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Work on Oneself: Rethinking Authenticity

Jochen Schmidt ¹

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This article addresses the concept of authenticity, a characteristic of late modern Western culture. This characteristic is viewed by some as an ideal and by others as a root of the problems inherent within Western culture. After discussing various viewpoints, the author supports the idea that authenticity should not be totally accepted or rejected and sets forth a proposal based on the so-called “negative ethics” or “skeptical ethics”.

Keywords: authenticity, Western culture, sincerity, negative ethics, sceptical ethics.

Introduction

Authenticity is arguably one of the most characteristic concepts of Western late modern culture. It is sometimes affirmed as an ideal (particularly, but not only, in self-help books), but at the same time, the pursuit for authenticity is sometimes looked at as representing all that is going wrong in Western culture. Those who position themselves somewhere in-between the embrace and the rejection of authenticity tend to distinguish between good authenticity and bad authenticity, as

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it were. In this paper, I will take up the idea that we ought neither to embrace nor altogether reject authenticity, and I will draw from negative ethics/sceptical ethics in my proposal.

The Shortcomings of Authenticity

Regarding the shortcomings of authenticity, it is often claimed that the imperative to be oneself is empty if it lacks any orientation regarding the kind of self that is worth striving for (Kreutzer 2016, 12). Pleading for authenticity without offering any criteria for the good can be destructive if any personal choice is being heralded merely for the sake of being a personal choice. Cultural critics have made this point many times (Lasch 1979; Bloom 1988). The core problem of a late modern or postmodern cult of authenticity is the idea that there is a true self hidden somewhere deep within ourselves, underneath the many things that shape our lives but which are not the “Real Me.” In this sense, “[t]he authentic self is the individual who can stand alone, shedding all status relations and social entanglements” (Guignon 2004, 73). This idea is epistemologically fraud, simply because there is no way we could ever access our Real Me, the kernel of our personality. Ernst Tugendhat has made this point very clear in his lectures on self-determination. He is asking his audience to look into their selves, and he then comments: “If I try to look into my real self, I do not see anything” (Tugendhat 1979, 13ff.), by which he presumably means that he can see a manifoldness of relations within himself, but not the naked real self. There is no way to determine what the Real Me is supposed to be, since I do not ever get to see my Real Me. My ideas about this Real Me are subject to potential self-deception and most certainly bear the imprint of my social environment (Menke 2011, 224, 229).

Finding a Place for Authenticity

This diagnosis has motivated the attempt to unearth the actual substance of the concept of “authenticity” that is lost in relativistic and individualistic guises, and it is sometimes suggested that *sincerity* is

some kind of “authentic” core of the concept of authenticity. In their article in the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Varga and others have given a neat summary of the contrast between authenticity and sincerity:

The older concept of sincerity, referring to being truthful in order to be honest in one’s dealings with others, comes to be replaced by a relatively new concept of authenticity, understood as being true to oneself for one’s own benefit. Earlier, the moral advice to be authentic recommended that one should be true to oneself *in order thereby* to be true to others. Thus, being true to oneself is seen as a *means* to the end of successful social relations. In contrast, in our contemporary thinking, authenticity as a virtue term is seen as referring to a way of acting that is choiceworthy in itself. (Varga and Guignon 2016)

In a similar vein, Charles Taylor famously proposes to distinguish between two kinds of authenticity: one good and one bad; to say it simply, he opposes the actual ideal of authenticity to its decadent version. The authentic kind of authenticity is framed within a horizon which has a transcendent character (Taylor 2003). In the eighteenth century, authenticity meant that human beings are receptive to the guidance of their inner intuition, and that they are true to themselves by realising the possibilities that really belong to an individual (Taylor 2003). So, Taylor’s idea is to unearth potentials in the tradition that he expects to act as remedies against the individualistic decay of authenticity (Herdt 2014, 194). This decay of authenticity consists in the idea that the very act of choosing a particular self has an inherent value, regardless of the particular nature of that decision (Taylor 2003). Taylor objects that I cannot simply decide that to move my toes in warm dirt is itself a meaningful act (Taylor 2003). In contrast to such “soft relativism,” Taylor makes it clear that only things which transcend the self are candidates for a meaningful choice (Taylor 1989, 507; cf. Herdt 2014). Things are only important within a horizon that gives meaning (Taylor 2011). And this, to find things of meaning, is only possible if

we restore our inner connection to the sacred. So, one *can* distinguish between more meaningful and less meaningful modes of self-choice; if this were not the case, then the very idea of self-choice would be empty (Taylor 2012; cf. Jaeggi 2014, 49).

The problem I see with Taylor's account is that we cannot go back to a time when the idea of an inner Godly voice was undisputed. Taylor is weak where he appears to suggest that we somehow restore the good old times. We cannot expect culture on the whole to return to a pre-secular age and to its noble ideas about authenticity (Legenhausen n.d., 21). It is well said that we have to establish or restore our "connection to the sacred," as Taylor claims in his *The Malaise of Modernity*, but Taylor does not explain what he means by "the sacred" here.¹ In *A Secular Age*, Taylor does distinguish between a secular sacred and a clerical, dogmatic sacred (Taylor 2007). However, in either sense of the term, Taylor's proposal that we have to establish or restore our connection to the sacred runs into difficulties. If he is referring to a clerical, dogmatic sacred, then this claim is reactionary. On the other hand, Taylor cannot really refer to the secular sacred, since the secular sacred is fluid and not something that we can establish a connection to. I do think Taylor is right in claiming that there is something of worth in the idea of authenticity, but I think that his opposition between meaningful choice and empty choice is too simple. My proposal will be to move beyond the dimension of choice and to introduce the notion of "work on oneself."

Part of the reason why I am sceptical about Taylor's contrast between meaningful choice and empty choice is that I think choosing a particular self is not the most crucial aspect. Instead, what matters is the work one does in the light of a vision of the kind of human being one would want to be. If we look at influential Christian narratives of choice

1. On Taylor and the sacred, see Gordon (2008).

and conversion, like Augustine's conversion, Martin Luther's so called reformatory discovery, or Kierkegaard's alleged option between different kinds of existence in more detail, I think we find that the idea of choice, turnaround and conversion is a way of giving expression to a personal change that is really the result of an arduous process and not something that just happens in the blink of an eye, even if narrative literature likes to condense personal developments in the narrative construction of conversion events (Schmidt 2011, 47ff.). Therefore, in what follows I will not oppose good authenticity to bad authenticity *pace* Taylor; instead, I will distinguish between *strong authenticity* and *weak authenticity*. Strong authenticity is the idea that one somehow "pulls oneself up into existence by the hair, out of the swamps of nothingness," as Nietzsche once put it with allusion to a famous fictional character from German literature (Nietzsche 2002, 21 [no. 21]). I doubt that this is possible, and recent empirical research on virtue ethics would second my doubts. In contrast, *weak authenticity* assumes that we are obliged to overcome inauthenticity and lack of integrity as much as we can. But we never get done with this pursuit of overcoming inauthenticity, we are always trying and failing and trying; at best, we sense a direction in the series of attempts that we undertake. Also, we heavily rely on the support of others, who have to remind us of the good if we lose sight of it (Schmidt 2015). In view of this idea of weak authenticity, I will go through main passages of the history or prehistory of authenticity and then make a couple of remarks as to how authenticity can be meaningful today.

Part of the reason why I would stand up for authenticity is that authenticity could be linked, albeit loosely, to what one could call creative createdness. By creative createdness, I mean the tradition according to which human beings are images of God in so far as they are bestowed with creative freedom. Origen calls the human being that "nature," which is created by its own freedom (cf. Origen 2002, 175ff.

[*RomCom* VIII,11]; Kobusch 2008).¹ Gregor von Nyssa holds that “[w]e are in some manner our own parents, giving birth to ourselves by our own free choice in accordance with whatever we wish to be, whether male or female, moulding ourselves to the teaching of virtue or vice” (Gregory 1978, 55f.; Kobusch 2008, 240). Nicolaus von Cusa argues that just like God is an almighty creator, human beings are creative creatures.

For just as God is the Creator of real beings and of natural forms, so man is the creator of conceptual beings and of artificial forms that are only likenesses of his intellect, even as God's creatures are likenesses of the Divine Intellect. (Nicholas of Cusa 2001, 794 [*de beryllo* 7])

This tradition is prominently adopted by renaissance philosopher Pico della Mirandola, who argues that the dignity of the human being lies in his *not being defined*, in being a creation without a peculiar natural equipment, as it were. Famously, Pico imagines God saying to Adam:

Adam, we give you no fixed place to live, no form that is peculiar to you, nor any function that is yours alone. According to your desires and judgement, you will have and possess whatever place to live, whatever form, and whatever functions you yourself choose. All other things have a limited and fixed nature prescribed and bounded by Our laws. You, with no limit or no bound, may choose for yourself the limits and bounds of your nature. We have placed you at the world's center so that you may survey everything else in the world. We have made you neither of heavenly nor of earthly stuff, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with free choice and dignity, you may fashion yourself into whatever form you choose. To you is granted the power of degrading yourself into the lower forms of life, the beasts, and to you is granted the power, contained in your intellect and judgement, to be reborn into the higher forms, the divine. (Pico della Mirandola, Giovanni et al. 2012, 117)

1. Origin is primarily thinking of the freedom to choose between good and evil, virtue and lust.

Friedrich Nietzsche, who ties with Pico, though in a secular reign, holds that man is the animal that is “unfixed animal” (Nietzsche 2002, 56 [§ 62]). Human beings have the task of giving “style” to themselves.

One Thing is Needful. To “give style” to one’s character that is a grand and a rare art! He who surveys all that his nature presents in its strength and in its weakness, and then fashions it into an ingenious plan, until everything appears artistic and rational, and even the weaknesses enchant the eye, exercises that admirable art. Here there has been a great amount of second nature added, there a portion of first nature has been taken away: in both cases with long exercise and daily labour at the task. (Nietzsche 2001, 163f. [No. 290])

It is worth taking note of the wording. To give style to oneself is not some kind of total spontaneity, as if we could simply jump into the kind of self that we desire. Rather, it is hard *work*. We do not fly into flying, says Nietzsche in a different text; we first have to learn standing and climbing and dancing (Nietzsche 2006 [III *Of the Spirit of Gravity* § 2]). This work is negative work as it contains *taking away*. In this respect, to become a self means to carve out one’s self in patient work, as Nietzsche says in his fragments (cf. Nietzsche 1988 [NF-1880,7 (213)]). Unlike in expressivist authenticity, Nietzsche’s authenticity is about *carving out* the self; that is, working with something that is already there, rather than merely presenting or inventing the self. Here, we can also see the link to Nietzsche’s explicit remarks on sincerity, which consists in fighting off the lies that one lives in (Schmidt 2014, 42ff.). So becoming an authentic self is not about *finding* one’s hidden true style and then merely giving expression to it, and neither is it about making something up from scratch. Rather, becoming an authentic self it is about starting off from the self that one already is and then carving out the self, which is to some extent a negative labour. The picture we get is quite distinct from that of expressive authenticity, which assumes that we only have to shrug of the external world.

We can see that being authentic starts off by surmounting inauthenticity, since inauthenticity is part of our existence. In similar vein, Jean-Paul Sartre concludes his famous novel *Nausea* by letting his protagonist, who is a writer, say his only hope had been to be able to write a story which would be beautiful and hard and that would make people feel ashamed about their own inauthentic existence. Lionel Trilling comments: “The authentic work of art instructs us in our inauthenticity and adjures us to overcome it” (Trilling 1972, 93).

Conclusion

In conclusion, I think the appeal to be authentic is ostensibly asking too much. Urging people to work against inauthenticity and thus work towards authentic being is still asking a lot, but it is not asking too much (cf. Legenhausen n.d., 20). The distinction thereby drawn calls a kind of ethics into play that has been called negative ethics.¹ Negative ethics rests on the simple assumption that rather than trying to be good, which is potentially asking too much, we should avoid being bad/evil: “The good—this is certain—is the bad which one does not do” (Busch 1974, 121 “Das Gute – dieser Satz steht fest – ist stets das Böse, was man lässt”). This idea of negative ethics might need further exploration, but I will not go into negative ethics anymore and will dwell on the idea of “work on oneself” a little more.

Wittgenstein famously claimed that philosophy is all about working on oneself: “Working in philosophy—like work in architecture in many respects—is really more work on oneself. On one’s own conception. On how one sees things (And what one expects of them)” (Wittgenstein 1980, 24e [MS 112 46: 14.10.1931]). And this passage from Wittgenstein’s later work ties with his earlier *Tractatus*, where it says:

Philosophy is not a theory but an activity.

A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations.

The result of philosophy is not a number of “philosophical

1. On negative ethics, see Ottmann (2005; 2014) and Schweppenhäuser (1993).

propositions”, but to make propositions clear. Philosophy should make clear and delimit sharply the thoughts which otherwise are, as it were, opaque and blurred. (Wittgenstein 1990, 4.112)

The misunderstanding of the strive for authenticity is the idea that everything is already there, as if there was some seed within me that I merely have to let grow without external inhibitions, and as if whatever were then to evolve was justified for the sake of being an expression of my internal being. Work on oneself, in contrast, does assume that there is something that is already there in each individual, and to be an authentic person means to take this seriously, but the act of taking seriously what is there in an individual is – hard work. This work is first of all work on how one sees things; it and means clarifying one’s perceptions and failures to perceive. Introducing this idea changes the perspective of authenticity: Authenticity being understood as a process of working on oneself is not about obsessive self-introspection, but about clarifying one’s vista of the external world.

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Honesty as a Foundational Virtue According to Islamic Mystical Ethics: Introduction and Definition

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Honesty in Islamic mystical ethics, at a superficial level, refers to the correspondence between speech, action, and intention and purpose. This application of honesty has been analyzed in depth in mystical ethics, and the analysis has resulted in honesty being considered as the foundation and basis of other virtues from five aspects, from which it can be understood that many of virtues are not virtues without honesty. In fact, these five aspects provide important and various meanings of foundational virtue in mythical texts. Considering this, one can find different levels and types of the virtue of honesty in mysticism and assess the obstacles in its path. A deep analysis of dishonesty and distinguishing self-deception are among the most important results of this specific approach to honesty. It is also in view of these analyses that mystics can explain how honesty can result in important ethical fruits, such as love for others, altruism, and abstaining from utilitarianism and egoism in actions, and how it leads to important psychological states, like happiness, satisfaction, hope, and strong inclination to virtues.

Keywords: honesty, foundational virtue, ethical mysticism, self-deception, phenomenology.

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Introduction

In Islamic mysticism, honesty holds fundamental importance; it is introduced as the rank before prophethood or as the condition of prophethood, and has been said to be the origin of all ethical virtues and spiritual states. According to *Misbah al-kifayah*,

Honesty is the second rank of prophethood, and all of the worldly and religious prosperity is the result of the matrimony between honesty and prophethood. If honesty did not carry the seed of prophethood, the children of *ghayb* (the unseen/hidden) would not be born [i.e., honesty is the foundation of prophethood]. Therefore, the foundation of all good is the rule of honesty, and the reality of honesty is an element from which all branches of ethics and favorable states branch out. (Kashani n.d., 344)

In *Hada'iq al-haqa'iq*, it is stated, "Honesty is the pillar, order, and the entirety of the work of the wayfarer and is the second stage after the rank of prophethood (Razi 1422 AH, 154). Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, also, has a comprehensive discussion of the centrality of honesty in the mystical journey and its rank according to the mystics (Ibn Qayyim 1425 AH, 495-98). What will be discussed in the rest of this article shows the serious emphasis of the mystics on this important ethical virtue.

In the third, fourth, and fifth centuries AH, an important definition for honesty took shape in Islamic mysticism and profound views were presented in the analysis of its nature, so much so that it can be said that these definitions and views formed a mystical movement, which provided the foundation for later analyses. As an example, Harith Muhasibi (d. 246) engaged in important discussions regarding the topic of honesty in two treatises, *al-Qasd wa l-ruju' ila Allah* (Intention and Return to God) and *Adab al-nufus* (Manners of the Souls). In the former, while analyzing honesty, he divides it into three levels: speech, action, and intention (Muhasibi 1986, 254). He continues by discussing the conditions of motivating honesty, its emotional characteristic, and

that this analysis can be compared with ethical, psychological, and phenomenological descriptions and analyses (Muhasibi 1986, 257). In *Adab al-nufus*, he addresses the issue of self-deception in honesty and explains how, in some cases, an action is considered honest, whereas it stems from personal benefits and desires. Muhasibi, also, speaks about how to be saved from this self-deception (Muhasibi 1428 AH, 89-91). Abu Sa'id Kharraz (d. 286) can be mentioned as another example in this regard. In his *Kitab al-Sidq*, he focuses on the topic of honesty and studies its levels and types (Kharraz 1421 AH, 12), specifically how the virtue of honesty is present in other virtues, such as modesty, love, and patience (Kharraz 1421 AH, 10-59).

Among the figures of the fourth and fifth centuries AH, who had important discussions on the topic of honesty, one can mention Abu l-Qasim 'Abd al-Rahman b. Muhammad al-Bakri (d. 380 AH) in *al-Anwar fi 'ilm al-asrar wa-maqamat al-abrar*, Kharkushi (d. 407 AH) in *Tahdhib al-asrar*, Sulami (d. 412 AH) in *Majmu'at athar al-Sulami*, 'Abd al-Karim Qushayri (d. 465 AH) in *al-Risalah*, Kh^waja 'Abd Allah Ansari (d. 481) in *Manazil al-sa'irin*, and Imam Muhammad Gazali (d. 505 AH) in *Ihya' 'ulum al-din*.

In the later centuries, the mystics continued mostly in the same vein, analyzing the topics related to honesty and truthfulness, topics such as the definition of honesty, analysis of honesty, levels of honesty, types of honesty, its characteristics and fruits, how honesty is related to the nature or perfection of other moral virtues and spiritual stages, self-deception in honesty and its cure, and how one can attain honesty.¹

1. See, for instance *Manaqib al-Sufiyyah* by Qutb al-Din Mansur Marwazi (d. 547 AH), *Mashrab al-arwah* by Ruzbahan Baqli (d. 606 AH), *Futuhat al-makkiyyah* by Ibn Arabi (d. 638 AH), *Manarat al-sa'irin ila hadhrat Allah wa maqamat al-ta'irin* by Najm al-Din Razi (d. 654 AH), *Hada'iq al-*

The efforts of the mystics in exploring the focal characteristics of honesty is related to mystical hermeneutics. With their interpretive method, the mystics apply a type of analytical method to different topics, including honesty, that gives significant results. An example of such results in the topic under discussion is the presence of honesty in all actions, states, and characteristics that are considered virtuous, positive, laudable, or valuable.

1. Meaning, Nature, and Analysis of Honesty

In defining honesty, the mystics have a deeper meaning in mind than the common meaning of honesty. In a primary definition, honesty is the correspondence between meaning and reality (Imam al-Sadiq 1400 AH, 35). Meaning is the concept of something in the domain of intention and motive, and reality is the concept of something that is manifested by man. Therefore, in various texts, honesty is defined as the correspondence between the external and the internal (see, e.g., Kharkushi 1427 AH, 170). ‘Izz al-Din Kashani states, “Honesty is a firm virtue in a person’s soul, which necessitates harmony between man’s inner and outer aspects and conformity between his apparent and hidden sides; his words must be in accordance with his intentions, and his actions must conform to his states; he must be as he presents himself” (Kashani n.d., 344). In this statement, two types of correspondence between the external and internal has been pointed to:

haqa’iq by Muhammad b. Abi Bakr al-Razi (d. 660 AH), *Awsaf al-ashraf* by Khwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi (d. 674 AH), *Sharh Manazil al-sa’irin* by Afif al-Din al-Tilimsani (d. 690 AH), *Istilahat al-sufiyyah* and *Sharh Manazil al-sa’irin* by ‘Abd al-Razzaq al-Qasani (d. 730 AH), *Misbah al-hidaya wa miftah al-kifaya* by ‘Izz al-Din Mahmud Kashani (d. 735 AH), *Madarij al-salikin* by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751 AH), *Nashr al-mahasin al-ghaliya fi fada’il mashayikh al-Sufiyya ashab al-maqamat al-‘aliya* by ‘Abd Allah al-Yafi’i (d. 768 AH), *Tariqat namah* by ‘Imad al-Din Faqih Kirmani (d. 773 AH), *Tasnim al-muqarrabin* (a Farsi commentary of *Manazil al-sa’irin*) by Shams al-Din Muhammad Tabadkani (d. 864 AH), and *Nata’ij al-a’fkar al-qudsiyya fi bayan sharh al-Risala al-Qushayriyya* by Zakariyya b. Muhammad al-Ansari (d. 926 AH).

the correspondence between words and intentions and the correspondence between actions and states. From these definitions, one can understand that the mystics were concerned with a focal point regarding honesty that causes it to be considered as a virtue. The virtue of honesty apparently does not mean speaking correctly or truthfully; what makes honesty honesty is abstaining from deception—deception as in the dualism of the different existential domains of man, the opposite of which is honesty: the unity and consistency of the existential domains of man with one another. In a tradition from the Prophet (s), which is narrated in mystical sources, we read: “Put aside that which causes self-deception, because honesty is settlement [inward settlement, as in the unity and consistency of the soul] and dishonesty is deception [as in the dualism of the existential domains].” (Majlisi 1403 AH, 2:359; Ibn Abi Jumhur 1403 AH, 3:330) The terminology used in the definition of honesty in the abovementioned narration is the word “*tuma'nina*,” which indicates tranquility, peace, settlement, and unity, and is the opposite of deception. In Persian, honesty is referred to as *rasti* (uprightness) and in Arabic as *istiqama* (perseverance) and *istiwa'* (equality) (Ibn Qayyim 1425 AH, 496). All three words—equality, perseverance, and uprightness—indicate unity, consistency, and continuity of the faculties and levels of man.

