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Revelation and Reason

In the Thought of Ṭabāṭabā'ī

with Special Reference to the Question of Freedom in Islam

Aboulfazl Sajedi Bidgoli

*A Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
the degree of Master of Arts*

Institute of Islamic Studies

McGill University, Montreal

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Abstract

Author: Aboulfazl Sajedi Bidgoli

Title: Revelation and Reason in the Thought of Ṭabâṭabâ'î with
 Especial Reference to the Question of Freedom

Degree: Master of Arts

Department: Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University

The relation between revelation and reason is a matter of interest for human beings and is connected with the development of reason and knowledge in modern society. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabâṭabâ'î, a modern Muslim scholar who was an expert in both Islamic philosophy and Qur'ânic interpretation, developed new approaches to such issues as the role of human rational ability, logic and philosophy in religious knowledge. Furthermore he deals with such specific controversial topics on the subject of revelation and reason as, social freedom and freedom of thought and belief in Islam. He tends to elaborate his view of freedom based on both the Qur'ân and rational bases. Ṭabâṭabâ'î's approach to revelation and reason, his reconciliation of them in general, and his specific perspective on freedom are studied in this thesis with respect to their underlying principles and their scopes.

Résumé

Auteur: Aboulfazl Sajedi Bidgoli
Titre: Les concepts de Révélation et de Raison dans la pensée de
Ṭabâṭabâ'î avec une attention particulière à la question de la liberté.
Diplôme: Maîtrise ès Arts
Faculté: Institute des Etudes islamiques, université McGill

La relation entre les concepts de Révélation et de Raison est digne d'intérêt pour les êtres humains et est reliée au développement de la raison ainsi que de la connaissance au sein de la société moderne. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabâṭabâ'î, était un théoricien musulman contemporain qui fut un expert à la fois en philosophie islamique et en interprétation qur'ânique. Celui ci a développé de nouvelles approches dans ces domaines, notamment ceux concernant les rôles de la capacité rationnelle des êtres humains, la place de la logique et de la philosophie au sein de la connaissance religieuse. De plus, il aborde certains thèmes controversés portant sur la Révélation et la Raison en tant que liberté sociale, liberté de pensée et de croyance en l'Islam. Il tente aussi d'élaborer sa vision de la liberté fondée à la fois sur le Qur'ân ainsi que d'autres fondements rationnels. L'approche des concepts de Révélation et de Raison de Ṭabâṭabâ'î, la réconciliation de ces deux principes en général ainsi que sa perspective spécifique sur la liberté sont donc étudiés dans ce mémoire tout en respectant leurs principes sous-jacents et leur portée.

Acknowledgment

All praises are due to Allah who created human being and taught him what he knows not (the Qur'ân, 96: 5).

My great admiration is due to the government of Islamic Republic of Iran which provided for me by its financial support the opportunity to continue my study at McGill University and to write this thesis. I would like also to express my thanks to the Institute of Islamic Studies specially Professor Eric Ormsby whose supervision, insightful comments and valuable guidance contributed to the development of this study. I should also thank him for providing essential sources for this thesis from Iran. Appreciation and thanks are also due to the Bâqir al-'Ulûm cultural Foundation, its president Âyat Allâh Meşbaḥ, and its staff for encouraging and supporting my studies and giving valuable suggestions to this work.

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I am deeply grateful and indebted to my wife and children who lost their joy and experienced a lot of pain for the sake of this service to be accomplished. May Allah accept this humble work and reward us with His grace.

Transliteration Table

	Arabic	Persian		Arabic	Persian
ب	B	B	ض	Ḍ	Z̤
پ		P	ط	Ṭ	Ṭ
ت	T	T	ظ	Ẓ	Ẓ
ث	TH	Ṣ	ع	‘	‘
ج	J	J	غ	GH	GH
چ		CH	ف	F	F
ح	Ḥ	Ḥ	ق	Q	Q
خ	KH	KH	ك	K	K
د	D	D	گ		G
ذ	DH	Ẓ	ل	L	L
ر	R	R	م	M	M
ز	Z	Z	ن	N	N
ژ		ZH	ه	H	H
س	S	S	و	W	V
ش	SH	SH	ی	Y	Y
س̣	Ṣ	Ṣ			

This humble work is dedicated

to

Imâm Mahdî

may Allâh bless him

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Introduction

Reason, intellect, or intelligence, (Arabic: *'aql*) has a wide variety of senses and uses. What is meant in this thesis is its theological meaning. From a theological point of view, reason is a source of knowledge in antithesis with Tradition (*naql*). Therefore, reason, which is independent from revelation, is a natural tool to understand what is right and wrong.¹ Among various kinds of human knowledge, rational sciences, such as logic and philosophy, depend on reason more than experimental sciences.²