Based on the above definition, honesty holds a position not only in speech but in all existential domains of man. This is why the mystics, in counting the instances of honesty, have repeatedly mentioned the honesty of speech, honesty of intention, honesty of heart, and honesty of actions (see, e.g., Muhasibi 1986, 254; Razi 1422 AH, 154). The honesty of speech is the correspondence between a person's statement and intention and between the words of a promiser and his action, and the honesty of action is one's serious effort to attain the object of intention.

This analysis and its conclusions in the works of the mystics is in accordance with the verses of the Qur'an, which emphasize on the necessity of accompanying and following those who are honest, God being with those who are honest, and the honest benefitting from their honesty in the Hereafter. Most of the commentators and scholars have defined honesty in these verses in a more profound way than the common meaning so that it may accord with the qualities and predications ascribed to it in these verses.

However, the mystics have not stopped at this analysis of honesty; they have tried to explain why honesty is a virtue in the abovementioned meaning and whether a more fundamental quality can be found that is the root of the virtuous nature of honesty. In order to answer these questions, the mystics refer to the consistency and unity of the internal and the external. The internal refers to the existence of man with all his domains, and the external refers to the existence of the world or existence in the absolute meaning of the word. Whatever is in man has roots in existence; man's existence is essentially a level or domain of existence. Thus, the coordination of the faculties and domains of man in a wider scope is the unity and coordination of existence. The root of all virtues is existence itself, and it is existence that manifests itself as unified and coordinated in its different and various levels and domains, and not as contradictory, antithetical, or factious. Man's being, which is a part of existence, also possesses virtue and worth in accordance with existence. Therefore, in the end, apart from the inner coordination, the existential domains of man must conform and be unified with all of existence so that this inner conformity can be referred to as the conformity of the existential domains in a wider horizon and so that it may have value (see Bakri 1421 AH, 179, 181; K. Ansari 1417 AH, 74; Razi 1422 AH, 154; Tilimsani 1371 Sh, 1:245; Kashani 1385 Sh, 379, 380). Explaining honesty as the mirror of reality and truth or the criterion for truth falls in the framework of the abovementioned meaning.

2. Honesty, the Foundational Virtue of Islamic Mystical Ethics

In mystical sources and texts, it has been stated that all ethical virtues and spiritual stages are in a way dependent on honesty, and it is with honesty that other virtues and stages are attained. Najm al-Din al-Razi states, “Honesty is the axis of all stages, and it is not possible to reach the final rank except through honesty” (Razi al-Asadi 1425 AH, 143). According to the mystics, in the final mystical rank, all the ethical virtues are present in the mystic’s existence. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya also regards honesty as the source of all mystical stages and ranks (Ibn Qayyim 1425 AH, 495). In mystical sources, it has been narrated from the Prophet (s): “Honesty guides towards *birr*” (Z. Ansari 1428 AH, 3:254). The word “*birr*” in Arabic refers to all types of goodness and virtue, and therefore the abovementioned hadith indicates the guidance of honesty towards all goodness and positive ethical qualities. In regard to this hadith, al-Muhasibi states that “honesty is the origin of all good (*birr*)” (Muhasibi 1986, 255). With the abovementioned examples and other instances that will be mentioned, it becomes clear that honesty must be considered a *foundational virtue* in mystical viewpoint. By “foundational virtue,” we mean a virtue which a group of virtues or positive moral characteristics, in a way, depend on, are conditioned to, or take root in. Considering this definition and by studying mystical texts, we find that honesty is the most foundational moral virtue and is also counted as a foundational virtue in relation to other foundational virtues.

In the following discussion, it will become clear that the profound meaning of honesty makes it foundational in six different senses: (1) derivation, (2) pre-requisite, (3) overlapping with another virtue, (4) absolute companion, (5) companion of perfection, and (6) standard. We will name every virtue or action/characteristic of moral foundation as B (basis), moral agent as A, every moral action/characteristic as M, and every resulting moral action/characteristic that is somehow a

consequence of the ethical action/characteristic under discussion as affective action/characteristic F. We will also show the foundational nature of a moral action/characteristic for one or more affective ethical actions/characteristics with B(f). We will also show foundational in the six abovementioned meanings in the following way: (1) DB (derivation), (2) PB (prerequisite), (3) OB (overlapping), (4) CB (absolute companion), (5) IB (companion of perfection), and (6) SB (standard). In the same way, Ax will show the attribution of the moral agent to a moral action/characteristic like X.

2.1. Derivation

Foundational in the sense of derivation means that one or multiple moral actions/characteristics (A) are derived from one or multiple other moral actions/characteristics (M) in a way that M is an external and sufficient cause for A. Therefore, a foundational moral action/characteristic in this meaning becomes a cause for the existence of other characteristics/actions, and one can consider the attribution of the moral agent (S) to it in order to result in his/her attribution to another action/characteristic or other actions/characteristics. In this frame, this meaning of foundational can be defined as follows: M is foundational for F in the sense of derivation (DB) if and only if the attribution of A to M (Am) is a sufficient cause for the attribution of A to F (Af).¹

2.2. Prerequisite

Foundational in the sense of prerequisite is that one or more moral actions/qualities (F) depend on a moral action/quality (M) in such a way that M is a necessary condition for F. Therefore, foundation in this meaning is an incomplete cause for the existence of other actions/qualities and not necessarily a sufficient cause. Therefore, the attribution of the moral agent (A) in this meaning of foundational must

1. See, for instance, Kharraz (1421 AH, 12); Muhasibi (1428 AH, 76; 1986, 255); Razi al-Asadi (1425 AH, 143); Kashani (n.d., 344-45); and Ibn Qayyim (1425 AH, 495).

be considered as the necessary condition for his attribution to other moral actions/qualities. Thus, foundational in this sense can be defined as follows: M is foundational for F in the sense of prerequisite (PB) if and only if the attribution of A to M (Am) is a necessary condition for the attribution of A to F (Af).¹

2.3. Overlapping

Overlapping is foundational in the sense that the realization of one or multiple moral actions/qualities (F) coincide with the realization of another moral action/characteristic (M) in a manner that the realization of M can replace the realization of F; that is, if F did not realize, a moral defect would not occur. Thus, having an overlapping foundational action/quality, the moral agent would not need to attain one or multiple other moral actions/characteristics. Thus, foundational in the sense of overlapping can be defined as follows: M is foundational for F in the sense of overlapping (OB) if and only if the attribution of A to M (Am) is equivalent to the attribution of A to A (Af).²

2.4. Absolute Companion

Foundational in the sense of absolute companion is the effect of a moral quality/action (M) in the nature and essence of one or more moral actions/qualities (F) in a manner that without M, the essence of F is not formed or is incomplete. Thus, the absence of a foundational action/quality in this sense places the action/quality of a moral agent in a state of non-virtue or negative worth. Considering the abovementioned points, foundational in the meaning of absolute companion can be defined as follows: M is foundational for F in the

1. See, for instance, K. Ansari (1417 AH, 73, 165); Kharkushi (1427 AH, 169-70); Ghazali (1416 AH, 153); and Razi al-Asadi (1425 AH, 143).

2. See, for instance, Kharkushi (1427 AH, 166-65) and Sulami (1369 Sh, 1:491).

meaning of absolute companion (CB) if and only if, with the attribution of A to M (Am), M is effective in the attribution of A to F (Af) as a formative part.¹

2.5. Companion of Perfection

This meaning of foundational refers to the impact of a moral action/characteristic (M) on one or multiple moral actions/qualities (F) such that, without M, F would not be perfect. Thus, the absence of the foundational action/quality in this sense places the action/quality of a moral agent in a state of non-perfection or decreases its value. Thus, this meaning of foundational can be defined in the following way: M is foundational for F in the sense of companion of perfection if and only if with the attribution of A to M (Am), M is influential in the attribution of A to F (Af) as a formative component of F in its state of perfection.

2.6. Standard

Foundational is used in the sense of standard when one or multiple moral actions/qualities (F) or their values are measured by another moral action/quality (M) in a way that M is a standard for F or its worth. The attribution of the moral agent (A) in this meaning of foundational is considered a standard for his attribution to other moral action/quality or moral actions/qualities. Thus, this concept of foundational can be defined as follows: M is foundational for F in the meaning of standard (SB) if and only if the attribution of A to M (Am) is the standard for the measurement of the attribution of A to F (Af).

3. The Stages of Honesty

The above discussions showed that honesty is not a simple virtue; rather, its scope is so vast that it is considered a necessary condition for

1. See, for instance, Imam al-Sadiq (1400 AH, 34); Muhasibi (1420 AH, 371; 1986, 344, 352; 1428 AH, 65); Kharraz (1421 AH, 8, 14, 19, 28, 35, 42, 47, 53, 56, 59); Qushayri (1422 AH, 175); Ghazali (n.d., 4:107); Siraj al-Tusi (1914, 217); Sulami (1369 Sh, 1:491); and Tusi (1373, 17).

all other virtues. It also manifests itself in various ways and from different aspects, and, as a result, different names have been ascribed to it. In other words, honesty has a gradational reality, and each of its levels has its own properties.

In order to show this gradation in honesty, the mystics have sometimes used the expressions “levels of honesty” and “types and categories of honesty.” One of the common divisions of honesty is its division into honesty in speech, actions, and states (Razi al-Asadi 1425 AH, 143; Razi 1422 AH, 154). Sometimes, honesty in intention has also been included next to honesty in speech and actions (Tusi 1373 Sh, 17; Qasani 1426b AH, 2:459; 1380 Sh, 493). That which appears to be the most accurate expression is suggested by Kh^waja ‘Abd Allah Ansari, who writes in his pivotal *Manazil al-sa’irin* on the gradational nature of honesty and confirms that each of its stages has different characteristics. He first mentions a common genus between all types of honesty and then discusses the distinguishing differentia of each type. Regarding the common genus between all types of honesty, he states, “Honesty is the name for the reality of something in terms of attainment and existence” (Qasani 1385 Sh). With this explanation, the correspondence between attainment and existence in the existential plane, according to the mystics, is defined as the fundamental reality of honesty.

3.1. The First Level of Honesty: Godly Intention/Intending God

This level of honesty is about honesty in intention; it refers to the dedication of all intentions to God. To the extent that a mystic allows anything or anyone other than God to be present in his intention, he distances himself from honesty. Kh^waja introduces duplicity as the opposite of honesty at this level: “Honesty is the intention and seeking of something without duplicity in any form” (Tilimsani 1371 Sh, 1:242).

Honesty at this level is foundational in the second meaning of foundational virtue, because in Islamic mysticism, honesty in intention is the condition for the realization of every virtue. No action or quality would have a virtuous aspect without attention to the presence of God and working only for him. In reality, at this level, the mystic possesses honesty of “singular direction” (Tilimsani 1371 Sh, 1:380) and is only concerned with God. The shared genus (i.e., the correspondence between attainment and existence) in this stage of honesty is the fact that God, who is present in the mystic’s intention, is the one who truly exists.

Among the characteristics of honesty at this level is that the one who possesses it does not see his own action at all, because the action is something other than God, and attention to anything other than God causes duplicity, which is against honesty. Among the signs of the realization of this level of honesty are ceaseless efforts of the mystic and his strong inclination to the spiritual journey toward God.

3.2. The Second Stage of Honesty: Attaining Life with God

According to Kh^waja ‘Abd Allah Ansari, at this level, one does not desire life except for God and does not witness in his soul except deficiency (Tilimsani 1371 Sh, 1:243). In his commentary on this statement, Tilimsani says, “And this is the quality of the honest, which leaves no share for his soul” (Tilimsani 1371 Sh, 1:243).

In the second stage of honesty, while preserving the common genus of correspondence between attainment and existence, the reality appears for the mystic as it is. The reality is that all perfections exclusively belong to God, and the mystic has no independence before God. Therefore, attaining life with God is manifested for him, and this is the most truthful reality that exists in the world, which also allocates to itself the content of personal unity in Theoretical mysticism.

Honesty is foundational in this stage in the sense of absolute companion, or rather companion of perfection, because this quality accompanies all the virtues of a mystic; all perfections belong to God and the perfections of a mystic are nothing but the shadows of the perfections of God. The more this honesty is realized by way of the certainty of truth (*haqq al-yaqin*), the more the other virtues attain their perfection.

3.3. The Third Stage: Attaining Perfection with God

In this stage of honesty, after attaining life with God, the mystic must know that his responsibility in this world is attaining similarity to such an absolute perfection; he is honest to the extent that he has achieved similar perfections and dishonest to the extent that he has distanced himself from those perfections. While preserving the common genus—i.e., correspondence between attainment and existence—in order to explain this level more precisely, one can benefit from the linguistic meaning of honesty suggested by Kh^waja ‘Abd Allah: “Honesty is all the power/potential of something” (Tilimsani 1371 Sh, 1:241).

After traversing the two previous stages of honesty, the mystic achieves the constant presence of God in intention and continuous life with Him in action and existence. Now he must abide by the necessities of attaining this life and realize within himself the perfections for which he has the potential. This is the most complete correspondence between attainment and existence and the most important meaning of foundational.

4. Self-Deception and Honesty

Taking into consideration the foundational meanings of honesty and also the nature and stages of honesty, one can conclude that the foundation of every virtue is honesty and that virtue itself can be considered an effect of honesty. Therefore, if a virtue is realized lacking

the characteristics of honesty, it is in fact a branch without root and a type of deception (Muhasibi 1428 AH, 76). This is the same notion that has been addressed many times in the Qur'an:

Say, "Shall we inform you about the biggest losers in regard to works? Those, whose endeavor goes awry in the life of the world, while they suppose they are doing good." They are the ones who deny the signs of their Lord and the encounter with Him. So their works have failed. On the Day of Resurrection, We will not set for them any weight. (Qur'an 103-5)

The faculty of imagination, at times, counts an attribute related to a virtue as a real virtue, and this leads to self-deception (Muhasibi 1428 AH, 89). The mystics consider dishonesty the first sign of self-deception: "The first sign of duplicity is one's satisfaction with being ignorant of the honesty in intention in his actions (Kharkushi 1427 AH, 168). It is clear that the abovementioned divisions of honesty also apply to self-deception: parallel to honesty in intention, actions, and states is self-deception in intention, actions, and states. In other words, self-deception is realized to the extent of deficiency in honesty. It is for this reason that one of the ways for abstaining from self-deception is practicing honesty in action and even love for honesty. If one is concerned about the praise and vilification of others rather than being concerned about the pleasure of God, who is the criterion of honesty, he is afflicted accordingly with self-deception (Muhasibi 1428 AH, 90).

This relation between honesty and self-deception completely clarifies the foundational meaning of honesty as a standard, because the existence of honesty negates self-deception in all other virtues, and its absence proves the presence of self-deception. Therefore, sometimes honesty is referred to as a state that draws the soul towards temperance (Bakri 1421 AH, 32).

5. Conclusion

1. Honesty (*sidq*) in mystical ethics refers to the conformity of the internal and external aspects of man and, more profoundly, the conformity and harmony between man and existence (reality).
2. The most important moral characteristic of honesty in Islamic mysticism is its being foundational in relation to all other virtues.
3. The foundational character of honesty in mystical texts can be explained in six types or meanings: (1) derivation, (2) prerequisite, (3) overlapping, (4) absolute companion, (5) companion of perfection, (6) standard.
4. Considering the foundational place of honesty, different levels and stages have been counted for honesty in mystical ethics.
5. In mysticism, self-deception in ethics has a direct connection to dishonesty, and honesty eliminates self-deception.

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I Am Alfa and Omega

A Jewish-Christian Schema in the Manichaean Context Based on the Middle Iranian Documents in the Turfan Collection

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This paper will give an in-depth discussion of Jesus' expression "I am Alpha and Omega" (*Apocalypse of John* = *Revelation* 1.8) and its influence on the Manichaean writings, on the one hand, and the reason for the division of Mani's *Living Gospel* into twenty-two chapters, corresponding to the twenty-two letters of the Manichaean alphabet, on the other. The paper has explored all the related Jewish, Christian, and Manichaean texts available and strived to find out more about the reason for, and the origin of, this particular division. The deep connection between the *word* (or *letters*) and *creation* in Manichaean as well as in Jewish and Christian traditions seems to play an important role in this regard. The paper will answer many different, previously unanswered, questions and eventually propose a plausible resolution.

Keywords: cosmic potency of letters, Mani's Gospel, Jewish literature, Christian literature, Manichaean literature.

***Mysteria Litterarum* in the Creation of the Twenty-Two Works**

In her study "Der Traktat 'vom Mysterium der Buchstaben'" (2007), Cordula Bandt edited and commented on the Greek *Treatise* Περὶ τοῦ

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μυστηρίου τῶν γραμμάτων (About the Mystery of the Letters) (*ML* viz. *Mysteria Litterarum*), with a Coptic “Preface” (*prooimion*) that has an Arabic translation.¹ This Christian *Treatise*,² containing a mystical doctrine about the names and forms of the Greek and Hebrew letters, was probably written in the sixth century Byzantine *Palaestina Prima* (Bandt 2007, 4-8), which is at least some two centuries later than the time of Mani. It seems that the original could be older. The anonymous author of the text not only discusses each of the letters in detail but also tries, throughout the text, to identify the symbolization ΠΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΕΤΨΟΟΠ ΖΝ ΝΕCΖΑΙ ΜΠΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΑ “about the mystery of God, which is [included] in the letters of the alphabet” (*ML. Prooimion* 3, in Bandt 2007, 102-3) that began with the saying of Christ “ΧΕ ΑΝΟΚ ΑΛΦΑ ΑΓΩ Ω” (I am *Alpha* and *Ω*) (*ML. Prooimion* 102.15-16, in Bandt 2007, 102-3); “ΧΕ ΑΝΟΚ ΑΙΩΩΠΕ ΝΑΛΦΑ ΑΓΩ Ω” (I became *Alpha* and *Ω*) (*ML. Prooimion* 102.17, in Bandt 2007, 102-3); and “Εγώ εἰμι τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ω” (I am the *Alpha* and the *Ω*) (*ML* 2.17, in Bandt 2007, 108-9 *apud* Shokri-Foumeshi 2015, 61).

That author himself says that he compiled his *Treatise* under the influence of the *Apocalypse of John* (*Revelation* = *Rev.*) and the influence of this advice of Christ to John to find “παρὼν θησαυρὸς τῶν γραμμάτων” (*ML* 2: 108.6, in Bandt 2007, 108-9) “the existing treasure in letters,” (i.e., ΠΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ “the mystery of God”). In *Rev.* 1.8, we read: “I am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the ending”;

1. For MS., see Bandt (2007, ‘Abbildungen’).

2. The Greek text published for the first time in 2007 by Cordula Bandt (in the above work). The unknown author of the text proposes a re-modelled Greek alphabet reduced to twenty-two letters based on the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. He interprets these letters as symbolic figures of the twenty-two works of divine creation in the biblical *Creation according to Genesis* and of the twenty-two corresponding works of salvation by Christ, elaborating this theory through descriptions of the various letters and interpretations of their shapes (Bandt 2007, 3ff.).

also, in *Rev.* 22.13: “I am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” As a point of departure, let us first look at the parts of the text which are relevant to our study:

ML 3: 108.21-22: Εικοσιδύο δὲ εἰσὶ τῶν γράμματα κατὰ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τῶν κβ' ἔργων, ὧν ὁ θεὸς ἐν πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει ἐποίησεν·

Twenty-two letters are, however, in accordance with the number of twenty-two works, which God has created in all creation. (Bandt 2007, 108-9; similar sentences in *ML* 3: 108.23; *ML* 3: 108.24-110.10; *ML* 3: 110.15-16; in Bandt 2007, 110-11. See also Dornseiff 1925, 73)

Then follows the Περί τῶν κβ' ἔργων, ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς εἰργάσατο (*ML* 3: 110.18) “the 22 works accomplished by Christ” (*ML* 3: 110.19-112.13).

ML 3.4: 112.14-15: Τούτων τῶν κβ' τοῦ χριστοῦ πραγμάτων εἰσὶ τύπος τὰ κβ' ἔργα τῆς κτίσεως, ἃ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός· ὁμοίως καὶ τὰ κβ' γράμματα ὡς προεῖπον τῆς ἀλφαβήτου·

Archetypes of these 22 acts of Christ are the 22 works of the Creation which God created. Just as the 22 letters of the alphabets, as I have already said. (Bandt 2007, 112-13)

It seems to me that “the number 22,” related to Christ’s acts here, has a parallel in a Manichaean Turfan document; namely, in the Middle Persian fragment S1, which is in fact an index of writings, and as far as I know, it is attested only here (see Shokri-Foumeshi 2015, 62-63):

S1/v/11-13/ * yyšw'yg * | 'br wyst 'wd dw k'rc'r 'yg [3-5] | 'mdyšnyh 'yg yyšw' zyn(dk)[r]. (Salemman 1904, 6; re-edited here)

Regarding Jesus: About the twenty-two battles of ... coming of Jesus the life[-giving?] one. (Salemman 1904, 6)¹

1. Cf. the title of the Coptic Manichaean *Synaxis* of the Ninth *Logos* of the *Living Gospel*: ⲉⲧⲁⲛⲁ ⲉⲧⲉⲃⲉ ⲧⲟⲩⲛⲉⲓ ⲛⲓⲏϥ ⲡⲉⲛⲁⲣϥ “Concerning the Coming of Jesus the Christ” (Mirecki 1994, 206).

Let us return to the Greek *Mysteria Litterarum*. We can assume that older sources—the *Old Testament* and the related works—have been formed on the basis of the above-mentioned *Treatise*, and it is likely that Mani was familiar with these sources. Below, we encounter evidence of one of the well-known Jewish works that is close to the time of Mani, a work that ought to be influenced by older sources. This well-known work is called *Memar Marqah* (*Tibat marqah*), which is a collection of six books. The language of the work is fourth-century Aramaic, with some development into later “Samaritan,” influenced by Arabic (Hjelm 2000, 96). The sixth book is a *midrash* of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, understood to have originated at the time of creation, which was probably known to Mani. In the first part (Rosenthal 1939, 142) of the *Treatise on the 22 Letters* (i.e., in the 6th book), we read: “When God revealed himself in the burning bush to him [i.e., Moses], he found the 22 letters, written in flaming fire in front of himself” (Baneth 1888, 54-55); also: “He [i.e. God] had already written the 22 letters, which form the basis of the words of the teaching” (Baneth 1888, 50-51).

***Book of Jubilees* and Twenty-Two Books of the Old Testament?**

Now, we address two quotations of the *Book of Jubilees*, which is an ancient Jewish text. The second chapter of the *Jubilees* is in fact the book of creation. Here, the twenty-two works of the six days of creation are enumerated. According to *Jub.* 2.15, the sum of the works of creation amounts to twenty-two kinds. *Jub.* 2.23 takes up this number and establishes an essential link between the creation of Israel and the sanctification of the Sabbath as the seventh day of the week of creation: twenty-two works of creation have been made *up to* the seventh day; similarly, twenty-two generations have passed from Adam *up to* Jacob (Doering 1997, 181; Berger 1981, 328-29).

In this context, in all of the Old Testament, there is no mention of the twenty-two books. It is therefore very remarkable that there is no

indication in the Torah to show the work divided into the twenty-two chapters—namely, the twenty-two books; the Old Testament has more than twenty-two books. The number 24 is attested in 4 Ezra 14:45 and in the *Gospel of Thomas* 52. Some scholars believe 22 to be the older number, and date the number 24 to the fourth century.¹ However, we must also bear in mind that the number 22 was frequently cited as encompassing the whole Old Testament and that this number had to be preserved regardless of the actual contents of the canon.²

All the same, all the evidence in this context, which we have seen above, is obviously later, whereas some scholars have been willing to attribute a Jewish origin to the alphabet connection. Nevertheless, as Gallagher also pointed out, “in fact, no Jewish source transmits the connection between the number of the biblical books and the alphabet” (Gallagher 2012, 87). However, some of the Fathers of the Church, such as Origen, who did not accept the limits of the Jewish canon, stressed the importance of the number 22.³

The Hebrew *Book of Henoch* and the Cosmic Potency of the Letters

Mani opposed Moses and Judaism, and thus it may seem that he was not influenced by Jewish literature. However, we must consider the largely unknown situation of the Jewish and Christian communities in early Mesopotamia. Additionally, the Manichaean texts show that Mani was familiar with Judaism, though partly via Christianity. According to Widengren, Judaism and Christianity had a major impact on Mani and Manichaeism, though in a negative direction (Widengren 1965, 11). Without a doubt, one of the best examples is the Manichaean *Book of*

1. See Gallagher (2012, 86) for a detailed study of this issue.

2. For an influential study dating the occurrence of 22 before 24, see Katz (1956, 191-217) *apud* Gallagher (2012, 86, n. 65).

3. Cf. Origen's opinion *apud* Gallagher (2012, 90); see also below.

the Giants.¹ It is certain that a “*Book of Giants*” was known to Mani. It must have been a version of the Enochic *Book of Giants* (and not *1 Hen.: Ethiopian*, e.g.), fragments of which were discovered in Qumran (see Martínez 1992, 97-99), as it is a well-known fact that Henoch played a great role prior to Mani as a great prophet.² This is obviously attested at least in the MP fragment M 625c published by Henning, as a proof that Mani was familiar with the *Book of Henoch* (Henning 1934). Klimkeit postulates a direct line of transmission from Qumran to Mani through the *Elchasaite* community (Klimkeit 1980, 367-77).

In the *Hebrew Book of Henoch* (3 *Hen.* 13) we read that all things were created when God began to speak the words. According to the following words, God writes with a flaming stylus on Meṭaṭron’s crown the cosmic letters by which heaven and earth were created (Odeberg 1928, II:34-35; cf. also Lumpkin 2009, 326-27). In 3 *Hen* 41, Meṭaṭron shows R. Ishmael the letters engraved on the Throne of Glory by which everything in heaven and earth has been created (Odeberg 1928, II: 128-29; cf. also *Sēpher Yəṣīrāh* [*Sefer Yeṣirah*] in Herrmann 2008, 31, 88-89; see also Shokri-Foumeshi 2015, 66-67).

Here, some points are considerable for our study: First, although the “cosmic potency of the letters and word” and the role of the alphabet in the creation of the world are mentioned in the 3 *Hen.*, there is no clear mention of the alphabet in Hebrew by name (even if it is Hebrew), as is mentioned specifically in the Jewish works. Second, the number of the letters has not been determined here. Third, wisdom, understanding,

1. Henning published the Iranian fragments of this text (Henning 1943). In this context, see also, especially, W. Sundermann, “Ein weiteres Fragment aus Manis Gigantenbuch,” *Orientalia J. Duchesne-Guillemin emerito oblata*, Leiden, 1984: 491-505. For a comparative study on its Iranian heritage, see P. O. Skjærvø, “Iranian Epic and the Manichaean Book of Giants,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 48, 1995: 187-223. Wilkens also published the Uighur fragments (2000, 133-76; 2011, 63-85). See also Morano (2011, 101-11).

2. For the references to *hwnwx* in the Manichaean texts, see *DMMPP* 194a.

knowledge, prudence, meekness, and righteousness are created here by the potency of the letters, something that is not seen in other Jewish texts. If Mani was familiar with this writing or with its related sources, which is very likely, he must really have taken these three cases into consideration, a point that could probably have had an influence on the composition of, at least, Mani's *Living Gospel*. Phrases like this, also, are in the Coptic Manichaean *Psalm-Book*, the Psalm of Thomas that shows the cosmic potency of the voice and the word (*PsB* 203.5-22). This Manichaean text speaks about the evocation of clouds, fire, wind, air, and mountain. C. Schmidt and H. J. Polotsky (Schmidt and Polotsky 1933, 63[64], 65[66]) correctly identified 𐤕𐤗𐤌𐤍𐤏 “(be)rufen, to call, invoke, summon” with the Syriac ܩܪܐ ܩܪ’ “to call, invoke”¹ (by Theodor bar Kōnai, see below) (Jackson 1932, 224ff) and the Arabic do’ā “call, invocation” (in *Al-Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadim; see Flügel 1862, 65, 5).

’lyf nxwyn ’wd t’ ’stwmyn

All the same, the Jewish concept of the “cosmic potency of the letters and word,” which caused the creation of the world, influenced the New Testament—namely, at the beginning of the first chapter of the *Gospel According to John*: 1:1-3, 14. The latter reference obviously shows that the “word” is considered to be Christ. Here, we remember the above-mentioned sentence in the *Apocalypse (Rev.) of John* (interestingly, in both cases “According to John”) 22:13: “I [i.e., Christ] am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” (cf. also *Rev.* 1:11, 17). This passage, which, in all the New Testament, appears only in the *Apocalypse of John*, is reflected in the Turfan Parthian fragment M173/v/, which together with M 94/v/ forms a Parthian hymn dedicated to the “Father of Greatness” (*pydr wzrgyft*):

1. Also, Syriac *qryt*’ “call, invocation” (bar Kōnai 314, 15 *apud* Schmidt-Polotsky 1933, 63[64] and 65[66]).

M 173/v/2^a-2^b/''lyf nxwyn tw xwd'y¹ ° 'wd t' 'stwmyn | pd tw 'ngd ° 'wd bwd 'spwr tw k'm kyrbg. (ABC 439, § 24a-b)

You, Lord, are the first *alif* and the last *tau*, | Through you yourself your pious wish has been fulfilled and accomplished. (ABC 439; GSR 32, §5)

This sentence indicates that Manichaeans, and perhaps Mani himself, made use of the *Apocalypse of John*, and were aware of the significance of the twenty-two letters hidden in the phrase (Shokri-Foumeshi 2015, 69f.).

Created by Your Word (of Blessing)

The idea of the “cosmic potency of the letters and word,” which caused the creation of the world, is obviously attested in the Turfan Manichaean texts *inter alia* in a long text concerning the Manichaean myth of the creation of the world. In the Middle Persian M 7984, in which the Living Spirit (*myhryzd*), having made the world, goes with the other gods before the Father of Greatness (here: *whyšt'w šhry'r*) to entreat him to evoke the Third Messenger, we read:

M 7984/II/r/ii/21-34/ + M 7984/II/v/i/1-5/: 'wd myhryzd 'wd srygrqrb qyrdg'r 'wl 'w whyšt'w 'hr'pt hynd °° 'wd 'b'g 'whrmzydby 'wd rwšn'n xw'ryst °° 'wd nwgšhr'pwr yzd hndym'n 'wy whyšt'w šhry'r dstkš 'yst'd hynd °° 'wš'n ngwcyd 'wd zwwpr nm'c bwrđ 'wš'n 'wh gw(p)t kw nmbrwm tw xwdy' ky pd xwyš wrz 'wd hww'c² 'm'h 'pwryd hwm °° (Mir. Man. i, 7[179]; Reader 63, text y: 8; Hutter 1992, 30-31 § 155-173)

And Mihryazd (the Living Spirit) and the Goddess of Creation in Female Form (Mother of Life) were lifted up to Paradise. And together with the God Ohrmizd (First Man) and the most Beloved of the Lights and the Creator God of the New World they

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1. Cf. also M 28/II/V/ii/34-35/ in *Mir. Man. ii*, 318; *Reader* 125, text *bu*:3; *GSR* 66, §5.3.
 2. Cf. M 39/R/I/16-17/ in *Mir. Man. iii*, text *m* 16-17 (p. 39 [884]); *Reader* 118, text *bk*: 1: *z'd 'yy p't wrc*, and not *pd wrc 'wd hww'c*. According to above text, the Manichaean gods are also “born” (*z'd n*). Thanks to I. Gershevitch (1955, 479, esp. 487-88), we have a great deal of information about the concept *w'c* with the double meanings “word” and “spirit.”

approached the Lord of Paradise, greeting him. Then they bowed down deeply and venerated him, saying, ‘We worship you, Lord, for you have created us by your wondrous power and by (your) word of blessing.’ (GSR 227, as text A)

Cf. the passage cited by Theodor bar Kōnai: “Then the Mother of the Living and the Primal Man and the Living Spirit stood in prayer and implored the Father of Greatness; and the Father of Greatness hearkened to them and *evoked* [*q^erā*] the Third Evocation, (namely) the Messenger” (*apud* Jackson 1932, 240. For *q^erā* see below). In the following MP text, the Third Messenger is evoked and begins his work as follows:

M 7984/II/v/ii/11-14/ *ps h'n whyšt'w šhry'r pd xwyys wrc 'wd hww'c 'pwryd yzd sh.* (*Mir. Man. i*, 8[180]; *Reader* 64, text y: 10; Hutter 1992, 38: 213-16)

Thereafter, the Lord of Paradise *created* three gods by his own wondrous power and (by his) *word* of blessing. (*Mir Man i*, 180; GSR 228, as text c)

It is noteworthy here that the Manichaeans made the adjective *w'c'fryd*¹ “created by word”² from the combination of the noun *w'c* “word” and the past participle *'fryd* “created (by sb/sth)”:

Huy.VIc/10a-b/: (‘w)[d p]d rwmb *w'c'fryd* [⊙] dyz 'br hw [*lacuna*] | (b)wrz 'wd ql'n [⊙] cy 'rg'w p(')[dyxš'n].³ (Boyce 1954, 102)

And⁴ by a spiritual invocation⁵ [he built?] on that [structure?] the fortress, high and vast, of the noble Em[peror]. (Boyce 1954, 103; slightly altered in Shokri-Foumeshi 2015, 75)⁶

1. Referring to the term, I am indebted to Dr. I. Colditz (personal communication). W. B. Henning (*apud* Boyce 1954, 103, n. 1) has recognized that the Manichaean *w'c'fryd* corresponds to the MP *mynewg* “spiritual.”

2. And also “spiritual, ghostly.” See *DMMPP* 334b.

3. Cf. M 324/R/15-16/: *w'c'fryd hy tw | xwd'y pd 'pryn 'y yzd'n* [⊙]

4. Not translated in Boyce (1954, 103).

5. *Apud* Boyce (1954, 103, n. 1): “Lit. ‘by a spiritual mouth.’”

6. See also (MP) M 43/r/5/: *zyw'y 'w j'yd'n* ^{⊙⊙} *thm'tr shy(n)* 'r(d)yqr ^{⊙⊙}

All in all, the above evidence shows that the creation of divinities and the spiritual world in Manichaeism as a continuation of the old Jewish and the Christian concept (which continued in Islam¹ too) has been accomplished by “voice” and “word.”² The Manichaean Turfan texts, on the other hand, confirm clearly that this was never used for the creation of the material world created by *Evil*.

“Primeval Voice” in the Manichaean Parthian, Sogdian, and Chinese Codices

Here, regarding the phrase ‘lyfnxwyn tw xwd’y ‘wd t’ ‘stwmyn, I would like to deal nevertheless with the Parthian hymn M1178, which with the help of the Parthian fragments M259c, M2402, M529 and Ôtani 7117 as well as the Sogdian fragment So18120 (T I / TM351) (see Reck 2006, 245f.) was recently re-edited and reconstructed by Durkin-Meisterernst and Morano (2010, 10-13; after Waldschmidt-Lentz 1926, 85ff.), E. Morano (1982, 10ff.), and X. Ma (2003, 81ff.) as its Chinese version was preserved respectfully in the *Hymnscroll* S2659 (ll. 176-83) (Waldschmidt-Lentz 1926, 85ff.) and its Turkish version in Pelliot Chinois 3407 (Hamilton 1986, 55f.) as well.³ Sundermann recognizes and publishes the text as a part of *Der Sermon von der Seele* (1997, 55, 72-73). Here, the well-known text “Primeval voice” (*wcn hsyng*),⁴

nyrwg’wynd yzd w’c’fryd ☉☉ “May you live forever, (oh you) very strong, prominent, warrior, *created by the word of God!*” (Klimkeit in *GSR* 158. Cf. *HR ii*, 78; *MSt* 12; *Reader* 194, text *dw*: 1. See also *BBB* 21; *Reader* 155, text *cu*: 15; *GSR* 135; Henning, *BBB* 21; *HR ii*, 49; *MSt* 2; *Reader* 160, text *cv*: 5; *GSR* 147; Colditz 2000, 78).

1. Cf. Qur’an 2:117: “The Initiator of the heavens and the earth: to have anything done, He simply says to it, ‘Be, and it is’ (*kun fa-yakūnu*).” See also Qur’an 3:47; 6:73; 16:40; 19:35; 36:82; 40:68.
2. It seems to me that *wcn hsyng* “Primeval voice” in the Parthian M7/V/ii/17-18/ (*Mir. Man.* iii, 27[872], text *g*:12[105-106]; *Reader* 108, text *ay*: 1) and the above-mentioned “Primeval voice” refers to this term.
3. All the parallels can be found in Durkin-Meisterernst and Morano (2010, 10-13).
4. Provasi (2007, 306 and n. 76), regarded the text as a “hymn.”

divided into the twenty-two parts¹ and addressed to the twenty-two kinds of the *hsyng* “primeval,” apparently shows the characters of the Father of Greatness. The text is not abecedarian, and, as Durkin-Meisterernst and Morano point out, “while this would not be expected of a Parthian translation of an Aramaic original there is no indication that the Aramaic original will have been abecedarian either” (Durkin-Meisterernst and Morano 2010, 13, n. 11). Interestingly, the list starts with *wcn* “voice” and *sxwn* “word.” What is important for us here is that a Manichaean text with the twenty-two characters of the Father of Greatness is divided into twenty-two parts (Shokri-Foumeshi 2015, 71-72).

Mani’s *Living Gospel* and Twenty-Two Chapters

From both Manichaean and non-Manichaean writings, we know that Mani’s *Gospel* was divided into twenty-two chapters (Syr. *mēm̄rē*, Gr. λόγοι) (Böhlig 1980, 45, Anm. 134) corresponding to the twenty-two letters of the Syriac/ Manichaean alphabet (Asmussen 1987, 31b; cf. *Panárion* 13.3-4, pp. 232-33; Kessler 1889, 206; Epiphanius of Salamis 1994, 232-33). In a Middle Persian Turfan fragment, there is an obvious reference to this fact, as well as to the first and the last chapters and to the book as a whole, as follows:

S1/v/4-6/: ⁽⁴⁾’wnglywn ‘y ‘rβ ncyhyd ⁽⁵⁾’wnglywn ‘y tww² ncyhyd
⁽⁶⁾’wnglywn ‘y wyst w̄ dw wdymwštyh ‘n. (Salemann 1904: 4-5, and Tafel; *MSt* 32; Henning 1945: 155 and n. 3; *Reader* 186, text dq: 2)

He teaches (the chapter) *Aleph* of the *Gospel*; he teaches (the chapter) *Tau* of the *Gospel*, the *Gospel* of the twenty-two wondrous things. (Klimkeit 1993, 152; 1998, 206)

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1. In the Chinese *Hymnscroll*, the text is numbered for each of the references (Durkin-Meisterernst and Morano 2010, 10; Morano 1982, 10ff.).
 2. The last letter of the Syriac alphabet and the last chapter of this book.

As far as we know, none of Mani's writings start with this kind of headline. Do we consider the *'wnglywn 'y 'rb ncyhyd* as the headline of the first chapter of the *Gospel* or only as the "opening sentence" for the priest to start reading the text? We see this title once more in another Turfan fragment, M 17, which has the headline *'wnglywnyg 'rb ncyhyd* "he teaches [the chapter] *Aleph* of the *Gospel*." As is well known, the fragment belongs to Mani's *Gospel*.¹

Here, I shall compare the above-mentioned passages of the fragment S1 with the other Manichaean sources. In the *Manichaean Homilies* 94:18-19, the first and last letters of the Coptic alphabet, corresponding to the original "from *aleph* to *tau*" (see also Tardieu 2008, 35) are used as follows: "... ΠΑΝΑΘ ΝΕΥ[ΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΧΝ Ν]Α ΩΑ Ω ..." (My *Great Ev[angel from] A to Ω*) (Pedersen 2006: 94.18-19).² This could mean either all parts of the *Gospel* or all revelations and secrets written in this book, or both.

The Coptic Manichaean *Synaxeis* papyri clearly show that Mani's *Gospel* had twenty-two *logoi* (chapters). Among the twenty-two page-headers of the *Synaxeis*,³ only two are completely legible, and therefore we know the theme of these chapters. What is of importance here is that, as Mirecki pointed out, "the *Synaxeis* author demonstrates numerological interest in the number of 22 chapters" (Mirecki 1994, 206). According to Funk's recent study and the edition of the new parts of the *Synaxeis* by him, *Synaxeis* emphasized that this *new Gospel* revealed "the interpretation of the twenty-two *logoi* of the primeval alphabet" (Funk 2009, 117, n. 6).

1. For the last reconstruction of the Middle Persian text of Mani's *Gospel*, see Shokri-Foumeshi (2015, 99ff.).

2. Pedersen's edition (2006, 94) in this case is definitely better than Polotsky's (1934, 94).

3. Published and commented by Mirecki (1994).

A reference to Mani's Gospel as a whole ("from *aleph* to *tau*"), furthermore, is recorded symbolically in the Coptic *PsB* 46.19-22 (i.e., *Bema-Psalm* 241: 46.19-22) too:

⁽¹⁹⁾ He has the antidote (ἀντίδοτος) that is good for every affection¹ (πάθος); ⁽²⁰⁾ There are two and twenty compounds (μίγματα) in his antidote (ἀντίδοτος): ⁽²¹⁾ His *Great Gospel*, the good tidings of all them that are ⁽²²⁾ of the Light. (*PsB II, I*, 241, pp. 112-14: 19-22[81-83], Allberry 1938, 46; see also Klimkeit 1996, 592)

As Mani introduced himself in a famous auto-testimonium (MP *bzyšk hym* (M 566/I/R/18/ in *MKG* 23, text 2) /Gr. ἱατρὸς τυγχάνω (CMC ed. Koenen/Merkelbach/Römer, p. 122 *apud* Tongerloo 2000, 617) "I am a physician"), he is here also depicted as "the Great Physician" (*PsB II, I*, 241, p. 112-113: 46.1-2[71]),² who has specific antidotes to diseases, as can be seen in the Turfan Manichaean texts (see *GSR* 201ff., 363ff.), as well as in the Coptic Manichaean ones relating to the various attestations about the healing miracle of Mani presented here.³

We have no need to explain that in this case also Mani has followed his most sacred forerunner Jesus.⁴ Mani, who heals with twenty-two "compounds" in his "antidotes," is praised therefore in the above-mentioned *Bema-Psalm*. These twenty-two "compounds" refer to the *Living Gospel*, each chapter of which is an antidote against (spiritual) sickness (Shokri-Foumeshi 2015, 50-52).