The notion of revelation (Arabic: *waḥy*), which originated from God's sending down his revealed law to human beings, is a basic concept in many religions. In Islam particularly it is a divine communication from God to people by means of the Prophet Muḥammad (d. 632) who received revelation through dreams, visions and auditions.³ Revelation is different from *ilhām*, which denotes the inspiration of artists, saints and others. Furthermore, it is distinguished from *tanzīl*, which indicates the object of revelation, and from *inzāl*, which is sending down the law from God to people.⁴

¹ F. Rahman, "Aql" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960) vol. 1, p. 341.

² The words "logic", "philosophy" and "reason" are not necessarily the same. However, I use in this thesis "philosophy" and "logic" as rational sciences which mostly depends on reason.

³ Johannes Denzinger, "Revelation" Translated from German by Matthew J. O. Connell, in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), vol. 12, pp. 356 & 361.

⁴ A. J. Wensinck, "Wahy" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (Leiden: E. G. Brill, 1934), vol. IV:2, p. 1901.

The argument between revelation and reason originates in the question; is it possible to demonstrate religious truths using reason? Is there any harmony between them or are they incompatible?

The relation between revelation and reason has been a matter of discussion for religious scholars for many centuries. We can divide the history of development of Western thought, in this concern, into three very broad main periods. The first one is the age of Greek Philosophy, the so called "Greek miracle." This period has been called the age of pure rational knowledge. It continued up until the fifth century. The second era is the Middle Ages. In this period, which continued up until the Renaissance, revelation was often seen as predominant as an absolute truth of Christianity. The last period of purely positive and rational contemplation, which was the result of the effort of scientists and religious reformers, started with the appearance of the Renaissance around the end of the fifteenth century.⁵

Referring to the history of Islamic thought we can divide the various positions of the Islamic thinkers into three categories, primacy of reason, primacy of revelation, and the harmony between them. Certain scholars, such as Ibn Rushd (1126-1198), attempted a reconciliation between the two. Ibn Rushd not only saw no conflict between revelation and reason, he upheld the necessity of reasoning for understanding Islamic revelation. This point can be understood from his view of philosophy as a knowledge, which mostly

⁵ Etienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), pp. 3-4.

depends on reason rather than experimental analysis. In his opinion, only philosophers are able to interpret the ambiguous verses of the Qur'ân. Other Islamic scholars, generally Ash'arites, and specifically Ghazzâlî (1058-1111), not only disputed this idea but taught that a conflict exists between philosophy and religion. Ghazzâlî differentiated as well between philosophy and logic in this regard, and he himself quite often, drew on Aristotelian logic to support his ideas. Meanwhile a number of thinkers including Ibn Ijâz (994-1064) and Ibn Taymîyyah (1236-1328) rejected Greek logic as a means of understanding revelation. Therefore, there is a dispute among Muslim thinkers over the use of reason and especially logic and philosophy in the interpretation of the Qur'ân or in any Islamic teaching. As far as the development of human reason and knowledge in modern society is concerned questions about the primacy of reason or revelation are still fresh and need to be elaborated more than in previous times. Furthermore, discussing revelation and reason is an important issue, which has an effect on understanding and interpreting religious texts.

Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabâṭabâ'î, (1901-1980) a modern Muslim theologian, interpreted the Qur'ân in one of his major works: the 20 volume *al-Mizân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân*, (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-A'lamî lil Matbû'ât, 1970). In that work he developed quite specific ideas concerning the relation between revelation and reason. His written works indicate that he was very concerned to develop philosophy and harmonize it with religion. He sought to answer objections, which have been raised against the use of reason especially logic in the understanding of religious materials. Thus, Ṭabâṭabâ'î completes,

and further develops, a new chapter in an old debate. In his *al-Mîzân* Ṭabâṭabâ'î also discusses, to a greater extent than earlier Islamic scholars, such specific controversial topics, which bear upon revelation and reasoning as miracles, human rights, women's rights, freedom in Islam, social communication in Islam, and the like. He tries to answer some of the ambiguous points in this regard and compares the Islamic idea with the Western approach in these controversial topics. It seems that he has developed Islamic thought regarding the relation between revelation and human knowledge. I shall discover in this thesis Ṭabâṭabâ'î's position with regard to questions that have been raised about the relation between Islam and reason as follows:

1. Does Ṭabâṭabâ'î believe that there is any sort of conflict between revelation and reason in Islam? Does he advocate the primacy of either reason or revelation or try to reconcile them?

2. In his opinion, what should we do when a contradiction occurs between them?

3. To what extent does he make use of philosophy and logic in his own interpretation of the Qur'ân?

4. Is it necessary for an Islamic researcher to consider the results of the rational sciences in order to interpret the Qur'ân in a better way?

Besides studying Ṭabâṭabâ'î's general view of revelation and reason, I shall concentrate on his specific opinion regarding human social freedom as a controversial case involving revelation and reason. The purpose is to see the extent to which he makes use of these two tools to elaborate his view. As a short introduction to the scope of revelation

and reason in the discussion on freedom, it is better that we consider the following point. Freedom (Arabic: *ḥurrīyyah*) has variant aspects such as theological and social aspects. The theological aspect of freedom addresses the question of a human being's ability to perform his own actions, whether by compulsion or by delegation. This aspect of freedom has been discussed in a variety of ways by different groups of Islamic theologians such as the Ash'arites, Mu'tazilites, as well as Shi'ites. The social aspect of freedom, entails freedom in speaking, writing, reading, publishing books and articles, choosing jobs, and other choices in human life. In this thesis I shall discuss social freedom as one of the controversial issues involving revelation and reason. The contradiction between them with regard to freedom originates from the point that Islam as other religions, has laws for life that limit people's social liberty. It prohibits a number of actions and recommends the performance of other actions. Ṭabāṭabā'ī tries to reconcile revelation and reason in the Islamic view of social freedom. He tries to develop an Islamic conception of freedom and to answer questions, which have been raised in this regard. Ṭabāṭabā'ī believes that no conflict ultimately exists between revelation and reason, even though this position has been rejected by other modern scholars. The latter maintain that there is indeed conflict between revelation and reason on this very issue. According to these thinkers, Islam limits human freedom. In this part I want to elaborate Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view of human freedom in detail. I will try to discover, in this part, Ṭabāṭabā'ī's views regarding the following questions:

1. Is there any inherent conflict between reason and Islam's view of social freedom?

2. How does he reconcile revelation and reason in this concern?

3. What is Ṭabāṭabā'ī's conception of both human freedom of thought and belief in Islam? And how much does he use reason to interpret and elaborate sacred law in this regard.

Ṭabāṭabā'ī tries to answer several ambiguous points in this regard and complete what has been explained by previous scholars. Although Ṭabāṭabā'ī does not exhaustively discuss, in any single passage of his book, his ideas regarding such issues directly, they can be followed and discovered throughout his written works.

The chapters of the thesis

The first chapter covers the discussion about Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī's educational life and work. His educational life includes various texts, which he learned in different fields such as Arabic literature, jurisprudence, its principles, logic, philosophy and theology. I will review several centers where he acquired Islamic knowledge, and the important professors in various fields with whom he had contact. Furthermore, I will look at his scientific activities including the publishing of books, articles, epistles, annotations on several Islamic texts, and training students in various fields. This chapter will help us to survey Ṭabāṭabā'ī's attempt to reconstruct Islamic philosophical research and Qur'ānic interpretation, his concern with modern social issues and with reconciling revelation and reason.

The next chapter deals with the historical background of the discussion about revelation and reason. This chapter covers the theologians' and the philosophers' position. The former will begin with a discussion of the forerunners of two theological schools of revelation and reason in the history of Islam, the Qadarites and the Jabarites and then, the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites. I will also consider the position of Abû Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālî (d. 1111), Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064), and Ibn Taymîyyah (d. 1328) as major figures in the criticism of just philosophy or both philosophy and logic. Then I will discuss the position of those philosophers who attempted to reconcile revelation and reason such as, Abû Yûsuf Ya'qûb Ibn Ishâq al-Kindî (d. 866), Abû Naṣr al-Fârâbî (d. 950), Ibn Sînâ (d. 1006) and Ibn Rushd (d. 1198).

In the following chapter I will review Ṭabâṭabâ'î's thought concerning philosophy and logic. His view regarding the importance of rational methods, logic and philosophy, in understanding revelation, will be clarified, as follows:

I will discuss first, his opinion of the Qur'ân's invitation to the use of the rational method and to follow the way of thought and knowledge. Then I will explain Ṭabâṭabâ'î's preference for rational method in understanding revelation. The next part deals with his view of the Qur'ân as a religious text that explains the criteria for its law and does not invite people to accept Islamic beliefs blindly. The following discussion deals with Ṭabâṭabâ'î's argument about a Qur'ânic verse to prove his position regarding the importance of logic. Then I will turn to his opinion about the role of philosophy in understanding revelation. The next point will be his answers about questions, which have

been raised against logic. The last argument covers the roots of his position concerning the importance of philosophy and logic in the work of Ibn Rushd.