1. Sic. Probably "affliction"?

2. On the theme "Das Bild vom Arzt und den Kranken," Arnold-Döben (1978, 97-107) has already surveyed this.

3. In the context, see especially Ort (1967, 95-101); Klimkeit (1996, 589-95); Tongerloo (2000, 613-21); and Coyle (1999, 135-58).

4. For an attestation in the eastern Manichaean sources, see the *Chinese Hymnscroll* translated by Tsui Chi (1943, 179-80 [36a-51b], 182 [72b]).

Conclusion

In this study, we have seen that the *Apocalypse of John*, the only book of the New Testament divided into twenty-two chapters containing the statement (*Rev.* 1:13) “I am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and the last: and, what thou seest, write in a book,”¹ and the corresponding passage in the *Book of Henoch*, speaking of twenty-two letters that created “both the spiritual and the material worlds,” have played a role for Mani, as the expression of Jesus is reflected in a Manichaean document as the ‘lyf nxwyn ’wd t’ ‘stwmyn “the first *aleph* and the last *tau*.” It is very likely that this actually happened, in particular, because both works are apocalyptic (this is of importance to me, because the theme could be compared to the apocalypse of Zarathushtra, of Vištaspa, and of Kerdir in Iran) and strongly related to astronomy. We should also keep in mind that Bardaišān (Bardesanes), from whom Mani has immensely borrowed, was an astrologer² as well as a theologian (Ephrem, *Hymns* 51.13 *apud* Skjærvø 1988, 781; see also McGukin 2004, 44b). The influence of the sixth book of the Jewish *Memar Midrash*, which is in fact a *midrash* of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, was probably well known to Mani.

Some Manichaean documents show that the creation of divinities and the spiritual world in Manichaeism as a continuation of the old Jewish and Christian concept (which continued in Islam too) has been accomplished by “voice” and “word.” In fact, the idea of “cosmic potency of the letters and word” is obviously attested in the Turfan Manichaean texts concerning the Manichaean myth of the creation of the world. Here, we have tried to show that “the number 22,” related to Christ’s acts mentioned in the Greek *Mysteria Litterarum*, has also a parallel in a Manichaean text.

1. The book must have been known to Mani.

2. A special word of thanks to Durkin-Meisterernst, who has kindly drawn my attention to this point.

My studies on this subject also conclude that the origin of the division of Mani's *Gospel* into twenty-two *mēmre* should be searched for in Babylon itself. This type of division of the *Gospel*, wherever they may come from, was so attractive to the greatest enemy of Manichaeism, Augustine, that he wrote his *De Civitate Dei* (*The City of God*)¹ with twenty-two books to be (as said by Böhlig) “a consciously (introduced) counterpart”² of the Manichaean *Gospel* (Shokri-Foumeshi 2015, 79-80).

Abbreviations

<i>ABC</i>	Boyce 1952
<i>BBB</i>	Henning 1937
<i>DMMPP</i>	Durkin-Meisterernst 2004
<i>GSR</i>	Klimkeit 1993
<i>Mir. Man. i-iii</i>	Andreas-Henning 1932-1934
<i>MKG</i>	Sundermann 1981
<i>MSt</i>	Salemann 1904
<i>PsB</i>	<i>Psalm-Book</i> , Allberry 1938
<i>PsB II,1</i> ,	<i>Psalm Book; Bema-Psalm</i> , Wurst 1996
<i>Reader</i>	Boyce 1975

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1. For the whole text, see Augustine (1998).
 2. ‘Ein bewusstes Gegenstück’: Böhlig (1980, 45; for reference, see 312, n. 134).

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Mulla Sadra on Virtue and Action

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This paper sheds light on the views of Mulla Sadra about virtue and action. The main question is how he explains the relationship, if any, between virtue and action. Mulla Sadra defines moral virtue as a settled inner disposition by which one acts morally, without need for any reflection or deliberation. This study seeks to explain how, according to Mulla Sadra, a virtue motivates the agent and leads him to do the right action easily. Is virtue the reason for or cause of action? Is there a semantic link between action and virtue? Can we regard an action as right if it is not motivated by a virtue? Another question is about the role of action in the development of moral character. Is virtue acquired through the practice of corresponding actions? If we divide virtues into moral and intellectual, we should ask about the relationship between an epistemic action and intellectual virtues as well. In addition, since Mulla Sadra is a Muslim religious thinker, explaining the role of faith and religious rituals in forming moral character and also the relationship between faith and moral action is important. This paper will show that Mulla Sadra accepts the semantic, metaphysical, and psychological relationships between virtue and action.

Keywords: Mulla Sadra, moral virtue, action, intellectual virtue, semantic relationship, metaphysical relationship, psychological relationship.

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Introduction

The relationship between virtue and action can be understood in four ways: semantic, epistemological, metaphysical, and psychological. The semantic connection between moral (or intellectual) virtue and right action holds if one defines virtue in terms of right action or defines right action in terms of virtue. So, what is the right action? Is it an action that does not necessarily come from virtue, or is it one that is performed by the virtuous person regardless of the circumstances?

If we claim that virtue is defined according to right action, not only should action be used as part of the definition of virtue but also virtue becomes a type of action. And if we claim that right action is defined according to virtue, then action is not right or, at least, not valuable without virtue. As a result, right action becomes an action performed out of virtue.

There are versions of virtue ethics that insist on a semantic link between virtue and moral action. Virtue ethicists, who base the definition of moral action on the concept of virtuous person, virtuous motive, or virtue itself, often believe in this kind of link. For example, Hursthouse and Slote have indeed accepted this kind of link. Hursthouse defines right action as “what a virtuous agent would, characteristically, do in the circumstances” (Hursthouse 1999). Michael Slote explains right action according to virtuous motivation (Slote 2001) and believes that an action is right if (and because) it exhibits or expresses a virtuous motive, or at least does not exhibit or express a vicious motive (Van Zyle 2009). Zagzebski, as well, subscribes to this perspective when she states that “the moral exemplar is the basis of ethics” (Zagzebski 2010; 2012) and when she tries to define the other moral concepts including moral action. Since a moral exemplar is a virtuous person,¹ it is true that being virtuous is the basis of ethics. “All

1. Moral exemplar, in fact, is a moral saint (see Khazaei 2005, 144-66).

other basic moral concepts,” she says, “are defined by reference to exemplars—a virtue, a desirable life, a right act, and a good outcome” (Zagzebski 2012, 157). So, virtue, in her view, “is a trait we admire in an admirable person ... that makes the person paradigmatically good in a certain respect” (2010, 54; 2012, 159), and the right act “is what the admirable person would take to be most favored by the balance of reasons in circumstances” (2012, 159).

Virtue epistemologists accept this kind of connection between rational inquiries and intellectual virtues and define knowledge as a true belief that arises out of intellectual virtue (e.g., Zagzebski 1996). The epistemological relationship between virtue and right action is related to the role moral and intellectual virtues play in the recognition of *what one should do*. According to virtue ethics, a practically wise agent has such power.

Sometimes, we ask about the role of virtue in performing moral actions, while other times we ask about the role of action in forming virtue. Here, we discuss the former connection as psychological and the latter as metaphysical. The metaphysical connection between virtue and action asks whether moral action has a role in forming virtues, and generally in the realization of personal identity, or not. Regarding the psychological relationship, we ask whether virtues are able to motivate the agent to do a right action or not? If so, are moral virtues sufficient for motivating the agent, or are they necessary?

Philosophers who seek out reasons for action usually ask about the role of belief in motivating the agent, and whether it is a sufficient or necessary reason. While moral externalists say that “belief is only the necessary condition” and that to desire is sufficient (e.g., Aristotle, Brink, Shafer-Landau), moral internalists believe that “belief only is the sufficient condition for acting” (e.g., Socrates, Kant, Smith, and

Korsgaard). Here, we can raise a question about the role of virtue in performing the right act. However, answering this question somewhat depends on the nature of virtue.

This paper studies the viewpoint of Mulla Sadra in regard to the types of relationship between virtue and action. Mulla Sadra, the Iranian Muslim philosopher, is the founder of Transcendent Philosophy. His viewpoint in the fields of Metaphysics, Philosophy of Religion, Philosophy of Mind, Epistemology, and Ethics are extremely valuable. Arguably, however, his ideas on mind are more important. We can see the consequences of his views on the mind in the philosophy of religion, ethics, and epistemology.

According to Mulla Sadra, although philosophers believe that all human beings have the same nature and define the human being as a rational animal, everybody has an individual identity, which, through actualizing their practical and theoretical potentials, builds them gradually and makes them distinct from others (Mulla Sadra 1382 Sh, 128; 1981, 8:343, 9:85). Dispositions of the soul, knowledge, deeds, and intentions are the main factors that contribute to forming personal identity (Mulla Sadra 1981, vol. 9). Since the constitutive elements are different from one person to another, everyone will have their own special identity. Mulla Sadra calls this identity the second nature, in contrast to the first nature, which refers to tendencies with which we are born (Mulla Sadra 1382 Sh). According to his teleological approach, the mentioned elements help one to achieve felicity. Mulla Sadra explains these ideas on the basis of his philosophical principles like the metaphysical primacy of existence (*asalat- al-wujud*), the substantial motion (*al-harka al-jawhariyya*), as well as the unity of the intellect, intelligible, and intelligible (*ittihad al- 'aql wa-l- 'aqil wa-l-ma 'qul*).

Considering the relationship between virtue and action in Mulla Sadra's viewpoint, this paper focuses on three types of this relationship

and omits the epistemological one. At the end, it refers to the role of faith. It will conclude that Mulla Sadra accepts all the relationships, while maintaining that the conception of the right action can only depend on the conception of virtue, not vice versa.

1. The Semantic Relation

Mulla Sadra, like other Muslim philosophers, defines moral virtue as a settled disposition of the soul that helps its possessor do the proper action without deliberation and with ease (Mulla Sadra 1981; Naraqī 1373 AH; Kashani 1960; Miskawayh n.d.). This definition shows that virtue is neither a feeling or activity nor a faculty. Instead, a settled, inner state is what enables a person to think correctly, to feel properly, and to perform moral conduct easily (Mulla Sadra 1981, 4). Moral vice, as well, can be defined in this way, with the difference being that a virtuous person easily performs good acts and a vicious person easily does bad acts without deliberation. The difference between virtue and vice is the same as Aristotelians say; that is, virtue is the means and vice is either excess or deficiency. Mulla Sadra sometimes, using Qur'anic terminology, refers to virtue and vice as angel and satan (Mulla Sadra 1360 Sh, 351-54). Angel and satan, here, may refer to a good and bad character that lead the agent to perform right or wrong actions.

By this definition, neither Mulla Sadra nor other philosophers accept a semantic link between virtue and action and they do not consider the concept of virtue to be dependent on that of moral action. However, they assert that virtue is one of the defining elements of the moral act. Accordingly, moral action is what a virtuous person would do in any situation because of his dispositions. For example, a miserly person who gives charity—while his action is not morally wrong and he is not deserving of punishment—is deficient in ethical value and is not worthy of being praised. The most important factor for being ethical is having inner purity and a pure heart. This is what makes one's actions

praiseworthy. Given this premise, what makes an action moral? Clearly, it is not enough for it to solely be intentional and conscious; rather, it depends on the agent's good character or his pure inner-self.

In Mulla Sadra's view, good intention is another criteria for an action to be considered good. Therefore, a moral act is defined in terms of the motives and dispositions of the agent. As a result, every action should be evaluated on the grounds of the goodness of the agent's motives and his virtues.

According to Mulla Sadra (like other philosophers), intention, consciousness, and voluntariness are necessary conditions for right action. This is why a person is blameworthy or praiseworthy for his action. In other words, the agent is morally responsible for the action that has been performed freely, consciously, and intentionally. In addition, the desirability of an act—that is, its being right in itself—is also necessary. This kind of action is one which the good person is permitted to intend and perform. Accordingly, good motives do not belong to bad actions. As a result, the goodness of both the agent and the act are necessary for an action to be good.

Up to now, we have discussed the relationship between moral action and moral virtue, but such a relationship can also be discussed in regard to epistemic action and intellectual virtue. According to Mulla Sadra, an action is right epistemically if it arises out of intellectual virtues. In this way, knowledge would be obtained (Khazaei 2013).

2. The Metaphysical Relationship

The metaphysical relationship explains the role of action or other factors in forming good character. Discussion about this is possible if we believe that virtues are not natural but acquired. As Aristotle mentions, "virtues arise in us neither by nature nor contrary to nature; but by our nature we can receive them and perfect them by habituation" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103a).

From the viewpoint of Mulla Sadra, human beings naturally have the potential of being virtuous. These virtues are acquired through struggle and learning—moral virtues are obtained through struggle and epistemic virtues through learning. Consequently, Mulla Sadra refers to virtue as a habit of the soul which “necessarily [affects] the easy procession of an action therefrom, without need of any reflection or deliberation. (Mulla Sadra 1981, 4:114). It is worth noting that Mulla Sadra divides people into two groups. The first group consists of the few who inherently have (or do not have) moral and intellectual virtues, and the second group consists of the others who have the potential for moral and intellectual virtues. The latter group is able to acquire them by struggle and learning. However, the former group, which could include a prophet or an innately foolish man, has (or does not have) intellectual virtues naturally, and thus does not need or is not able to acquire them by learning (Mulla Sadra 1981, 9:87).

Many philosophers accept the idea of acquiring virtues, especially moral virtues. What distinguishes Mulla Sadra from others is his belief that human beings do not have a constant identity; rather, they gradually build it (Mulla Sadra 1382 Sh, 128; 1981, 8:343; Tusi 1373 Sh, 7:181). Through this gradual process, dispositions, which are among the constitutive factors of human identity, are acquired. Therefore, he is responsible not only for his actions and activities but also for his character. Indeed, everyone chooses his personal identity by way of acting and thinking. As such, the agent is responsible for the factors which contribute to the development of his identity (Khazaei 2013, 34).

According to Mulla Sadra, actions, intentions, dispositions and knowledge are the constitutive factors in the formation of human identity. Among these factors, knowledge is the main factor through which human identity will be determined (Mulla Sadra 1981, vol. 9).

However, knowledge is an after-product of action. In other words, action is the first step that shapes a person into a good or bad person. Action builds dispositions, and dispositions prepare the conditions for acquiring true knowledge. First, actions produce inner states, and then inner states gradually change into settled dispositions. In his work, Mulla Sadra maintains that we can acquire good and bad characters, which potentially exist in us, through exercising the related good or bad actions (Mulla Sadra 1360 Sh, 347). In fact, good actions make the heart pure and light, while bad actions make it dark (Mulla Sadra 1360 Sh, 347). Mulla Sadra calls these dispositions the inner face (esoteric) of man or his truth (Mulla Sadra 1366 Sh, 1:297). This truth will appear in the afterlife. Thus, moral virtues are acquired by performing the actions of a virtuous person. The performance value is used to evaluate the agent: the higher the value, the better the agent.

Just as performing moral acts leads to moral virtues, carrying out epistemic actions leads to wisdom. Thus, Mulla Sadra believes that exercising, in addition to learning, is necessary for having intellectual virtues. Carefulness, fairness, patience, and authenticity are some of the acquired intellectual virtues required for acquiring knowledge (Mulla Sadra 1981, 9:91).

Here, I would like to refer to the following supplemental notes:

1. Considering the effect of actions on the realization of virtues, every action is valuable insofar as it brings about a purification of the heart and so long as this effect remains. Because of this, the amount of reward and punishment of actions varies. Therefore, according to Mulla Sadra, actions are not worthy in themselves; rather, they are valuable in so far as they result in virtues and a pure and illuminated heart (Mulla Sadra 1366 Sh, 2:63; 1376 Sh). Mulla Sadra goes on to repeatedly mention that the right action is not itself the true goodness, but it is important

for the heart's purity (Mulla Sadra 1366 Sh, 1:319, 320; 1366 Sh, 2:191-92; 1977, 74).

2. In spite of Mulla Sadra's emphasis on the importance of the purity of heart, he does not consider this purity as the end. Because he believes that humanity depends on theoretical knowledge, and knowledge is the most important constitutive element of human identity, as well as the cause of true happiness or felicity; the worth of everything in comparison to knowledge is secondary. In this way, purity of heart is important, because it gives the person the ability to acquire true knowledge. The more truth one knows, the more pious one becomes, as a result of which, he becomes more felicitous. Accordingly, good action is a means and true knowledge is the final perfection (Mulla Sadra 1366 Sh, 1:319, 320). The objects of true knowledge are religious entities, such as God, prophets, angels, and resurrection. The stronger the existence of the object of knowledge, the more valuable the acquired knowledge and the greater the felicity of the knower.
3. Moral and intellectual actions are not the only factors, but rituals too have an important role in the purification of the heart and the realization of virtues and eradication of vices. In contrast, sins and evil actions result in vices and darkening of the heart. As moral virtues prepare the mind for acquiring knowledge, moral vices result in vices of the mind, like fallacy and fiction. And, in the end, one becomes ignorant of the truth (Mulla Sadra 1366 Sh, 1:386). Although rituals have an important role in moral and intellectual development, they are not the end and their value depends on their effect on the purification of the heart. For this reason, rituals and moral actions are the first step of perfecting practical reason. After that, the person, by refraining from vices, struggles to purify his heart. At the third step, he gains virtues,

but as long as his heart is not purified, it will not be illuminated. Only upon purification is his heart able to gain knowledge. Mulla Sadra mentions (e.g., 1981, 9:139; 1360 Sh, 854-56; 1376 Sh, 74) that the purpose of rituals and moral actions is the purification of the soul and the perfection of practical reason. He further says that this purity is not the final purpose; rather, the light of faith is the final purpose that will be brought about after achieving purity of the heart. This light of faith and the light of knowledge are the same in Sadra's view.

4. Intention is another factor that plays an important role in forming human identity. Action, alongside good intention, gradually changes the nature of the human being and makes him a good or bad person. Good intentions motivate the agent to perform good actions, and good actions make good character. Indeed, intention and character have a mutual, internal relationship. Thus, from one side, intention defines the level of one's moral identity, while, from the other side, moral character leads to good or bad intention.

Mulla Sadra considers good and bad intentions as the spirit of action. In this way, they not only play a role in the rightness of actions but also in forming moral and intellectual virtues; that is, virtues would be built by good action and good intention. The better the intentions, the worthier the actions. Then, peace of mind and heart will be achieved. Good motives, here, enable good actions to result in a purified heart. Mulla Sadra discusses the effect of bad motives on the soul. In his opinion, darkness, one that is the result of self-love and deception of others, does not allow one to be purified from vices. Bad motives result in a veil over the heart which prohibit one from achieving virtues or "brightness" (Mulla Sadra 1367 Sh, 172).

The relationship between intention and moral action can be understood in two ways: (1) good intention is necessary for an action being morally right, and (2) Good intention is not necessary for an action to be morally right, but it does make an action morally worthwhile and valuable. The first relationship may occur if the relationship between intention and action is a semantic or metaphysical one. If this is the case, then it is possible to (a) consider the intention as a constitutive element of the concept of right action, and (b) to believe that the existence of moral action depends on good intention. In both cases, if an action has been done without a good intention or moral spirit, not only is it not valuable but it is not right either. In such a case, the agent may deserve punishment. Accordingly, the existence of moral action is based on good intention; that is to say, there is no moral action without good intention.

If we say that this relationship (intention and right action) is not necessary, we consider good intention as a sufficient condition for an action to be valuable, not as a necessary part of its definition. In this case, even though an action without good intention is not morally valuable, it is nevertheless right.

When Mulla Sadra argues that the worth of an action depends on the level of the heart's purity, he accepts the latter relationship, in which good intention makes an action morally valuable. He believes that gaining proximity to God is the best motive. This does not mean that an action lacking in this kind of motivation is wrong or not valuable, such as performing an act motivated by empathy. He even acknowledges that performing actions with the pure intention of getting closer to God is very difficult and only a few people can achieve such intentions.

5. Faith is the last factor by which a person strengthens the effect of good action on the purification of the heart. Even the lowest level of faith can result in an amount of illumination of the heart. While gaining proximity to God is the main condition for characterizing an action as good, it is also the element that makes an action valuable. In general, faith has an important role in forming identity. Therefore, in Islamic ethics, although achieving virtues is not possible without practice, faith in God plays an important role in shaping moral character. In fact, faith in God promotes one's eagerness to perform good deeds which result in good character.
6. Although building virtues requires practice, Mulla Sadra believes that all virtues, be they moral, intellectual or religious, are due to God's grace. According to Mulla Sadra's interpretation, the word "wisdom," as it appears in Surah al-Baqarah¹ and also in Surah al-Jumu'a,² consists of knowledge as well as moral and intellectual virtues (Mulla Sadra 1367 Sh). He believes that God graces us with all of them, but gaining such divine grace requires struggle. Thus, while God does not force us to do good acts, He does love that we act morally and He does help us in this regard.

3. Psychological Relationship

The main question here is whether virtues lead to action? In other words, do they have a motivational role in the performance of an action? Do they cause action?

Most contemporary philosophers have drawn distinctions between normative, motivating, and explanatory reasons. Normative reasons

1. "He grants wisdom to whom He pleases" (Qur'an 2:269).

2. "It is He who sent to the unlettered [people] an apostle from among themselves, to recite to them His signs, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and wisdom, and earlier they had indeed been in manifest error." (Qur'an 62:2).

justify or favor an action, while motivating reasons are the reasons that *the agent* takes on in order to favor or justify her action and to guide her in acting (Alvarez 2016). Different still are explanatory reasons, which are the reasons that explain an action. Here, I focus on motivating and explanatory reasons as psychological.

Some Western philosophers, like Zagzebski, believe that virtues, moral or intellectual, essentially have a motivational element (1961). Muslim philosophers, including Mulla Sadra, when defining virtue as a disposition that leads the agent to do right action easily, in fact, have argued for this kind of relationship. Although virtue is not a feeling, the emotional element of moral virtue is what motivates the agent. If belief and desire are two reasons for doing an action, moral virtues could be the source of the said belief and desire. Because of this relationship, Mulla Sadra says that dispositions are incentives of the soul for doing good and bad acts. In Mulla Sadra's work, will, anger, and lust have been called motivational faculties. Nevertheless, he does not accept a causal relation between virtue and action (Mulla Sadra 1366 Sh, 1:546). Despite his belief that our actions indicate our inner states—that is, our dispositions and motives—Mulla Sadra denies that virtues are necessary *and* sufficient conditions for action. He argues that they are necessary but not sufficient. Human will is what leads Mulla Sadra to adopt this idea. Free will lets a person do or not do an action. Knowledge, desire, and intention are three stages through which the person performing an action moves. Every stage produces the next stage and motivates the agent to do the action (Mulla Sadra 1360 Sh, 351-54). Significantly, Mulla Sadra believes that no stage requires the next stage necessarily, and that next stages do not necessarily follow previous ones. Finally, the person would perform what he has chosen by his own will. In Mulla Sadra's view, even after making a decision, the agent may defeat his intention and not do what he should do.

According to Mulla Sadra, only those who have true knowledge can *necessarily* do the right action (Mulla Sadra 1360 Sh, 309-10). He explains that only those who have strong will are able to perform an action as soon as they imagine or conceive of it. It is here that the necessity of the connection between belief and action appears. It seems what makes a person do the right action necessarily is either the strength and weakness of will (or soul) or the possession of moral and intellectual virtues (Mulla Sadra 1981, 9:87). Indeed, the harmony between the reason and emotion of a truly virtuous agent is the cause that necessitates action. This causal relationship also applies to persons who have weak will and lack moral and intellectual virtues; moral and intellectual vices guide vicious people to do bad actions quickly and with ease.

In general, Mulla Sadra cites several causes that make the agent fail to do what he should do:

1. Long-term desires not only prevent a person from thinking of God but also create obstacles that hinder good action.
2. Irrational pleasures, which darken the heart, prevent the agent from deliberating, and stop him from doing the right action (Mulla Sadra 1366 Sh, 1:337-38).
3. Ignorance, sins, and vices of the mind are among the causes of bad dispositions, which in turn result in immoral actions. Mulla Sadra sometimes refers to ignorance as the root of unhappiness, particularly the kind of ignorance that has been ingrained. Mulla Sadra believes that ignorance and infelicity are from Satan, but felicity and knowledge (particularly knowledge that comes with proof) are from an angel (Mulla Sadra 1366 Sh, 1:386). He argues that ignorance and weakness of will are among the causes of fear and immoral behavior (Mulla Sadra 1991, 9:92).
4. Laziness (or laches), as a psychological factor rather than an immoral one, is one of the obstacles that hinder good actions.

Maybe this factor, more than others, is proper for justifying the virtuous person's wrong actions, because a virtuous person does not perform wrong easily. This relates closely to Aristotle's argument. If a person knows which action is the right action and does not have any desire for doing the wrong one and is not forced to perform it, then, if he performed a bad action, it would be for psychological factors, such as laziness, depression, obsession, and desires, as Mele and Davidson have referred to (Mele 2009; Davidson 1980, 21-42).

5. Self-deception is another cause of action, one that the agent imagines to be good but in reality is bad. This kind of deception sometimes occurs in regard to our intentions, such that good intentions seem bad and bad intentions seem good (Mulla Sadra 1360 Sh, 358-59). Self-deception produces ignorance, which in turn results in bad action. Only someone who has gained practical and theoretical perfection can understand this kind of deception.

All of the aforementioned factors would produce a kind of irrationality, one that leads a person to do wrong action, because he practically and epistemically is not *able* to do right action.

4. Faith and Its Connection to Action

Since Mulla Sadra is a Muslim philosopher, we ask about how the role of faith in God may affect this connection: Are they connected to each other semantically? Is faith the necessary condition for the rightness or value of action? Can it motivate the agent to act? Does faith necessarily result in action?

Mulla Sadra defines faith in God as knowledge; it is not itself a kind of action. Nevertheless, he accepts two kinds of relationships between action and faith: On the one hand, he says that faith is the product of good action. Good action, whether moral, epistemic, or

ritual, purifies one's heart, which in turn prepares the person to receive faith from God. Because of this purification process, he believes that when an action is done with good intentions, it will produce faith. Nevertheless, faith is a gift given from God to some of his servants (Mulla Sadra 1366 Sh, 1:310). On the other hand, he argues for the psychological relationship between virtue and action, while still stressing the *motivational* role of faith. Faith motivates the person to do the action. Strong faith will increase the possibility of performing good action. In Sadra's viewpoint, only the faith of a true believer necessitates action. That is, the persons with true knowledge have such a capability. For other people, the commitment to do the right action depends on their faith; with stronger faith, there is a greater possibility of moral commitment.

Mulla Sadra believes that faith has different degrees. The lowest degree is to believe in God and His prophets. After that, at the next degree up, a person will get a heart-felt belief, but his heart is not yet exposed to the light of knowledge. When he reaches the third degree, he will have achieved the insight and vision for religious truths. At the last stage, there is nothing that can be present to him except God, who is the beginning and the end of everything (Mulla Sadra 1363 Sh, 255, 257). Given the degrees of faith, it can be guessed that when faith leads to action, what kind of action is appropriate for each stage, and to what extent the relationship of faith and action can be necessary.

Conclusion

In this article, we discussed the semantic, metaphysical, and psychological relationship between action and virtue in Mulla Sadra's thought. Explaining these relationships, from one side, depends on the definition of virtue and right action, and, from the other side, depends on the factors that contribute to the realization of either action or virtue. In the semantic relationship, we sought to answer whether or not virtue and action are defined in terms of each other. In the metaphysical

relationship, we determined how much moral and epistemic action existentially depends on moral and epistemic virtue.

As we mentioned above, Mulla Sadra accepts the semantic relationship in a unilateral manner; that is, he defines right action on the basis of virtue but not vice versa. He, like Aristotelians and other Muslim philosophers, defines virtue as a disposition of the soul that makes the possessor of it act easily and without deliberation. Therefore, conceptually, right action is defined according to virtue, whether we define it, as Hursthouse does, as “what a virtuous agent would, characteristically do in the circumstances” (Hursthouse 1999) or as Zagzebski says, as something based on moral exemplar. Mulla Sadra believes that right action is what is performed by a good person with good motives. In addition to free will and consciousness, a moral agent should have moral virtues, and an epistemic agent should have epistemic virtues in order to perform moral and epistemic action properly. Indeed, virtuous action makes the agent praiseworthy.

Saying that virtues are not natural implies that they are acquired. Mulla Sadra accepts the metaphysical relationship between virtue and action and believes that not only moral acts, but also rituals, are involved in the creation of virtue. Of course, divine grace, as well, plays an important role in creating virtue.

Relying on a psychological connection, we tried to answer whether virtues motivate the agent to act. If the belief and desire are the reasons for an action, can virtue be considered one of the reasons too? Is virtue a necessary and sufficient condition for doing the right action, or it is only a motivational reason? Mulla Sadra accepts the psychological relationship between virtue and action, where virtue is the reason for right action, as belief and desire are the reasons for action. However, belief and desire are different from virtue in that belief and desire are

stages of performing action, while virtue is not. Instead, virtue is a *condition* for doing the right or admirable action. In fact, virtue enables the agent to recognize the right action and to control his feelings and behaviors. Because of this, we consider virtue to be the basis of moral judgment, good feelings, and proper actions. Virtues are the reasons for action, not the causes. Consequently, virtue is not a sufficient condition for doing the act, but it is necessary to act properly. Virtue is a sufficient condition for only a few people, such as prophets.

According to Mulla Sadra, since moral action builds one's self-esteem for moral virtue, it makes one's self-perfection for the fulfillment of epistemic virtue and knowledge. Therefore, moral virtues cultivate and purify the soul, and, in the final stage, help the agent to obtain true knowledge. Thus, virtue, with its moral and epistemic types, right actions, motives, and knowledge are considered the constructive elements of personal identity. In other words, all of the moral and intellectual factors contribute to forming personal identity. As a result, the stronger these factors are, the more pious the agent will be. In this regard, belief in God is very important. It not only purifies the heart but also motivates the agent to do the right action easily.

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Covenant, Promise, and the Gift of Time

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If we categorize religions according to whether they give greater prominence to time or to space, the role of “promise” marks a religion of covenant as clearly a religion of time. Yet the future is unknowable and can only be present to us as a field of possibilities. How far do these possibilities extend? The question directs us back to the nature of time, a question that became concealed in the course of Western philosophical development or that was answered in terms of time's nullity. Modern philosophy (Levinas) has, however, pointed to the inseparability of time, language, and responsibility, thereby giving to time a positive content in terms of the ethical responsibility that, before God, we have for one another.

Keywords: time, covenant, promise, eschatology, possibility, immortality, the other, language, responsibility.

Space, Time, and Covenant

For much of the twentieth century, a widely influential typology of world religions made a broad division between mythical and historical religions. The former were religions that had never known or that turned

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away from what Mircea Eliade, a leading proponent of this view, called “the terror of history” (Eliade 1954, 139-62). Their primary characteristic was a cultic life centred on the annual liturgical return to the primordial time in which the gods made the earth and established human tribes and customs. Everything subsequent to that time was perceived in terms of decay and degeneration, a falling away from original purity and vigour. The latter, essentially Judaism and Christianity, accepted the linear movement of time and the ultimate impossibility of any kind of return—although, as Eliade pointed out, elements of myth continue to inform Jewish and Christian liturgical practice. Essentially, however, Judaism and Christianity look to history as the primary medium in which God is revealed to human beings and in which human beings are to work out the meaning of their God-relationship. Here, it is not the past, the time of origins, that receives primary emphasis but the future, the time in which God’s Kingdom will come, whether through human works or divine intervention.

This typology closely correlates with another, favoured by Paul Tillich amongst others, that categorizes religions according as to whether their primary forms of thought are focused on space or time. Those that privilege space are likely to insist on ethnic purity and on the ontological link between people and sacred ancestral land. This was an especially urgent question for Tillich in the context of the Third Reich and its ideology of “blood and earth.” In this context, Tillich could, in the case of Judaism, distinguish between what he saw as the authentically biblical prophetic call to historically enacted justice and the alien “pagan” emphasis on the promise of land, a particular land, in which alone the Kingdom of justice can be fully realized (Tillich 1959, 31-9).

These differences given can be extended to a further difference—namely, that between religions that find expression in visual representation and those that believe the Word to be the only adequate

expression of divine will. Inevitably, however, the distinction has to be once more qualified in the light of the fact that alongside the stricter monotheistic ban on images in Judaism, Islam, and some versions of Protestant Christianity, a visualization of the biblical inheritance has repeatedly taken place in Catholic, Orthodox, and some Protestant traditions). In these terms, it is no accident that the religions of the land were perceived by the biblical authors as essentially cultic and idolatrous, a critique that would later be extended to the mythical religions of the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

Such typologies have declined in popularity over the last thirty years, not least because, as we have seen, the complex lived reality of religious life makes it hard to find examples of the “pure” forms to which such phenomenologies give normative status. Nevertheless, they can still serve to focus significant questions. Not least, they can help sharpen the question as to what the most appropriate form of imagining and symbolizing the truth of a religion is, in which a historical covenant is a defining feature and therefore also the ideas of promise and futurity implied by the idea of covenant. Perhaps, the most concise statement of this future orientation of the promise is found in the revelation to Moses at the Burning Bush and God’s self-naming as “I will be who I will be” (Exodus 3.14). The promise that lies at the basis of the covenant with Israel is a promise reaching out into time that is not yet.

Eschatology

The statement that “promise” and futurity are an integral to the idea of covenant may not be self-evident. Sometimes it seems that the historical foundations of covenantal communities function like the time of sacred origins in Eliade’s account of mythical religions. Liturgical celebrations of Passover or the Christian Eucharist seem to involve just such an eternal return to origins on the parts of Judaism and Christianity respectively. Yet, without wanting to enter into too much detail, it is

also clear that in both cases the past is valued and even, as it were, re-lived, because of its relation to what must be done now, in the present, in our orientation towards the future, whether that is next year in Jerusalem or, for the weekly Christian communicant, the tasks that await him or her in the week ahead.

But if time in the mode of futurity really does enter into the defining structure of covenantal thought, then it seems that this generates a peculiar set of problems for imagination and symbolization. Hegel's dictum that the Owl of Minerva first flies at dusk and that a period of world-history can only be understood from the point of view of its conclusion would seem to apply also to visual representation (Hegel 1991 [1821], 23). We can only depict what has been and, even then, only to the extent that it has a residual continuance in the present, in what "is." We cannot depict what has not yet come to pass, or, if we do, we can do so only with images drawn from our experience of what has been and what is. Even when the apocalyptic fantasies of a Hieronymus Bosch revel in producing images of creatures never seen on earth, they are, nevertheless, only recombinations of elements actually experienced and known in worldly life.

In this regard, Bosch's paintings reveal a widespread tendency to think eschatology in the mirror of protology and to see the promised future as the return of a golden age of the past, whether in pagan or biblical forms. Other artistic examples of this tendency are the

Northern Renaissance theme of the "land of cockaigne" or the luminous pastoral sunsets of Claude Lorraine that so fascinated Dostoevsky.

Kierkegaard's widely quoted saying that life is lived forwards but understood backwards sums up what he saw as a fundamental epistemological challenge to German Idealism, which, in his view, was unable to account for the future-oriented freedom of the living human

subject. This saying, in its own way, echoes Hegel's comment on the Owl of Minerva. However, Kierkegaard sees this situation of having-been—what Jankélévitch would call *passeité*” (Jankélévitch 1974, 60)—as defining the essential limitation of idealist thought. Why? Because in order to see the human subject as an object of “knowledge,” it is necessary to imagine this subject as having reached a state of completion. Only so can we know “what” it is. Thus, the orientation of traditional philosophy towards the quiddity, the essence, the “what” (*to ti estin*) that defines the identity of the subject under consideration in such a way that its temporality is consigned to its mere contingency. Thus, for Kierkegaard, when philosophy describes the human being as having an immortal soul, this is to see the human being in the mirror of the past—that is, in terms of an endowment contemporary with its coming into existence and that continues as a defining element of its way of being across all temporal permutations. But, as he saw it, the question of immortality cannot be solved by such a naturalizing movement, because immortality is an essentially existential question: Will *I* be immortal? What will my immortality mean to me? How can I live my life so as to attain a truly blessed immortality? (Kierkegaard 1991 [1846], 173)

Crucial here for Kierkegaard was that the existential question of immortality cannot be answered by simply identifying “immortality” as an essential attribute of human beings, because immortality itself is meaningless apart from consideration of the kind of immortality to be enjoyed—whether, it will be the blessedness promised to the saints or ...? The mere extension of life into an after-life says nothing as to the meaning of that life, and neither preachers nor artists should waste their efforts on depicting such an after-life: the point is solely and exclusively the demand to do justly, love mercy, and perform the works of love that the Bible commands as the sole basis of blessedness—in time and in eternity.

Future and Possibility

Philosophically, Kierkegaard conceded (as he had to) that we cannot *know* whether such a future life awaits us. What is important, however, is that it can become an issue for us and, as such, an issue that has implications for the whole way in which we understand ourselves and our life in the world. A creature that is “like the beasts that perish” and a creature made for an eternal heavenly life are two very different kinds of creatures. The insolubility of the question thus throws a veil of ignorance over our basic possibilities of self-knowledge. How can we know whether we are angels or monsters? At best, we see “in a glass darkly,” but we are not yet what we shall be, and the truth of our being will only ever become manifest “in the end.”

Heidegger would criticize Kierkegaard for thinking time in relation to a pre-modern idea of eternity (Heidegger 1963, 497), but it is clear that, for Kierkegaard, it is precisely the question of eternity that confronts us with the need to take seriously the thorough-going temporality of human life on earth. But this also means that there will be a necessary limitation on our capacities for self-representation—that is, for conceptualizing, portraying, or even dramatizing the reality of human being. Our essential possibilities have a quality of “not-yet” that eludes all representation. There is a moment in the film *Russian Ark* that illustrates this well. In it, the Marquis de Coustine comes across two boys looking at an El Greco portrait of the apostles Peter and Paul. He asks them whether they read the gospels, and when they admit that they do not, he asks how they can possibly understand the human possibilities revealed in El Greco’s painting. I am perhaps over-interpreting at this point, but I take it that the point (at least, my point) is that what the gospels reveal is precisely how the human being is essentially future and therefore also essentially unknown and still-to-be-discovered.

Ancient pagan thought also understood that there might be limits to human knowledge. Plotinus knew that in relation to the One, everything we might say could only ever be a matter of “so to speak,” whilst Plato’s daring thought that the good was “beyond being” suggests also that it is beyond anything we might call knowledge, or, if it is knowable, it is knowable in a way that is distinct from all other ways of knowing. But what Kierkegaard and the modern focus on the intrinsic temporality of human life opens up is, I suggest, something rather different from such epistemological and ontological limits on human self-knowledge. The difference is, very imprecisely, that for the Platonic tradition the limit has a kind of objectivity that is independent of human subjectivity. We can go so far towards the sun, but will always fall short. It will always be above or beyond our reach. For the existential tradition, however, the limit is internal to our own being, and it is in our self-relation that it comes most urgently into view, as in Kierkegaard’s concern for an eternal happiness that could not be assuaged by assurances about the immortality of the soul. Eternity is not external to the human being, but the human being is a synthesis of time and eternity in such a way that the difference goes right to the heart of human identity itself.

Let me recap. If human life is inherently and essentially temporal, even (I would say) eschatological, then there is an inherent and essential limit to our capacity for self-representation. But are there, might there be, other ways of thinking time than those that have been dominant in the Western philosophical tradition and that could allow for such representation? This is not just a question calling for some new avant-garde initiative that would, as it were, bring time into view for the first time (something at least some twentieth-century avant-gardists hoped to do), but it is or may also be a question inviting a new orientation in hermeneutics that would facilitate the retrieval of the testimony to temporal life that is certainly to be found in great works of philosophy,

art, and literature of the past. Where are we to look that we might see time, our time, the time of our lives?

The Concealment of Time

One response to this question is to take the negative path of learning to see how dominant modes of representation have served to conceal the lived reality of time. This would be a case of what Heidegger called a destruction of the history of philosophy (Heidegger 1963, 43-4). This destruction reveals how even in what philosophy has genuinely revealed about human life in time there is also always an accompanying distortion or concealment. In many respects, the study of Heidegger's own thought can serve as an eminent training in such thinking. However, it is also arguable that even Heidegger perpetuates some of the most persistent assumptions about time that limit our insight into its true potential meaning, a point to which I shall return.

Examples of how time became concealed even in thinking about time can be seen in the cases of Aristotle, Plotinus, and Augustine. For Aristotle, the question of time is a question as to how time can be measured. But, he argues, time can best be measured by tracking the distance covered in the movements of the heavenly bodies. "A day" is a unit of time, but, in the Aristotelian perspective, a day is the time taken for the sun to make a single circuit of its path through space. Thus, space becomes the measure of time, and time itself eludes observation. Indeed, the decision to set the question up in terms of cosmology already distances it from the lived human experience of time (Aristotle 1930, 217.b.29-224.a.16).