In the following chapter I turn to a question, which naturally comes up with regard to revelation and reason. That is, the case of conflict between a statement of the Qur'ân or Tradition and a philosophical or scientific opinion. I will review Ṭabâṭabâ'î's view of legal proofs and the bases of the credibility of reason, the condition for the impossibility of the conflict between revelation and reason, and the solution for the cases of that conflict.

The next chapter deals with the study of Ṭabâṭabâ'î's view on the social aspect of freedom (Arabic: *ḥurrîyyah*) as an example of a controversial issues involving revelation and reason to see how he reconciles them. I will discover first, the definitions of variant aspects of freedom, including theological, mystical, ethical, legal and social aspects. Then I turn to his clarification of the social aspect of freedom through five rational bases, as follows: the natural liberty of the human being, the necessity of social life, the necessity for the limitation of human freedom in a society, sources of legislation, and general permission for using God's blessings. Finally I shall turn to Ṭabâṭabâ'î's view concerning freedom of thought and belief.

CHAPTER 1

Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī's Life and Work

I. Ṭabāṭabā'ī's Life and Education

II. Ṭabāṭabā'ī's Scientific Activities

III. Ṭabāṭabā'ī's Written Works

Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī's Life and Work

Preface

Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī was a Muslim theologian who played an important role in introducing modern Islam to Muslims. He tried to understand the political and social aspects of Islam and wrote different books to this end. His works make clear that he was very much concerned with reconciling revelation and reason, as well as with modern social issues. In this chapter I will discuss his life, his social and scientific activities and his written works. Ṭabāṭabā'ī's life can be divided into three parts: study of Islamic subjects, teaching, and writing activities.

I. Ṭabâṭabâ'î's life and education

Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabâṭabâ'î was born in 1901 to a religious family in Tabrîz, a city in the north-west of Iran. The name *Ṭabâ* had come from one of his grandfathers, Ibrâhîm Ṭabâṭabâ, the son of Ismâ'il Dîbâj. Fourteen of his ancestors had been Islamic scholars.⁶ His life can be divided into three periods, learning in Tabrîz and Najaf, and his teaching and scientific activities in Qum.

Ṭabâṭabâ'î's education in Tabrîz

Ṭabâṭabâ'î started elementary school in Tabrîz in 1910 after his parents had died. He learned in this period the ordinary books studied by other children such as the *Giulistân* and *Bûstân* of Sa'dî, *Târîkh-i Mu'jam* of Amîr Nazẓâm and the *Qur'ân*. From 1215 to 1222 Ṭabâṭabâ'î learned Arabic literature, jurisprudence and its principles, logic, philosophy and theology in the Ḥawzah 'Ilmîyyah of Tabrîz.⁷ For Arabic language he learned the following texts: *Jâmi' al-Muqaddamât*,⁸ *'Alfiyah* of Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd

⁶ Alî Âlûsî, *Ṭabâṭabâ'î wa-Manhajuhû fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân*, Translated by Sayyid Ḥusayn Mîrjalîlî, (Tehran: Makaz-i Châp va-Nashr-i Sâzmân-i Tablîghât-i Islâmî, 1990), p. 59-60.

⁷ Nâsir Bâqirî Bîdhindî, "Zindigî-yi Âyat Allâh 'Allâmah Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn 'Ṭabâṭabâ'î," in *Nûr-i 'Ilm*, December 1989, p. 46.

⁸ See for the new edition of this book with explanation: Mudarris-i Afqânî, (ed.) *Jâmi' al-Muqaddamât* (Qum: Mu'assasah-i Intishârât-i Hijrat, 1990). This book includes different texts in Arabic grammar such as: *Kitâb al-Amthalah* and *Sharf-i Mîr* of al-Sayyid al-Sharîf al-Jurjânî (d. 816 A. H.), *al-'Awâmil fî al-Nahw* of Muḥsin Ibn Muḥammad Ṭâhir al-Qazwînî al-Nahwî, and *Ṣamadîyyah fî al-Nahw* of Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ibn 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Ḥârithî (Shaykh Bahâ'î) (d. 1031 A. H.). See: Aqâ Buzurg-i Tihirânî, *al-Dharî'ah Ilâ Taṣâñf al-Shî'ah*, (Beirut: n. p. 1983), vol. 15, pp. 41 and 359, and vol. 13, p. 115.

Allâh Ibn Mâlik (d. 1274) with the commentary of Suyûṭî, *Kitâb al-Naḥw* of Jâmî, *Mughnî al-Labîb* of Ibn Hishâm, *al-Muṭawwal* of Taftâzânî. For jurisprudence and its principles he studied the texts: *al-Rawḍah al-Bahîyyah fî Sharḥ al-Lum'ah al-Dimashqîyyah* of Zayn al-Dîn Ibn 'Alî, al-Shahîd al-Thânî (1506-1559), *Kitâb al-Makâsib* and *Farâ'id al-Uṣûl* of Murtaḍâ Ibn Muḥammad Amîn, Shaykh Ansârî (d. 1864), *Taḥrîr al-Ma'âlim fî Uṣûl al-Fîqh* of Jamâl al-Dîn Ḥasan Ibn Zayn al-Dîn 'Âmulî (d. 1602), *Qawânîn al-Uṣûl* of Mîrzâ-yî Qumî, and *Kafâyah al Uṣûl* of Muḥammad Kâzîm Kurâsânî (d. 1911). In logic, philosophy and theology he learned the following texts: *Sharḥ al-Risâlah al-Shamsîyyah* of Qutb al-Dîn Muḥammad, al-Râzî (d. 1365), *Kashf al-Murâd*⁹ of al-Ḥasan Ibn Yûsuf Ibn Muḥahhar al-Ḥillî (d. 1325) and *al-Ishârât wa-al-Tanbîhât* of Ibn Sînâ (d. 1037).¹⁰

An interesting event happened to Ṭabâṭabâ'î while studying in Tabrîz. When he started learning Arabic as a child, he felt that he did not intend to continue studying. He felt that he was not intelligent enough to become a learned person. He once failed in the examination on an advanced book in Arabic grammar; the *Alfiyah* of Ibn Mâlik with the commentary of Suyûṭî. This angered his instructor who told Ṭabâṭabâ'î that he was wasting both of their time. As a result, Ṭabâṭabâ'î became so disappointed that he was not able to stay any more in his city and continue studying. He left the city and asked God in a

⁹ This book is a commentary on *Tajrîl al-I'tiqâd* of Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Naṣîr al-Dîn al-Ṭûsî (d. 1365).

¹⁰ Muḥsin Amîn 'Âmulî, *A'yân al-Shî'ah*, (Beirut: Dâr al-Ta'âruf lil-Maṭbû'ât, 1986), vol. 9, p. 255.

especial prayer to help him. With that prayer, he felt an immediate improvement in his intelligence and in his aptitude for studying. He was then able to study without tiring.¹¹

Ṭabāṭabā'ī's professors in Najaf

In 1923 Ṭabāṭabā'ī went to Najaf, where he stayed for 11 years, to complete his studies. At that time Najaf was a renowned center for Islamic learning. During this period he participated in classes of jurisprudence and its principles (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). His professors in these fields were Āyat Allāh Muḥammad Ḥusayn Nā'inī,¹² Āyat Allāh Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī,¹³ and Āyat Allāh Muḥammad Ḥusayn Gharavī Iṣfahānī.¹⁴ He studied philosophical and mystical texts such as *al-Asfār* and *al-Mushā'ir* of Mullā Ṣadrā, *Shifā'*

¹¹ Bîdhindî. "Zindigî-yi Āyat Allāh 'Allāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī," pp. 54-55.

¹² Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn Nā'inī Gharavī, the son of Mīrzā 'Abd al-Raḥīm Shaykh al-Islām, was born in 1857 in Nā'in. He wrote various books and articles on jurisprudence and its principles. Ālūsī. *Ṭabāṭabā'ī wa-Manhajuhû fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân*. Translated by Sayyid Ḥusayn Mīrjalîlî, p. 64.

¹³ Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī, (d. 1365) the son of Sayyid Muḥammad, was born in Madîsah, a village of Iṣfahân. He was a famous professor of jurisprudence and its principles. Aḥmad Ṣadr Ḥāj Sayyid Jawādî, *Dāyarah al-Ma'ârif al-Tashayyû'*, (Tehran: Sâzmân-i Dāyarah al-Ma'ârif al-Tashayyû', 1988), vol. 2, pp. 220-222.