For Plotinus, against Aristotle, the problem is precisely that time cannot be measured and that temporality is a kind of rebellion against the eternal order of timeless mathematical relationships that are the standard of both being and knowledge. Time is therefore inherently marked by a tendency towards non-being and escapes knowability

(Plotinus 1930, 222-38). Plotinus' argument is reformulated in more psychological terms and with a marked theological and soteriological interest in Augustine's meditation on time in Book 11 of the *Confessions*. Augustine is searching for traces of God in time and memory, which leads him to ponder whether time is indeed capable of revealing the presence of the divine being. But what is time? As Augustine quickly discovers, the past no longer is, the future is not yet. This is not just an epistemological problem, since, for Augustine as for Plotinus and for the Platonic tradition generally, being and knowledge are two aspects of a single reality. Thus, the unknowability of time reveals its ontological nullity. In psychological terms, to live in time is to be exposed to the constant possibility of annihilation. Our need, therefore, is not to "know" time but to be saved from time, and, Augustine believes, we can be saved from time, because God is in himself timelessly eternal.¹

Heidegger himself acknowledges that various religious sources, including Augustine and Kierkegaard, were philosophically necessary in preparing for the phenomenology of time that he undertakes in *Being and Time*. However, as previously indicated in connection with Kierkegaard, Heidegger does not believe that evaluating time by reference to eternity is either desirable or possible. The kind of being that we are is a being that exists in time as thrownness towards death. Our only recourse is not to appeal to a timeless God, but, as Heidegger puts it, to "run towards" the nothingness of time as that is revealed in death. But it seems legitimate to ask whether, despite removing eternity from the analysis of time, Heidegger has really thought time in a manner that is true to its own proper temporality. Is nothingness the best that we can say about time? (See Pattison 2013)

1. Augustine's *Confessions* are available in innumerable editions. These comments refer to Book 11, uniform across all editions.

One Kierkegaardian term that Heidegger took over was that of “the moment of vision.” In Kierkegaard, this is expressly related both to the New Testament idea of the *kairos*, the fulfilment of time in the coming of the Messiah, and the eschatological “moment,” the “atom of time” in which we shall, as Paul puts it, be “changed,” putting on immortality. Heidegger rejects the religious aspects of this concept (i.e., the appeal to eternity), but he believes that we can nevertheless speak of a privileged moment that is able to give meaning to temporal life—namely, the moment in which we resolve to run towards death. This is a moment of truth, the revelation of pure temporality, but, as I have suggested, it is thus far solely the revelation of what is in itself null.

The Other

There is something missing in Heidegger’s account, and this, I believe, is connected with what many have seen as another missing or, at least, deficient element in *Being and Time*—namely, the role of the other. Heidegger certainly acknowledges *Mit-sein*, being-with, as a basic element of human being-in-the-world and some of his commentators have taken his few remarks on this as nevertheless sufficient for the development of a robust account of ethical relationships. I am more sceptical and do not see anything in Heidegger’s account that really requires us to look to ethical responsibility for and to the other as a defining element in human life.

It is this deficiency that Levinas, for one, seeks to make good when he speaks of “time and the other,” asserting that “time is not the fact of an isolated subject on its own” (which he sees as being the case with Heidegger’s account of thrownness towards an always singular death as the measure of time) “but the relation of the subject to others” (Levinas 1983, 19). When we realize the relation to the other, death, of course, remains as the end of our individual lives on earth, but we are not (he says) obligated to see death as simply “annihilation”—a mystery, indeed, but not of itself an annihilation (Levinas 1983, 20).

Levinas does not spell this out at this point, but we might say, for example, that though I must die as a centre of subjective self-consciousness, I will in some sense remain for some time in the memories of those with whom my life has been shared. So death is not simple, unqualified annihilation.

At the same time as criticizing the lack of a significant other in Heideggerian ontology, Levinas also rejects Martin Buber's location of the relation to the other in the immediacy of the face-to-face I-Thou encounter. For Levinas, there must always be a third; being-with-one-another can never be just a matter of "two," since there will always have to be a third term through which the two are related, as when two people are united in a shared undertaking, the work in relation to which their relationship takes on its specific and actual form, or when two lovers attest their love to the wider community in what we call marriage. Theologically, we might think of this in terms of being called by divine command to be responsible for the other, to be our brothers' keepers, an interpretation Levinas would not reject. On the contrary, he regards the unqualifiedly "other" "height" from which God commands us as integral to ensuring that we recognize the other in terms of their need and not just as an occasion for us to extend our subjectivity. The other is really other, not me, and my obligation to the other is not a quality of my subjectivity but something in which I am rather an object, "accused," as Levinas put it, "me" rather than "I," or a "Vous" rather than a "Tu" (Levinas 1972, 73). In this connection, we might note that Levinas was deeply stirred by and often cited the teaching of the Elder Zosima's brother Markel from *The Brothers Karamazov*: "That we are all guilt of everything before everyone, and I most of all" (Toumayan 2004). But this guilt of moral responsibility is something very different from the ontological guilt described by Heidegger and that he saw as consisting in our "owing" our lives to a source from beyond ourselves.

But how does this relate to the question of time? The remembrance of the dead that I briefly referred to earlier provides one hint. Our experience of time is in reality inseparable from how we experience our lives with others. Psychologically, it is arguable that a child's basic experience of time has to do with its experience of the absence and return of the mother, as deduced by Freud from the phenomenon that became known as "Fort-da" ("Away-there") from a child whose play consisted in throwing objects away and then retrieving them, yielding a symbolic control over the otherwise feared disappearance and unpreconceivable return of the mother. And, as Levinas pointed out, it is also intrinsic to our experience of language. While you speak, I must wait until you have finished in order to understand and respond to what you say. While you are speaking, I am, in a certain sense and at a certain level, rendered passive, waiting, not coinciding with my-self but extended beyond myself in waiting on your words, your meaning, and your claim on me.

Time, Language, and Responsibility

Levinas learned much from Franz Rosenzweig, and for Rosenzweig it was characteristic of the "new thinking" that he sought to promote that it understood the intertwining of time and language (Rosenzweig 1984, 148-51). Analytic philosophy seeks to understand propositions in ways that render their content timeless—if it is true that Napoleon lost the Battle of Waterloo, then it will always and in all possible circumstances be true that Napoleon lost the battle of Waterloo, and logic will, at best, approximate the timeless world of mathematics, but, for Rosenzweig, there is no language that is not grounded in the relational structures of call and response, what he called the vocativity of language and for which, he argued, the revelation of the divine name at the burning bush was a prime example (Rosenzweig 1937, 195). We might for comparison think of Bakhtin's category of "answerability," as developed in his early writing, where he too insists on the irreducibility

of the “I”s involved in any speech-act. Levinas would call this, or something like it, *le Dire*, the saying, as opposed to *le Dit*, “what” is said, the quiddity. And this lived time of language is, precisely, the time in which I am engaged by what Levinas spoke of as “the face” of the other.

And here we return to the themes of covenant and promise, for covenant is precisely a way of ordering time on the basis of responsibility for and towards the other. Equally, it is precisely a way of ordering our responsibility to the other in terms of time. And, because the covenant must take some symbolic form, it is also, precisely, a way in which our relation to both time and the other is woven together in the form of, normally, language. I am who I am because of what I have promised you and what you have promised me, and “what” we have promised is itself disclosed in the promise we have made. The word of promise reveals me to you and you to me, as we are, in time, coming together from separate pasts into a shared future, shared at least as far as the reach of the promise. In such an event “the moment” is no longer just the moment in which I realize that I am just a thrown nullity, but, as for Kierkegaard and the biblical sources on which he drew, a real “fullness” of time.

But, as I suggested earlier, if time is taken to be a defining feature of human existence, then this creates problems for the representation of human reality. Although the promise binds us together in time as we go towards a common future, this future itself is, for now, unknown. One or other of us may break the promise, or circumstances beyond our control may make it impossible to keep. The meaning upon which I staked everything may unravel in time. To commit myself in a promise cannot therefore be a means of evading the intrinsic unknowability of the self.

Yet, in time—as long as I am in time—I now know myself in the measure of my responsibility to and for you. I may have no control over the outcome of this responsibility, but the responsibility itself is real. Levinas, as I have mentioned, spoke of the face of the other appealing for my help, although he by no means understood this literally. The face, in his sense, is only a “trace” of the claim that is laid on me by my being born into a community predicated on responsibility, a covenantal community. Yet the category of “face” does give us, perhaps, a hint as to how we might proceed to think about the kind of representation appropriate to representing a being whose life is hidden in the mystery of time. C. S. Lewis entitled one of his books (which had nothing to do with Levinas) *Until We Have Faces*, and this, I think, offers a suggestive programme for understanding both our inherited and contemporary representations of human being (Lewis 1956). Our philosophies, pictures, plays, songs, and poems, are, at their best sketches (again: “as in a glass, darkly”) not of how human beings are or have been but of what we might yet be, the redeemable possibility that calls from beyond all distortions and failures of historical time.

I find a powerful literary statement of these issues in Dostoevsky’s allusion to the legend of the Virgin’s visit to hell and her encounter with those whom even God has forgotten. The notion that there might be a depth of hell so deep that those confined there have been forgotten even by the eternal memory of God is one of extraordinary terror. As Dostoevsky (via Ivan Karamazov) tells the story, the Virgin is so moved by their plight that she recalls their fate to God, who grants an annual reprieve from their sufferings from Good Friday to Trinity Sunday. Of course, as narrated, it is a tale told as if it were the chronicle of an event long past, what the Virgin did “once upon a time.” But, as a narrative set in eschatological time, the eternal time of heaven and hell, it is properly understood (I think) as a parable of our responsibility in time to work and to pray that all who labour in and under time may not be

forgotten, indeed, that they may be remembered, and remembered according to the appeal of the face that they, beyond all knowing, turn to God and to us, crying “Let me be!” (see Pattison 2015, 163-72).

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***Tawatur*: Forgotten Historical Evidence in the Studies of Wansbrough and His Followers**

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For Muslims, the *tawatur* of the Quran—the fact that it has been massively and consecutively transmitted from generation to generation since the time of the Prophet—is among the most important proofs which shows that the Qur'an we have today is the same scripture that was revealed to the Prophet. However, this proof has been neglected in the studies of Western scholars on the topic of the history of the Quran. Moreover, some Western scholars, such as John Wansbrough and Gerald Hawting, claim that since the Quran does not give any information about its formation and because there are no sources with information about the Quran that date back to the first two centuries of Islam, the Quran should be considered the product of the discussions and debates between Muslims and followers of other religions, with its text finalized in the early third century AH. However, contrary to Wansbrough and other like-minded scholars, who hold that the first two centuries of Islamic history are obscure and vague, a quick look at the history of Islam shows that in the first decades of Islam, Muslims had gone to different parts of the World, including some parts of Europe, and the Christians and Jews were watching the developments of this new religion. Hence, it is not possible that an important event, such as

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the formation of the Quran, could occur in the second or third century AH without any of the non-Muslim historians noticing it. In addition, many Western academics who have studied Islam and the Quran in recent centuries have trusted Muslim accounts on the matter.

Keywords: *Tawatur* of the Quran, Orientalists, Quranic studies, history of the Quran, John Wansbrough.

Introduction

Western scholars of Quranic studies such as Wansbrough and some of his students maintain that the events in the early centuries of Islam, including the history of the compilation of the Quran, can rarely be discovered via Muslim written sources. They believe that these sources do not really show what really happened in that era; rather, they merely reveal what their writers thought and believed about that time. Therefore, we probably can never find out what really happened at that time (Rippin 1985, 151-63). With this assumption, they consider the Quran to be a product of an extended period of time and not exactly the same scripture that was revealed to the Prophet.

However, the conclusion that the Quran was compiled in the second or third century AH is only a hypothetical theory that requires adequate evidence in order for it to be established. In addition, the *tawatur* of the Quran is strong evidence against this theory, which has been neglected by these scholars. When a historical proposition is accepted by a great number of people over a number of generations, the proposition is *mutawatir* (reported with *tawatur*), and certainly true. Thus, the proposition that the Quran as we have it today is the scripture that was revealed to Prophet Muhammad is a *mutawatir* proposition, because all Muslims and even some non-Muslims have believed it to be true throughout history and around the world. This important evidence, which refutes the viewpoint of Wansbrough and his supporters including Gerald R. Hawting, Patricia Crone, and Michael Cook, is totally neglected in their works.

All Muslims have regarded that the Quran as the precious legacy of the Prophet. The first generation of Muslims preserved it in their memories and by writing it down on leaves and animal skins; then, they read what they wrote to the Prophet, and finally these writings were collected in codices. From that period till now, Muslims have protected this precious heritage and delivered it from generation to generation, and it is for this reason that they have never doubted in the authenticity of their sacred book—the fact that the Quran they have in their hands is identical to the scripture that was revealed to Prophet Muhammad.

Now, the question is, what evidence can be provided for the claim that the Quran was compiled at the end of the second century—a claim that goes against the consensus of all Muslims regarding their scripture? If the text of the Quran was finalized so late, why has this fact not been reported in history? Why is there no report indicating that the Quran was formed as a result of the discussion or debates between the Muslims and the People of Book in the first centuries of Islam? How could it be acceptable that this book was produced two hundred years after the death of the Prophet and then all Muslims accepted it as the same scripture revealed to the Prophet? By considering traditional Islamic sources as unreliable, and not being able to find mention of the Quran in the writings of non-Muslims during the first century of Islam, it cannot be unequivocally concluded that the Quran was accomplished in the third century, because to simply falsify all traditional Islamic sources and only accept the sources that were written by non-Muslims is an unjust and unfair bias. It is a natural phenomenon that every nation takes pride and gives importance in recording their own cultural heritage over others. It could be assumed that non-Muslims did not have sufficient motivation to mention the Quran in their documents and writings in the first century AH. Of course, it is also never mentioned in non-Muslim sources that

Muslims have no sacred book. Not speaking about the existence of a thing does not necessarily mean that it does not exist.

For more clarity about the subject matter in question, it is necessary to clarify the status of Islam and Muslims at the end of the second century AH, the time when Wansbrough and his supporters claim that the Quran had been formed in its final form. It will become clear that Muslims and the People of the Book had very close contacts and very serious debates with each other at that time, but there is no evidence in the works of non-Muslims indicating that the Quran was compiled at that time.

1. The Background of Adducing the *Tawatur* of the Quran

It seems that the first whispers of the concept of the *tawatur* of the Quran was raised in the fourth century AH. This was aimed at emphasizing on the fact that nothing had been added to or omitted from the original text. Great Shi'ite scholars, such as al-Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 413 AH) and al-Sharif al-Murtada (d. 436 AH), are among the earliest scholars to adduce the *tawatur* of the Quran. This concept, moreover, was seriously taken into account since the sixth century AH in the discussions on the recitations (*qira'at*) of the Quran in order to prove the authenticity of the Quranic text (Ibn al-Jazari n.d., 1:13).

A problem that arises here is whether not adducing the *tawatur* of the Quran in the first centuries of Islam challenges this evidence. The answer is that this not only negates the *tawatur* of the Quran but could be a sign of its being an undoubted and well-established fact.

As mentioned previously, adducing the *tawatur* of the Quran began from the first half of the fourth century AH and continued more seriously from the sixth century AH. Muslims have agreed on the *tawatur* of the Quran from the beginning of Islam to the present day and have had no doubt about it. This was also accepted among Western scholars before Wansbrough; they also believed that the present Quran

is the same scripture that existed at the time of the Prophet and agreed upon the authenticity of its text, but Wansbrough and his followers neglected this evidence.

2. Evidence for the *Tawatur* of the Quran

It may seem that since the Quran is the sacred scripture of Muslims, the *tawatur* of the Quran is only acceptable for them and cannot be adduced in the discussions with non-Muslims. In response to this, it is necessary to note that the Muslim community was not independent and isolated from other communities during the first two centuries of Islam. Muslims in the early days of the Prophet interacted with Jews and Christians, and they evaluated each other's views. Moreover, Muslims have always tried to proselytize, and this has led to many interfaith debates and discussion, which are recorded in historical sources. On this basis, if the Quran appeared during the first part of the third century AH, why have these documents not mentioned the appearance of the new scripture at their time? Therefore, we could conclude that non-Muslims, as well as Muslims, were sure that the Quran of their time was the same scripture brought by Prophet Muhammad.

On the other hand, Muslims were not restricted to a specific geographic location, such as Mecca or Medina, because in the very first century of Islam, Muslims went to different parts of the world, though academics such as Wansbrough and Hawting have chosen to neglect it. According to the revisionists, in contrast to traditional orientalists, the first two centuries of Islam are obscure; none of the Muslim sources that report the events of that time belong, or are even close, to it; and later written sources cannot tell us what really happened during the Age of Ignorance, the advent of Islam, and the life of the Prophet—they merely indicate what the authors thought or wanted their readers to think about those times. Therefore, what really happened in the early centuries of Islam can rarely be discovered through the study of Muslim sources.

The idea of Wansbrough is based on five principles:

1. No written source can tell us what really happened during early Islamic history; rather, they only indicate the ideas of their authors.
2. Only an eyewitness can talk about an event, and even the report of an eyewitness may also be subject to conscious and unconscious interpretations (Rahmati 1381 Sh, 77).
3. The mere act of writing about what happened—that is, reducing it to a set of words and then imposing a particular order on it, which the reality may lack—leads to the distortion of the reality.
4. The history of the transmission of ancient documents is extremely doubtful. Here, there is not only the issue of the possibility of scribes making mistakes in copying texts but also the issue of changing the reality in a conscious way, which occurs when a writer, who is working in the framework of an accepted reading of history, intentionally changes his sources in order to adjust them to his ideas and beliefs (Koren and Nevo 1378 Sh, 570-71). As a result, written sources deceive us and only reflect the views of their authors. In other words, they are literary texts, and do not provide an analysis of history but a literary criticism of it (Koren and Nevo, 1378 Sh, 570-71).
5. Since we need external evidence to prove a view that is merely based on Muslim sources, the lack of this type of evidence is an important factor in rejecting the account provided by these sources and its historicity.

Wansbrough applies the above-mentioned points to Muslim sources, because he believes that Muslims began to put their early history into a written form after at least one hundred and fifty years. This idea is accepted by some Orientalists, such as Wansbrough's student Gerald R.

Hawting, who is skeptical about Islamic sources like his mentor. In addition to Islamic traditions, he also believes that the Quran was compiled during the late second century or early third century AH. In his *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam*, Hawting has also used the method of literary analysis of the Quran's text to prove his views in addition to presenting other evidence in this respect. He concludes by saying that since monotheists were not present in Hijaz at the time of the Prophet (s) to have been addressed by the Quran, the Quran must have been written at a time or place other than those of the Prophet. He says that the time and place of the Quran's advent was the third century AH and in the Middle East, but outside Arabia. He believes that the presence of monotheists in the region and their interactions with the Muslims in the second and third centuries led to the evolution of Islam in its current form. Hawting also holds that Hijaz at the time of the Prophet was an unfavorable environment for the emergence and evolution of a monotheistic religion such as Islam (Hawting 1999, 11-13; 55-58).

Hawting's presuppositions and evidence for his claim are the following:

1. From the third century onwards, the amount of Islamic writings increased rapidly (Hawting 1999, 8).
2. Islamic law gradually developed and achieved its theoretical foundations in the works of al-Shafi'i in the late second century (Hawting 1999, 12).
3. Islam, like other monotheistic religions needed a long time, a broad geographic location, and a monotheistic atmosphere to evolve and become a religion, after being a cult.
4. Scholarly research on other aspects of Islam—its theology, conversion to Islam, and the formation of Shiite Islam in its

various forms—confirms that many of its important characteristics have been established only in the third or even fourth century AH.

5. The environment of Hijaz was not suitable for a great revolution in tradition. Such a revolution occurred in some regions of the Middle East—Syria, Palestine, and Iraq—in the monotheistic traditions that were firmly established, because many of the cultural and religious changes that were necessary to advance Islam had certainly emerged in these areas before Arabs arrived there (Hawting 1999, 12-13).

Based on these reasons, Wansbrough and consequently his student Hawting hold that the final consolidation of the Quranic text took place in the late second or early third century AH, and hence they do not consider Muslim sources to be authentic in their account of the formation of the Quranic text.

To clarify this issue, it is necessary to explain the status of Islam and Muslims by the end of the second century AH, when the Quran was formed in its final form according to Wansbrough and his students. What is important in this regard is to examine the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslim communities, specifically the Jewish and Christian scholars and the religious debates and controversies which occurred at that period. If the Quran was formed in the third century AH, why has no reports been found in the works of those non-Muslim scholars indicating that the Quran has been recently formed and did not exist at the time of the Prophet?!

Wansbrough and his followers have not shown any historical evidence for their claims. The Quran had a great presence among Muslims in the third century AH, and some comprehensive commentaries were written at that time on it. The assumption of these commentaries was that the text they were interpreting was the same

scripture revealed to Prophet Muhammad. This proves that the formation of the Quran took place long before the third century AH.

Some orientalist have acknowledged that there are some documents from the first and second centuries AH exhibiting the relationship between Muslims and Christians and the presence of the Quran during the first part of the second century AH. Alphonse Mingana,¹ for instance, refers to the debates, letters, and other historical evidence that show the relationships between Muslims and Christians in the first century AH and refer to the Quran in the early second century AH in some Christian documents. Mingana enumerates the following sources: (1) the dispute between ‘Amr b. al-‘As and the Monophysite Patriarch of Antioch, John I, which took place and was recorded in the year 18 AH; (2) a letter written in the first years of ‘Uthman’s caliphate by the bishop of Nineveh, later known as Isho‘yahb III, Patriarch of Seleucia; (3) an account on the Muslims written by an anonymous Christian in the year 60/680; and (4) the chronicle of John Bar Penkaye written in 70/690, in the first years of the caliphate of ‘Abd al-Malik. According to him, concerning the writings of historians and theologians at the beginning of the 2nd/8th century, no mention has been made of a divine book in which the Muslims believe in; rather, it is only towards the end of the first quarter of this century that the Quran became the theme of conversation in Nestorian, Jacobite, and Melchite ecclesiastical circles (Motzki 2001, 167).