¹⁴ Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn, the son of Ḥāj Muḥammad Ḥasan Mu'in al-Tujjâr al-Iṣfahānī al-Najafî (d. 1940), was a famous professor in philosophy, jurisprudence and its principles. He wrote different books on those fields such as *Tulūfah al-Ḥakim*, (Qum: Mu'assasah Âl al-Bayt, 1958), and *Mukâtabât-i 'Irḥânî bayn-i Sayyid Aḥmad Ḥāj 'Irî va-Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn Gharavî dur Sharh-i du Bayt-i Aḥṭâr*, (Tehran: Markaz-i Intishârât-i 'Ilmî va-Farhangî, 1982). Āghâ Buzurg Tihrânî, *Ṭabaqât A'lâm al-Sh'fah*, (Najaf: Intishârât 'Ilmî, 1955), vol. 1, p. 560.

Shifa' of Ibn Sînâ, *Tamhîd al-Qawâ'id* of Ibn Turkah, by Sayyid Husayn Bâdkubî.¹⁵ He also learned mathematics, geometry and algebra, from Sayyid Abû al-Qâsim Khunsârî. His professor of ethics was Âyat Allâh Hâj Mîrzâ 'Alî Qâdî Ṭabâṭabâ'î.¹⁶

Ṭabâṭabâ'î's return from Najaf to Tabrîz

Ṭabâṭabâ'î was forced to leave Najaf for economic reasons. He returned to his birth place where he stayed for more than 10 years. He almost ended his studies and researches in this period and started working in agriculture to earn his living. Ṭabâṭabâ'î considered this period the worst of his life and a waste of his time. He finally decided to leave Tabrîz for Qum, a famous Islamic center in Iran, which includes different Islamic cultural institutions, libraries and professors.¹⁷

¹⁵ Sayyid Husayn, the son of Rizâ, the son of Mûsâ Husaynî Bâdkubah'î (d. 1933) was a specialist in Islamic philosophy. He wrote different books such as *Hâshiyah bar Kitâb Ṭahârât*, *Hâshiyah bar Kitâb Asfâr* and *Hâshiyah bar Kitâb al-Shawâhid*. Âlûsî, *Ṭabâṭabâ'î wa-Manhajuhû fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân*. Translated by Sayyid Husayn Mîrjalîlî, p. 64.

¹⁶ Âlûsî, *Ṭabâṭabâ'î wa-Manhajuhû fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân*. Translated by Sayyid Husayn Mîrjalîlî, pp. 63-65.

¹⁷ Âmulî, *Al'yân al-Shîah*, vol. 9, p. 255.

II. Ṭabāṭabā'ī's scientific activities in Qum

When Ṭabāṭabā'ī came to Qum and started Islamic research he felt that he had been freed. He considered his time in Tabrīz, without any intellectual research, as time in prison. Some of Ṭabāṭabā'ī's activities during his period of living in Qum are, as follows:

He tried to reconstruct Islamic philosophical research and Qur'ānic interpretation. Before starting any work, Ṭabāṭabā'ī evaluated the intellectual situation in Qum, and found that some of the Islamic fields did not have enough professors. He did find enough classes on jurisprudence and its principles. Therefore, he began to teach philosophy and Qur'ānic interpretation, although the conditions for teaching philosophy were not good. Most of the scholars who were teaching Islamic law at that time, believed that philosophy was in contradiction to Islamic beliefs. It was only after Ṭabāṭabā'ī's teaching in Qum, that Islamic thinkers gradually tended more to philosophy and agreed with the necessity of learning philosophy.¹⁸

He was also very concerned with training students in the fields of Islamic philosophy and theology. He helped his students in this regard by holding additional classes for them and by supervising their researches. One of his famous students is Murtaḍā Muṭahharī (1920-1979).¹⁹

¹⁸ Bīdhindī, "Zindigī-i Āyat Allāh 'Allāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī," pp. 48-49.

¹⁹ Murtaḍā Muṭahharī was born on 1920 in Farīmān about 60 K.M. distant from Mashhad. His main instructor in philosophy was Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī. He was assassinated in 1979. Muṭahharī wrote more than 40 books and articles including, *al-'Adl al-Ilāhī* (Qum: Dār al-Islāmīyyah lil Nashr,

Ṭabâṭabâ'î's works shows that he is very much concerned with reconciling revelation and reason, and with modern social issues. In this regard he held different dialogues with Islamic scholars of various universities. For example he participated in a discussion of Islamic thinkers at Tehran University. These sessions, which were held every autumn, concentrated on discussions about the relation between philosophy and religion.²⁰ Ṭabâṭabâ'î also made contact with the orientalist scholar, Henry Corbin, during Corbin's annual pilgrimage to Iran. Corbin regularly visited Iran from 1954 up to his death in 1978. One of his projects was to become acquainted with Islamic thinkers such as Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabâṭabâ'î.²¹ Corbin decided to hold sessions with Ṭabâṭabâ'î to ask him questions regarding Shî'ite thought and belief. He held regular sessions with Ṭabâṭabâ'î over the years. One of the major issues in this discussion was the relation between Shî'ite Tradition, philosophy and mysticism.²²

1981), and *Islamic Movement in Twentieth Century*, (Tehran: Maktab-i Qur'ân, Great Islamic Library, 1979). See: Muḥammad Vâ'iz Zâdah Khurâsânî, "Sayrî dar Zindigî-i 'Ilmî va-Inqilâbî-i Shahîd Murtaḍâ Muṭahharî" in *Yâdnâmah-i Ustâd Shahîd Murtaḍâ Muṭahharî*, (Tehran: Sâzmân-i Intishârât va-Amûzish-i Inqilâb-i Islâmî, 1981), pp. 321 and 379.

²⁰ Âlûsî, *Ṭabâṭabâ'î wa-Manhajuhû fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân*, Translated by Sayyid Ḥusayn Mîrjalîlî, p. 69.

²¹ Sayyid Ḥusayn Naşr, *Traditional Islam in the Modern World*, (London: KPI Limited 11 New Fetter Lane, 1987), p.277

²² Ibid p.279. The result of this exchange was published in the following article: Ṭabâṭabâ'î, "Shî'ah" in *Maktab-i Tashayyû'*, Qum: Dâr al-'Ilm, April 1960.

III. Ṭabāṭabā'ī's written works

Ṭabāṭabā'ī wrote books and articles on various subjects such as philosophy, theology, mysticism, and the principles of jurisprudence. We can divide his work into three categories:

Ṭabāṭabā'ī's books

Ṭabāṭabā'ī wrote various books. His most important books are, as follows:

1. *Al-Mizân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân*, "Interpretation of the Qur'ân," in 20 volumes, in Arabic (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-A'lamî lil-Matbû'ât, 1970). This book, which is his major work on the interpretation of the Qur'ân, has been translated into Persian in 40 volumes. Some of its first volumes also have been translated into English.

2. *Uṣûl-i Falsafah va-Ravish-i Ri'âlisim* "Principles of the Philosophy and the Method of Realism" in five volumes, in Persian. (Qum: Intishârât-i Şadrâ, 1990) Since this book was very complex and difficult, Ṭabāṭabā'ī asked Murtaḍâ Muṭahharî, one of his students, to write a deep explanation of it. The first, second, third and fifth volumes of this book are published with the commentary of Muṭahharî. However, he did not have the opportunity to finish his description of its fifth volume before his death. This books deals with evaluating philosophical proofs of some western philosophers who reject the existence of Metaphysic and God.

3. *Bid'ayat al-Iḥikmah*, "Beginning of Philosophy" in Arabic, (Beirut : Dār al-Muṣṭafā lil-Ṭibā'ah wa-al-Nashr, 1982). This book has been translated into Persian by Muḥammad Alī Garāmī.

4. *Nihāyat al-Iḥikmah*, "The End of Philosophy" in Arabic, (Qum: Markaz al-Ṭibā'ah wa-al-Nashr, 1975). This book has been translated into Persian by Haqqānī-i Zanjānī. These two books, "*Bid'ayat al-Iḥikmah*" and "*Nihāyat al-Iḥikmah*," are considered Ṭabāṭabā'ī's major works in philosophy.²³

²³ Besides these major books he wrote other books such as the following:

1. *Sunan al-Nabiyy* "The Life Style of Muḥammad, the Messenger of God" in Arabic, (Tehran: Kitābūrūshnī-i Islāmīyyah, 1987). This book has been translated into Persian by Muḥammad Hādī Fiqhī, and also has been summarized by the Center of Islamic Propaganda in the book titled: "*al-Muntaqā min Kitāb Sunan al-Nabī*", (Tehran: Mu'āwanīyyah al-'Alāqah al-Dawlīyyah fī Munazzamah al-l'ām al-Islāmī, 1989).

2. *Shi'ah dar Islam* "Shi'ite in Islam" in Persian, (Qum: Dār al-Tablīgh-i Islāmī, 1969).

3. *Al-Qur'ān fī al-Islam* "The Qur'ān in Islam", (Tehran: Markaz l'lām al-Dhikr'a al-Khamisah li-Intisar al-Thawrah al-Islamiyah fī Iran, 1983). This book has been translated into English, Arabic, Urdu, Turkish and Malaysian.