Now, if in 18 AH (i.e., approximately six years after the death of Prophet Muhammad) Islam and Muslims were deeply connected with Christians, why did Christians never mention that the Quran emerged

1. An ethnic Assyrian theologian, historian, Syriacist, orientalist, and a former priest, best known for collecting and preserving the Mingana Collection of ancient Middle Eastern manuscripts at the University of Birmingham, England.

and appeared at the end of the second century AH? Because the Quran was not mentioned in a few short writings, Mingana concludes that during that period the Quran did not exist, but he does not explain why after it appeared in the second century AH, its appearance was not reflected in the writings of the time.

Many sources mention the Quran as a product of the Prophet's time; there is not even one historical source that considers it a product of a later period. How, then, is it possible to think of the Quran as a product of the first two centuries of Islam? To claim that the traditions about the compilation of the Quran during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs are fabricated just shows that the existence of the Quran and its being the same scripture given to the Prophet were obvious facts for the Muslims of the second and third centuries AH. Otherwise, hadith fabricators could not forge those traditions and ascribe the compilation of the Quran to a later time. Accordingly, given the historical background, the *tawatur* of the Quran is very important evidence that shows that the text of the Quran was finalized during the time of the Prophet.

Now, we will have a discussion about the history of the first two centuries AH in the viewpoint of Western historians and the position of Islam, Muslims, and the Quran from their perspective.

2. Muslim Historical Evidence According to Western Scholars

2.1. Until 10 AH

Because Islam expanded extraordinarily since its advent, the course of events in the first two centuries of Islamic history is clear and known for scholars. When the Prophet entered Medina, he prepared a pact regulating the relationship between the Muslims and non-Muslims, including the Jews¹ in Medina and inside the Muslim territories (Bulliet

1. In this pact, the Jews were required only to help Muslims in their battles and refrain from cooperating with their enemies. In return, Muslims would

1364, Introduction). Moreover, in the last two years of his life, the Prophet signed other pacts with certain Christian tribes,¹ including the pact with the Christians of Najran in 10 AH (Zaydan 1336 Sh, 4:116). These reports provide important evidence for the presence of Jews and Christians in the Arabian Peninsula.

Moreover, Islam spread at the time of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina and then to all neighboring areas. After the demise of the Prophet, the expansion of Islam continued through the conquests led by the caliphs, especially the second caliph. The details of the battles of the Prophet and the conquests of the caliphs are recorded in Muslim historical sources and reflected in the works of Western scholars (Tabari 1375 Sh, 4:1281; 3:1067, 1084, 1145; Lapidus 1373 Sh, 71; *The Cambridge History of Islam* 1378 Sh, 89-90; 101-102; Noth and Conrad 1433 AH, 40-49).

Paying attention to the presence of the People of the Book in the Peninsula and their contacts and conflicts with the Muslims in the first century AH is very important evidence for the reliability and historicity of the Muslim account of the formation of the Quran.

2.2. 11 AH until 200 AH

After the death of the Prophet, vast Muslim conquests began at the onset of Abu Bakr's caliphate, and all the regions of Iraq (Hirah, Savad, Basra, etc.) were conquered by Muslims, who went as far as Syria (Baladhuri 1337 Sh, 158; Tabari 1375 Sh, 3:35; *The Cambridge History of Islam* 1378 Sh, 110-12). During the caliphate of 'Umar, Damascus was completely conquered, Baalbek and Homs peacefully surrendered in 15 AH, Yarmouk was conquered, and Jerusalem was besieged in 16

respect and protect their religious freedom, security, and financial rights.

1. One of these pacts, which is extant today in Istanbul, is the pact of the monastery of Mount Sinai, which was brought to Istanbul by Sultan Selim after he conquered Egypt (Zaydan 1336 Sh, 4: 116-19).

AH and then peacefully fell to the Muslims. Afterwards, Alexandria and Egypt were conquered in 20 AH, and the Muslims continued their conquests of Iraq and Iran. Abu ‘Ubayd al-Thaqafi was the commander of these conquests. In the era of the second Caliph, Khurasan and Sistan were also conquered. Jurji Zaydan describes the Arabs’ migration to Iraq and Syria during ‘Umar’s era and says that although the people of Iraq and Syria were Christian Arabs, since they were mistreated by the Iranians, they were open to the Arabs and helped them; regardless of their religion, they had the same culture and language. Accordingly, not only ‘Umar did not ask the Christians tribes, such Taghlib, Abad, and Namir, to pay tax (*jizyah*) but also provided them with a stipend from the Muslim treasury (Zaydan 1336 Sh, 4:35-36). This report indicates the thorough mixing of Christians and Muslims that paved the ground for debates and discussions between them. Historical sources indicate that there was a close and deep relationship between Muslims and the People of the Book, but the revisionists neglect this evidence—which is recorded in the works of Jewish and Christian historians—and claim that this account is a distortion of history by Muslims and is just their salvation history.

After the death of the second caliph, the conquests continued during the caliphate of ‘Uthman. It is said that the Arab troops conquered Tabaristan in northern Iran during this era. It should be noted that the Arab invasion of Iran refers to a series of attacks against the Sassanid Empire in the seventh century CE that had begun since the caliphate of Abu Bakr and which peaked during the eras of ‘Umar and ‘Uthman. It eventually led to the complete fall of the Sassanid Empire in the year 651 CE (31 AH) and the murder of Yazdegerd III (the last Sassanid king). ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amir was the commander of the Muslim army that conquered Nishapur in 30 AH, who conquered other lands around Khurasan, such as Herat, Faryab, and Badghis. Yazdegerd, who had fled Khurasan, was killed at a mill around 31 AH in Marv. In 32 AH,

many Arabs settled in Iran, especially in Khurasan. The only area that remained unconquered for more than two centuries was the northwest region of Iran. After the conquest of Egypt in Umar's era, North Africa and parts of Andalusia were conquered gradually till 27 AH. The first Muslim naval ship was sent to Cyprus, and then Muslims migrated to that area after its fall to them. In the western Islamic lands, the most important goal of the Muslims was moving towards Asia Minor and Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire. During the period of 'Uthman, the Muslims reached the Dardanelle Strait and fought with the Byzantium Empire.

At this time, the Muslim territory stretched from the East of Sistan and Khurasan to the northwestern regions of Iran, including Azerbaijan and Armenia, and to the West, including all of what was called the Levant (i.e., Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, and Egypt). These areas were previously ruled by the Byzantine Empire. People in these areas were partly Arabs and partly Romans. After Islam, the demographics of these countries changed to the benefit of Arabs, and the Arabic culture became prevalent in most of these areas. After the death of 'Uthman, Imam 'Ali became the caliph and chose Kufa as his capital, because it was so important from military and political aspects (Tabari 1375 Sh, 5:2116). In this period, due to internal conflicts and other issues, the conquests were stopped, but Mu'awiyah resumed them. He created an army for his caliphate, adopting the military model of the Levant and the Rome. During his caliphate, there was constant conflict with the Romans, and in 49 CE, Muslims reached the outskirts of Constantinople. It was during this time that more changes occurred in the Islamic Empire, as parts of Africa and Sudan were conquered and the city of Kairouan was founded as a major military base. Muslims went also to Bukhara, Samarkand, India, Sind, and Ghor.

From this time onward, we cannot find a great victory for Muslims, because, on the one hand, the Romans were prepared to fight with more courage, and, on the other hand, some events in the East prevented the Muslims from making serious efforts to conquer that region. Gradually, the conquests created problems, and the Arab tribal conflicts in the conquered lands, such as in Khurasan, prevented the Muslims from preparing themselves to continue with the conquests. In addition, the apostasy of some of the new Muslims in the conquered areas caused the power of the Muslims to diminish. Uprisings within the Islamic lands, such as those led by the Khawarij and the Shia, further weakened the central Islamic government (Zaydan 1957, 4:35-39; Baladhuri 1337 Sh, 324-25). Between the 50s and 90s AH, Muslims conquered many places. In 91 AH, which coincided with the reign of Walid ibn ‘Abdul ‘Aziz, Andalusia was conquered (Tabari 1375 Sh, 9:3837; Baladhuri 1337 Sh, 332; Lapidus 1373 Sh, 82). However, for many reasons, such as power struggles among Muslims, most of their resources were wasted, and, thus, no significant victory was achieved until 200 AH.

Some Western historians also have reported the Muslim conquests after the demise of the Prophet in detail (Gibb 1362 Sh, 23; Adler 1384 Sh, 1:221). Armstrong reports the Muslim conquests in her book and has no doubt about them (Armstrong 1383 Sh, 225-27). William Montgomery Watt explains that a *ghazwah* (battle) was an Arab nomadic craft and sport, the most common purpose of which was kidnapping the sheep and camels of unfriendly tribes (*The Cambridge History of Islam* 1378 Sh, 91). According to Max Weber, booty and the tribal interests were the basis of all tribal wars (Turner 1385 Sh, 58).

Whether or not the abovementioned remarks are true, they show that not all Western scholars and historians regard early Islamic history as vague and undiscoverable and Muslim reports of what happened in that period as forged and unreliable. If Wansbrough or his followers had presented independent sources written during the Prophet’s era that

spoke about the Prophet and Muslims but did not refer to the Jews or the Prophet's battles, those documents could have supported their claims. But to deny the historicity of Muslim reports just because there are no independent sources among the Christian or Syriac works of that period that can confirm them is not a valid reason.

J. M. B. Jones is a researcher who has discussed early Islamic history in detail (Jones 1957, 245-80). In Jones 1959, he concludes that the reports of early Islamic history were recorded mostly in the second century AH before al-Waqidi and Ibn Ishaq, and these later writers only added some interpretive points and organized the content (Rahmati 1381 Sh, 77).

Israel Wolfensohn maintains that there is no information about the Jews who settled in the Arabian Peninsula, such as the Ban Qaynuqa', Banu al-Nadir, and Banu Qurayzah, and that the Jews of Aleppo and Damascus denied the presence of the Jews in the Arabian Peninsula during that period, because, they claimed, those who called themselves Jews there did not fully abide by monotheism and the laws of Talmud (Wolfensohn 1415 AH, 55; Shaker 2012, 13). This report, however, shows that Jews were present in the Peninsula, even though they might not have been fully faithful to their monotheistic religion and its laws.

Christian writers have approached this in a different way and have emphasized on the contacts between the Muslim and the People of the Book in the first centuries of Islamic history, the tensions and conflicts between them, and the hatred¹ of some Christians of that time towards Muslims. For instance, Sebeos, an Armenian bishop and historian,

1. For instance, Johanna Nikiu (fl. 696 CE), an Egyptian official and bishop, was furious that the Egyptians had converted to Islam. His hatred and anger is obvious in a treatise that he wrote in Greek (Nikiu 1916, 201-3).

wrote an important work on the history of Islam, which begins from the reign of Peros (459-484 CE) and ends with the rule of Mu‘awiyah in 661 CE. Sebeos’s work reports many events that were witnessed by the writer himself and, therefore, is a very important source. Among the events he describes are the Arab conquests, especially in Iran, Armenia, and Byzantine territories, and also the fall of the Byzantine Empire (Ali 1391 Sh, 33-39). Moreover, there is a Manuscript of a book in four volumes in the Vatican Library, written in 775 CE, whose fourth volume is on the events of the time of its unknown author. The author talks about Islam and Muslims in the Peninsula and the relationship between them and the People of the Book and the latter’s complaints about the heavy taxes imposed on them by their governors (Ali 1391 Sh, 33-39). In addition, the debates between scholars, especially between Christian and Muslim scholars, are important historical evidence for the presence of minorities in the Peninsula, such as the debates of Dionysius with the Muslim scholars at the court of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdi in 783 CE (Ali 1391 Sh, 33-39). Moreover, Theophanes (d. 817/818 CE) presents a comprehensive report of the events of Islamic history, especially of the relations between the Arabs and Romans and the Islamic conquests (Von Grunebaum n.d., 66). Such reports show the attention of Western historians to the interactions between the Muslims and Christians. In addition, the apologetic works of the Christians of early Islamic history against Islam and Muslims are noteworthy, such as the writings of Bartholomew of Edessa (fl. 13th century CE), which show his acquaintance with Islam and Prophet Muhammad,¹ or the epistle *Liber de haeresibus* by John of Damascus (d. 749 CE), which, although its authenticity is disputed, is an important refutation by Eastern Christians against Islam (Parsa 1389 Sh, 140-41). In section 100 of this treatise, the author introduces Muslims, whom he

1. He was a fierce debater with Muslims; his hostility towards Islam was caused by the conflicts and wars between Muslims and Christians (Von Grunebaum n.d., 68).

calls Ismailis, as innovators in religion; he also quotes some verses of the Quran in the treatise, mentions the names of some surahs, and criticizes some Quranic rulings such as polygamy and divorce (Parsa 1389 Sh, 140-41).

Also, the Byzantine emperor Basil I (r. 867-886 CE) ordered his distinguished official Niketas to write a refutation of Islam, and Niketas wrote two treatises in this regard (Von Grunebaum n.d., 68). In his works, Niketas analyzes surah al-Baqarah and surah al-Kahf in detail and surveys the other surahs briefly. He translated most of the surahs that mention the gospel and/or the characteristics of Jesus. In particular, he translated the word *samad* in Quran 122:2 mistakenly as “extremely compact and sturdy,” indicating a material image of God, which is against the Quranic teachings about God (Parsa 1389, 140-41).

One of the most important polemical works is *The Apology of al-Kindi*, which contains an imaginary debate between a Muslim and a group of Christians at the time of al-Ma'mun (813-833 CE) (Eslami 1377 Sh, 21). Also, the earliest Syriac polemical text written in Muslim territories around the beginning of the eighth century CE contains the questions of a Muslim emir from Patriarch John III of Antioch (631-648 CE) on May 9, 644 CE. The Muslim emir is shown to have been 'Umayr ibn Sa'd al-Anbari¹ (see Nau 1984; Samir 1987).

Another early and famous polemical texts is undoubtedly the one that records the responses of Patriarch Timothy I (780-823 CE) to the questions of the caliph al-Mahdi (775-785 CE) in two consecutive sessions in the presence of others (Griffith 1387 Sh, 25:67). The full text and summary of this conversation written in Syriac and then its

1. More probably, he is 'Umayr ibn Sa'd al-Ansari, who had an important role in the Roman and the subsequent Sham conquests and was an agent of 'Umar in Homs (Dhahabi 1987, vol. 3; Ibn Hisham 1985, 1st section; Ibn Sa'd 1996, vol. 4).

translation into Arabic gained great popularity (Mingana 1928, 161-2). Accordingly, this text is of great importance in the study of the development of Christian polemical literature in the Muslim world.

Therefore, the Christian polemical writings against Islam in the eighth and ninth centuries CE and the debates between Christians and Muslims include important historical evidence that has been ignored in Wansbrough's research.

Conclusion

The vast expansion of Islam, the contacts between Muslim and Christians and Jews, and other historical evidence show that Muslims were not a small and isolated group in the world until the third century AH, all of a sudden known in Iraq with their scripture gathered based on their debates with the non-Muslims in that era.

In other words, the argument of Wansbrough for the late compilation of the Quran is a proof by contradiction, based on the lack of reference to the Quran in the Muslim and non-Muslim sources of the first two centuries AH. However, the evidence that was presented in this article confirmed the existence of references to the Quran in the early Muslim and non-Muslim sources and verified the historicity of the Muslim reports of the first two centuries AH.

Moreover, a literary analysis approach does not provide convincing proofs for historical and geographical conclusions about the exact date of the final compilation of the Quran. Of the other objections to Wansbrough's and Hawting's conclusions is the influence of their assumptions on their research. These assumptions include using traditions and historical documents later than the first two centuries AH to support their hypotheses, regarding other Muslim traditions as fabricated, and neglecting historical evidence recorded by independent, non-Muslim sources.

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The History of the Idea of a Literal Connection between the Words “Ahmad” and “Paraclete” in the Qur’an and the Gospel of John

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In recent years, some people, comparing the word “Ahmad” in a Quranic verse speaking of Jesus’ prophecy about Prophet Muhammad (Qur’an 61:6) with the word “Paraclete” in the Gospel of John (14:26, etc.), have tried to make a connection between them. They have ascribed to Muslims (and even to the Prophet himself) the idea that the word “Paraclete” is a distorted form of the word “*periclete*,” the meaning of which, in turn, is approximately equal to the Arabic word “Ahmad,” to which the Quranic verse refers. In this article, we examine this idea and conclude that the claim has stemmed from a mistake in the writings of some western scholars during the eighteenth century, and does not have any actual basis in Christian or Islamic literature.

Keywords: Ahmad, Muhammad, Paraclete, gospel, the Qur’an.

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Introduction

As we know, the Qur'an explicitly states that the advent of Prophet Muhammad (s) was predicted by Jesus Christ, who referred to the Prophet with the name "Ahmad":

And when Jesus son of Mary said: "O Children of Israel! Verily, I am the apostle of God sent unto you, confirming the law which was delivered before me, and bringing good tidings of an apostle who shall come after me, and whose name shall be Ahmad." (Qur'an 61:6)

The words "Ahmad" and "Muhammad" both are derived from the Arabic root *h-m-d*, which means to praise. While "Muhammad" means one who is greatly praised, the "Ahmad" has two meanings: in the subjective form, it means one who praises more, and, as an accusative, it means one who is the most praised (the second meaning is most commonly used). The only non-Islamic text which mentions the name Ahmad (or more precisely "Ahmat") is *Ginza Rabba*, the holy scripture of Mandaean religion (apparently compiled around the eighth century CE) (*Ginza der schatz* 1:203).

In the Gospel of John, we have the word "Paraclete" (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7, 20, 22), which means comforter and is used in a famous prophecy by Jesus Christ about one who would come after him, regarded by most Muslim scholars to have been Prophet Muhammad. The word, which is the koine Greek "παράκλητος" (*paraklētos*), is derived from the infinitive root "παράκαλεῖν" (*parakalein*) which means "to invoke."¹ Literally, the word means "one who is called alongside," particularly one called to help in a legal situation, such as a defense attorney. Though the word has an objective form, it is usually considered with a subjective sense, referring to one who is called to do helpful work. Accordingly, the word is often considered to mean one who intercedes on behalf of another one, a comforter, or an advocate.²

1. The word is composed of two parts: *para-* (to the side of) + *kalein*, *klē* (to call).

2. For further details about the word, see Karimpur (2014, 73-75).

Paraclete in Early Islamic Sources

Some Muslim scholars, who believed that the relevant verse of the Qur'an has to do with a prophecy about the Prophet in the Four Gospels, tried to find the equivalent of "Ahmad" therein, so they settled on the word "Paraclete," which was written as a transliteration in both the Syriac and Arabic versions of the Gospel, notably without translation.

In earlier times, some Muslim scholars who could not read the Gospels in their original Greek language and, thus, only had access to its Syriac and Arabic versions, thought the Syriac word "Paraqlita" or the Arabic "Faraqlit" meant Muhammad or Ahmad. They thought the Christians had not translated it in order to hide its real meaning and to give another interpretation for it (mostly as the Holy Spirit). The oldest Christian document which introduces Paraclete as the Holy Spirit is a letter attributed to Emperor Leo III (d. 741 CE), who sent it to the Muslim caliph 'Umar II (d. 720 CE) in the eighth century CE. Some of the material is probably from the late eighth or early ninth centuries (Hoyland 1997, 499). Emperor Leo III writes, in the version of letter recorded by Ghevond, that the word "*paraclete*" is a name for the Holy Spirit, and since its meaning is not equal to the name Muhammad, it cannot be a reference to him:

[God] has chosen the way of sending [the human race] Prophets, and it is for this reason that the Lord, [...] having fore-announced His incarnation by way of His prophets, yet knowing that men still had need of assistance from God, promised to send the Holy Spirit, under the name of Paraclete, (Consoler), to console them in the distress and sorrow they felt at the departure of their Lord and Master.[...] It was for this cause alone that Jesus called the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, since He sought to console His disciples for His departure, and recall to them all that he had said, all that He had done before their eyes, all that they were called to propagate throughout the world by their witness. Paraclete thus signifies "consoler," while Muhammad means "to give thanks," or "to give grace," a meaning which has no connection whatever with the word Paraclete. (Jeffery 1944, 292-93)

Another source in which we find a reference to the equivalence of the words “Paraclete” and “Ahmad” is a letter attributed to Abu Rabi‘ Muhammad ibn Abi Layth, the secretary of Caliph Harun al-Rashid (d. 809). The letter is sent to Constantin VI to invite him to Islam. In this letter, Abu Rabi‘ brings up a series of biblical “prophecies” where ancient prophets predict the coming of Prophet Muhammad, and after mentioning the prophecy in the Gospel of John, he states: “Paraqlita (Paraclete) means: Ahmad” (Safvat 1937, 264).

These documents show that the idea of similarity between the meanings of the two words can be traced back to the eighth century. However, it seems that most of the early Muslim scholars did not suppose any connection between the words Paraclete and Ahmad. Al-Mu‘ayyad bi-Allah, a Zaidi Muslim scholar (d. 1020 CE), and his pupil al-Muwaffaq bi-Allah, in their books *Ithbat al-nubuwwah* and *al-Ihatah*, never claim any literal connection between the words “Paraclete” and “Ahmad” or “Muhammad” (Schmidtke 2012, 246, 263).

After a while, Muslim scholars more seriously examined the idea of a literal connection between the two words. It seems that the Palestinian-Syriac versions of the Gospel strengthened this idea, because in these versions the true meaning of the word “Paraclete” (comforter) is mentioned with a pronunciation of its Syriac and Hebrew equal Monahhema or Munahhemana (*menahhemana*). Because the latter word seems very similar to the Arabic word “Muhammad,” some Muslim scholars supposed that it is indeed the Prophet’s name. Ibn Ishaq (d. 767), the great Muslim historian, in his famous book *The Life of Muhammad*, gives a somewhat inaccurate paraphrase of John 15:18-27:

It is extracted from what John [Yuhannis] the apostle set down for them when he wrote the Gospel for them from the Testament of Jesus Son of Mary: “When the Comforter [Munahhemana] has come whom God will send to you from the Lord’s presence, and the spirit

of truth [*ruh al-qist*] which will have gone forth from the Lord's presence he (shall bear) witness of me and ye also, because ye have been with me from the beginning ..." The *Munahhemana* (God bless and preserve him!) in Syriac is Muhammad; in Greek he is the Paraclete [*al-baraq̄litis*]. (Ibn Hisham 1955, 103-4)

Scholars argue that Ibn Ishaq's source must have been a Palestinian-Syriac Lectionary of the Gospels (Guillaume 1950, 292-93). According to the scholars of linguistics, the only Aramaic dialect in which *menahhemana* is used for "παράκλητος" is the Palestinian Dialect (Ragg 1907, xxxii). It seems that in the prior centuries, even before Islam, the gospels were translated into Palestinian-Syriac which had differences with the usual Greek and Syriac versions of the Gospels, both in regard to this phrase and some other phrases (Guillaume 1950, 292-93). It is noteworthy that the Palestinian-Syriac Lexicons give the secondary meaning "to console, comfort" for *nhem*, *nahhem* (Schulthess 1903, 122a). Therefore, Ibn Ishaq's quotation from the Gospel is merely a mistake about the meaning of the word "Paraclete" and does not refer to any distortion in the Gospel of John.

Some other Muslim scholars who were more familiar with Syriac knew that the Syriac "Paraqlita" cannot be translated as Ahmad or Muhammad. Nevertheless, it appeared to be a mysterious word to them, such that they tried to find another meaning for it. As a result, some of them went so far as to argue that the numerical value of its letters showed a description of the Prophet. Ali ibn Rabban Tabari (d. 870), the converted Muslim scholar, says:

When I examined carefully the word "Paraclete" and searched deeply for the meaning of the saying of Christ, I found another wonderful mystery in it: if somebody counts the total of the numerical value of its letters, it will be equivalent to the same total as that of the letters of the words "Muhammad bin 'Abd Allah al-Nabbi al-Hadi" (Muhammad son of 'Abd Allah, the rightly guiding Prophet). (Tabari 1922, 142)

However, arguably because the idea of a connection between the word “Paraclete” and the Prophet’s names was more attractive, it became popular amongst Muslim scholars during the Middle Ages. Ibn Taymiyya¹ (d. 1328) provides a full discussion of this word and its different possible meanings:

Of this word Paraclete in their language several accounts are given. Some say it “Hammad” (greatly praising); some “Hamed” (praising); some “Mu’izz” (perhaps “Mu’izzi” or “consoler”; strengthener): some say it means “praise”; The last is preferred by some, who aver that it is proved by the words of Joshua: “[w]hoso does well shall have a good Paraclete,” i.e., “good praise.” And also by their well-known phrase in accosting ... Those who say it means “Saviour” urge that it is Syriac, and derived from parak, “to save,” with “lit” a Syriac expletive particle. Those who interpret it “fortifier” say it is Greek. (Ragg 1907, xxxi, fn.1)

Later, some Muslim scholars, through western scholarship, learned that the idea was incorrect and avoided repeating it in their works. For example, Mir Muhammad Baqir Husayni Khatunabadi, an Iranian Shi‘ite scholar of the eighteenth century, in his commentary on the Persian translation of the Gospel of John, mentioned only three meanings for the word Paraclete: “teacher, consoler, and intercessor”; he never argues for “Ahmad” or “Muhammad” as meanings of the word, or for the existence of the explicit name of the Prophet in any of the versions of the Gospel of John. Moreover, he does not claim any relationship between the Jesus’ prophecy in the Qur’an and the prophecy in the Gospel of John (Husayni Khatunbadi n.d., 306).

1. In an earlier document, Ibn Babawayh (d. 991), a prominent Shi‘ite Muslim scholar, claims that in the Gospel of John there is a prediction about Muhammad which mentions his explicit name. Ibn Babawayh attributes to Imam al-Rida (d. 818) a debate between him and some non-Muslim religious scholars, in which the Imam says that the Gospel of John quotes a word from Jesus Christ about Arabian Muhammad (Ibn Babawayh 1378 AH, 142). But later, this same document refers to the prophecy of a “coming Paraclete” with the word “Faraqlita” (145), which shows that, even in the first prophecy, the author was discussing something other than the case of Paraclete.

Islamic sources before the nineteenth century, contain only an incorrect supposition about a similarity of meanings between the word "Paraclete" and the words "Ahmad" and "Muhammad," but no further analysis. However, since the nineteenth century, a new idea appeared in Islamic writings. Scholars began to argue that the word "παράκλητος" (Parakletos) was a distorted form of the original word "περικλυτος" (Periklutos, Pericylte or Periclete in some western scholars' writings), whose meaning was equal to the meanings of "Ahmad" and "Muhammad."¹ This new idea became very popular in the Islamic world.

It is improbable that the Muslim scholars who claimed, for the first time, that a distortion had occurred in the Gospel and who suggested the supposedly correct Greek word "περικλυτος" (Periklutos), had enough knowledge of Greek to even know the meaning of the original word. It is also improbable that such an idea could have been cultivated in the minds of the first Muslim scholars, such as Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham (Guthrie and Bishop 1951, 253-54). So, in order to find the origin of the idea, we must examine its history and search for its scholarly background.

The Background of the Idea of a Literal Connection between the Words "Ahmad" and "Paraclete"

But what was the main cause of searching for an alternative for the word "Paraclete"? On the one hand, the Greek word "παράκλητος" (Parakletos), which is supposed to be taken from the infinitive "παράκαλειν" (parakalein), does not have the letter "α" (with long

1. The word "περικλυτος" (Periklutos) can be translated as "much praised one": "περι" (a prefix which means very or much) + "κλυος" (a infinitive which means to praise) + "-τος" (a suffix showing objective form of the verb). So, the exact meaning of the word is "much praised," or "glorious" (Liddell and Scott 1966, 628), which is equal in its meaning to the Arabic word "Muhammad."

pronunciation) after “κ” in the infinitive root (Keldani 1987, 209). The word is not a commonly used word in Greek literature either, and its technical application is rare (Bauer 1958, 1226). Mentioning the word in Syriac and Arabic versions of the Gospel without translation made people think that it had a special meaning. The unusual structure in the mysterious and rarely used word “παράκλητος” led some scholars to suggest that it was originally another word. On the other hand, the Arabic word “Ahmad”, too, had an unusual feature: it was a rarely used name for Prophet Muhammad, and in the Qur’an, it was mentioned only once and in the context of Jesus’ prophecy (Qur’an 61:6), while the name “Muhammad” was used four times (Qur’an 3:144; 33:40; 47:2; 48:29). Although using two names for a person (especially for a prophet) has precedence in the biblical tradition,¹ this unusual usage led some scholars to think that it was related to the word “Paraclete” in the Gospel of John; that is, to the “original” word Periklutos.

Examining the Idea of a Literal Connection between the Words “Ahmad” and “Paraclete”

While the idea of a distortion in the Gospel in the case of Paraclete found wide acceptance in the Muslim world, a thorough examination does not confirm it. In fact, there are many reasons that show its inaccuracy and lead us to reject it. The verse of the Qur’an only says that Jesus, addressing the people of Israel, predicted the coming of a prophet with the name Ahmad (i.e., prophet Muhammad), but it does not explicitly attribute it to the Gospel of John or any other Gospels. So, we do not have a firm reason that the Qur’anic verse refers to this specific prophecy in the Gospel of John. Indeed, there are many reasons for us to assume that the Qur’anic verse does not refer to that prophecy:

1. Abraham and his wife Sarah are similarly named in the Bible as Abram and Sarai (Gen. 17:5, 15), Jackob is called Israel (Gen. 35:10), and Joseph is also called *Zephnath-paaneah* (Gen. 41:45).

(1) Difference between the audiences. In the Qur'anic verse, Jesus addresses his audience by the following words: "O Children of Israel!" This indicates that the Jews (and not the Apostles) were his audience. However, in the prophecy of the Gospel, Jesus is speaking only to his nearest disciples in a private meeting (John 13:1-2). The expression "*Banu Isra'il*" (Children of Israel) in the Qur'an is always used to refer to the Jews as a whole, and not the Apostles. The term used throughout the Qur'an to refer to the Apostles of Jesus is "*al-Hawariyyun*," a special group of people who believed in him and were his nearest disciples (e.g. Qur'an 61:14). So, if, in the Qur'anic prophecy of Jesus (Qur'an 61:6), the Apostles had been the audience (as in the Gospel of John), the above-mentioned term would have been used. Therefore, the Qur'anic reference to Jesus' prophecy about a prophet with the name "Ahmad" cannot refer to the prophecy of Jesus about the coming Paraclete as reported in the Gospel of John.

(2) Difference between special words. Another indication showing that the Qur'anic verse does not refer to the prophecy in the Gospel of John is the difference between the words they have used for the coming prophet. The Qur'an emphasizes that Jesus Christ predicted the coming of Prophet Muhammad with his proper name Ahmad. However, such an explicit word is not mentioned in the prophecy of the Gospel, and the word "*περικλυτος*" (Periklutos), as is suggested by some scholars instead of the word "*παράκλητος*" (Parakletos), is not a proper name for a particular person. Because the word is an adjective, it can only be assumed to be a translation of a name. If the writer of the Gospel wanted to record a prediction of Jesus about the coming of the next prophet, he would have to introduce that coming prophet with his proper name, Muhammad (or Ahmad, as is mentioned in the Qur'an), not its translation. It is difficult to accept that a prophet, especially if informing his people about the next prophet is his duty, predicts the coming of the

next prophet, not with his proper name, but with a translated word. Moreover, we cannot accept even the word “περικλυτος” (Periklutos) as a translation for the name Ahmad, because Ahmad in Arabic, means “the most praised,” while the Greek word means “much praised,” which is only equal to the name Muhammad, not the name Ahmad.

(3) Incoordination of the idea and the text. Another reason is the lack of coordination of the proposed Greek word “περικλυτος” with the structure of the sentences in the text. The following is an example of one of the phrases in which the word “Paraclete” appears: “And I will ask the father, and He will give you another Paraclete who will remain with you forever” (14:26). The word “another” in this phrase clearly shows that the word before it is not a proper noun. Certainly, it could have never been meant as the proper name of Prophet Muhammad or its Greek translation, because this would make the phrase meaningless. Also, it would be possible that besides Prophet Muhammad as “Periclete,” we would have many other Pericletes too.¹

(4) Absence of related versions. Another reason confirming that the word “περικλυτος” (Periklutos) was never mentioned in the ancient Greek manuscripts of the Gospel of John is the total absence of this word in our existing ancient documents. There are around five-thousand ancient Greek manuscripts, which contain all or parts of the New Testament (Metzger 1968, 36), and there exist a plethora of known Christian documents which have mentioned or referred to the prophecy. All of these documents have recorded the word solely as “παράκλητος” (Parakletos) or its transliteration or translation. All of these documents belong to pre-Islamic centuries and are written by different individuals

1. Benjamin David Keldani, the famous convert, who was convinced that the original word in the prophecy might have been “Periclete,” could not solve the problem. Instead, he suggested a new construction for the phrase: “I shall go to the Father, and he shall *send* you another *apostle whose name shall be* Periqlytos, that he may remain with you forever” (Keldani 1987, 211). But there is no evidence supporting such a change.

belonging to various Christian sects in a vast geographical range, from Rome to Mesopotamia and from Egypt to China, and in different languages, such as Greek, Syriac, Pahlavi (ancient Persian), Coptic, and Latin. Since these documents are written based on former manuscripts, the mentioned word was indeed the same in those manuscripts as well. Even the sects who regarded the word to be a reference to a prophet regarded it only as Paraclete, and did not mention any other word like "περικλυτος" (Periklutos) or "Ahmad" in its stead.

Based on the above points, there is no evidence that confirms the existence of the proper (or even translated) name of Prophet Muhammad (s) in the ancient manuscripts of the Gospel of John. Recently, some scholars have attributed this mistake to the time of the Prophet. They argue that in the time of the Prophet, in which the majority of Christians in Arabia were Syriac-speaking, some of their ignorant translators, who wanted to translate the word "Paraqlita" (Paraclete) from Syriac into Arabic, thought it originated from the Greek "περικλυτος" (Periklutos). Relying on this mistake, these Christian scholars cited the word "Ahmad" as its equal in their translation. Some scholars argue that the Prophet heard this translation from some heretic Christian monks and incorporated it into the Qur'an (St. Clair Tisdall 1905, 190-91).

The Original Source of the Idea of a Literal Connection between the Words "Ahmad" and "Paraclete"

As we said, the claim that the Gospel was distorted in the case of Paraclete has no precedence in the early Islamic sources, and can be found only in the works of Muslim scholars after the nineteenth century. Given that Muslims' knowledge of Greek was never so strong to develop such an idea, we should try to find its origin outside the Islamic world.

The earliest traces of the idea can be found in the writings of George Sale, the great British scholar of the early eighteenth century. George Sale was the first one who brought up the idea of the similarity between the Greek words “παρακλητος” and “περικλυτος,” and, without any evidence, attributed to Muslims the belief in a distortion in the Gospel of John in this case. It seems that what led Sale to assume such an idea was the Gospel of Barnabas. In his study of the Gospel of Barnabas, Sale found phrases which referred to Prophet Muhammad (s) not only with his explicit name but also with its meaning. He writes:

The Muhammadans (Muslims) have also a Gospel in Arabic, attributed to St. Barnabas, wherein the history of Jesus Christ is related in a manner very different from what we find in the true Gospels, and correspondent to those traditions which Muhammad has followed in his Koran... instead of the Paraclete or Comforter they have in this apocryphal Gospel inserted the word Periclyte, that is famous or illustrious, by which they pretend their prophet was foretold by name. (Sale 1877, 53)

Later, when he comes to his footnote on the Qur’anic verse (61:6), he refers to an interpretation by an Iranian commentator, which implies a relation between the verse and the prophecy of Paraclete in the Gospel. He then repeats his former claim and writes:

For Mohammed also bore the name of Ahmed; both names being derived from the same root, and nearly of the same signification. The Persian paraphrast, to support what is here alleged, quotes the following words of Christ, “I go to my Father, and the Paraclete shall come” [John 16: 7] ... [T]he Mohammedan doctors unanimously teaching, that by the Paraclete (or, as they choose to read it, the Periclyte, or Illustrious), their prophet is intended, and no other. (Sale, 1877, 449).¹

But Sale’s Opinion was not based upon an examination of the Gospel of Barnabas, because in that time he had not yet seen the text:

1. However, he never mentions the names of these “Mohammedan doctors” in this book or any of his other works.

[B]ut of the gospel of St. Barnabas (which I had not seen when the little I have said of it in the Preliminary Discourse, and the extract I had borrowed from M. de la Monnoye and Mr. Toland, were printed off), I must beg leave to give some further account. (Sale 1877, ix)

But such a thing does not exist in the works of de la Monnoye and Toland, and it seems that the idea was merely a misunderstanding of their works by Sale.

When Sale wrote his glossary on the English translation of the Qur'an, by which point he had seen the Gospel of Barnabas, he repeated his words there too without correction. However, it is not known from which part of the Gospel of Barnabas he derived the idea. The Gospel of Barnabas has no Greek manuscripts, but only two Italian and Spanish manuscripts. Thus, none of the two claimed Greek words "παράκλητος" and "περικλυτος" (Paraclete and Periclete) can be found therein. So, what was the basis of Sale's supposition? As some scholars have shown, there are only two phrases throughout the Gospel of Barnabas which can be assumed as the possible places upon which Sale's idea is established: first, where the Gospel (introducing Prophet Muhammad as the Messiah), in one place, mentions his name as "Machometo" (Muhammad) and says that his name is "Admirable" (synonymous to the name "Ahmad"): "The name of the Messiah is admirable, for God himself gave him the name when he had created his soul, and placed it in a celestial splendour" (The Gospel of Barnabas 1907, 225); second, the Gospel introduces him as "a splendor": "I therefore say unto you that the messenger of God is a splendor" (The Gospel of Barnabas 1907, 105). Splendor is another meaning of the same word, and the Arabic glossator of the Italian manuscript, who saw here a reference to the Paraclete of the Gospel of John, brings the Arabic word "Ahmad" for it: "In the Arabic tongue Ahmed, in the Amran (Hebrew) tongue Messia, in Latin Consolator, in Greek Paracletus" (The Gospel of Barnabas 1907, 105, footnote f).

But the words “admirable” and “splendor” in these phrases of the Gospel are only adjectives, and, despite what Sale has supposed, are not mentioned as proper names for the Prophet. Also, it is confusing that the gloss in the Italian manuscript contains the word “Ahmad.” It makes the word “splendoure” equivalent to the Arabic word “Ahmad,” but also to the Hebrew word “Messiah,” the Latin word “Consolator,” and the Greek word “Paracletus.” It seems that the glossator only provides some titles for Prophet Muhammad in different languages, and never claims that the word Paraclete is a distorted form of another word. Generally speaking, the glossator of the Gospel of Barnabas, like other Muslims, has only incorrectly assumed that the word Paraclete in the Gospel is equal to the Arabic word Ahmad. But it is in no way what Sale has claimed.

What was the actual opinion of the Muslim author of the Gospel of Barnabas¹ about the word “Paraclete” in the Gospel of John? For an answer, we must examine a phrase that puts these words in the mouth of Jesus:

But my consolation is in the coming of the messenger (i.e. Muhammad), who shall destroy every false opinion of me, and his faith shall spread and shall take hold of the whole world, for so hath God promised to Abraham our father. And that which giveth me consolation is that his faith shall have no end, but shall be kept inviolate by God. (The Gospel of Barnabas 1907, 225)

This phrase, which regards Prophet Muhammad as a “consolation giver” to Jesus, is an explicit reference to the prophecy in the Gospel of John, which regards the coming prophet as Paraclete or “Consolator.” So, the author of the Gospel of Barnabas, much like his Christian and Muslim contemporaries, related it to the word Paraclete in the Gospel of John, with this same form, the same meaning of consolatory, and

1. For further discussion on how the Gospel of Barnabas has been written by a Muslim author, see the author’s introduction to the new Persian translation of the Gospel (Karimpur 2015, 1-241).

without exchanging it for another word. Thus, he included the parenthetical phrase in his Gospel to clarify why Jesus gave this title to him in the Gospel of John. So, Sale's attribution of the belief in the distortion of the Gospel to the Muslim author of the Gospel of Barnabas is not correct. To be sure, if he had examined the Gospel carefully he would have never developed such an incorrect idea.

Sale's supposition, however, made him believe that the Qur'anic verse, which mentions Jesus' prophecy about the advent of Prophet Muhammad by the name Ahmad, refers to this supposedly original Gospel of John and the Greek word "περικλυτος" (synonymous with the words Ahmad and Muhammad). Since this claim could not be originally from a divine source, Sale assumed that Prophet Muhammad had heard this part of the Gospel from a Christian monk in Arabia and then put it in the mouth of Jesus in order to claim that the prophecy in the Gospel was about him. This idea later on became accepted amongst modern scholars, especially those who denied the divinity of the Qur'an and were looking for a human origin for it. However, as we have already described, not only is there no evidence to confirm such an idea but there are many reasons that lead us to reject it, reasons which in turn reveal the inadequacy of modern scholarship on this topic.

Conclusion

(1) In Muslim writings, prior to the nineteenth century, the only linguistic relation assumed between the two words "Paraclete" and "Ahmad" was the wrong assumption that the latter is a translation of the former.

(2) The origin of the idea of a distortion in the Gospel of John is not Islamic sources; rather, its first traces are found in the works of George Sale, who attributed to Muslims the belief that the word Paraclete is a distorted form of the word Periclete.

(3) The main cause of Sale's supposition was his inaccurate study of the Gospel of Barnabas.

(4) A careful study of the Gospel of Barnabas shows that, despite what Sale supposed, the author of the Gospel of Barnabas never believed "Paraclete" to be a distorted word. In fact, even the Muslim writer of its Arabic glosses did not propose such an idea, as Sale has claimed.

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