4. *Barrasḥā-yi Islāmī* "Islamic Studies" in Persian, (Qum: Markaz-i Intishārāt-i Dār al-Tablīgh-i Islāmī, 1976).

5. *Islamic Teaching in Brief*, Translated by Muzhān-i Jalālī, (Qum: Anṣārīyān Publication, n. d.). See: Ālūsī, *Ṭabāṭabā'ī wa-Manhajuhū fī Tafsīr*, pp. 71-75, and 'Āmulī, *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, vol. 9, pp. 255-256, and 'Abd al-Jawād Falāṭūrī (ed.), *Catalogue of the Shi'ite Collection in the Oriental Department of the University of Cologne*, (New York: K. G. Saur, 1988), pp. 320-321, and "Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī" in *Rāḥmānā-yi Kitāb*, vol. 17, No. 7-9, Oct.-Dec. 1974, pp. 602-605.

Ṭabāṭabā'ī's Treatises and commentaries

Ṭabāṭabā'ī wrote treatises, which are mostly in philosophy, logic and mysticism. Some of his treatises are, as follows:

1. *Muḥammad in the Mirror of Islam*, Translated by William Chittick under the direction of Sayyid Iḥṣayn Naṣr, (Houston, Tex.: Free Islamic Literatures, 1979).

2. *Khalq-i Jadīd-i Pāyān Nāpazīr: Risalah-i Quwwah va-I'īl*, "An Epistle on Potentiality and Actuality" in Arabic and Persian, (Tehran: Mu'assasah-i Muḥala'āt va-Taḥqīqat-i Farhangī, 1986). This epistle includes 75 problems concerning potentiality and actuality in Islamic philosophy. It has been translated into Persian by Muḥammad Muḥammadī Gīlānī.²⁴

He also wrote commentaries on several books in Arabic such as the following:

1. *Biḥār al-Anwār* of Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, 110 volumes, (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Wafā', 1983). Majlisī has assembled most of the Shī'ite Traditions in these books. Ṭabāṭabā'ī has annotated several cases of Majlisī's explanations about the Maxims in its

²⁴ He has also other treatises such as:

1. "Shī'ah" in *Maktab-i Tashayyū'*, (Qum: Dār al-'Ilm, April 1960). This is a collection of Ṭabāṭabā'ī's long interviews and discussions with professor Henry Corbin in several sessions. It covers questions regarding the origin of the Shī'ite sect in Islam, and revelation and reason in Shī'ite thought and Tradition.

2. *Ma'navīyyat-i Tashayyū' va-22 Maqāli-i Dīgar* "Spritualities Of Shiite and 22 Other Articles" in Persian. (Qum: Intishārāt-i Tashayyū', 1975).

3. *Majmū'ah-i Maqālat va-Pursish va-Pāsukh* "Collection of Articles, and Questions and Answers" two volumes, in Persian, (Tehran: Daftar-i Nashr va-Farhang-i Islāmī, 1992). Ālūsī, *Ṭabāṭabā'ī wa-Manhajuhū fī Tafsīr*, pp. 71-75, and 'Āmulī, *A'yân al-Shī'ah*, vol. 9, pp. 255-256.

different volumes. His commentaries were published as footnotes with the text of volume 1-7 of *Bihâr al-Anwâr*.²⁵

2. *Al-Asfâr al-Arba'ah* of Mullâ Şadrâ, 9 volumes, (Tehran: n. p. 1966-).²⁶

²⁵ Sayyid Ibrâhîm 'Alawî, "Ta'liqât 'Allâmah Ṭabâṭabâ'î bar Bihâr al-Anwâr" in *Kayhân-i Andêshah*, No. 38, October-November 1991, pp. 12-30. For further information, see: Muḥsin Kadîvar, "'Aql va Dîn az Nagâh-i Muḥaddith va Ḥakîm" in *Kayhân-i Andêshah*, No. 44, October-November 1992, pp. 14-37.

²⁶ This is a major source for both Mullâ Şadrâ's philosophical doctrines and the history of Islamic philosophy and other intellectual sciences work of Mullâ Şadrâ. The second edition of this book published with some of the Traditional commentaries under the editorship of Ṭabâṭabâ'î, (Tehran: n. p. 1966-). Sayyid İhsan Naşr, *Islamic Life and Thought*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1982), p. 173

CHAPTER 2

Historical Background of the
Discussion about Revelation and
Reason

I. The Theologians' Position

II. The Philosophers' Position

The Historical Background of the Discussion about Revelation and Reason

The relation between revelation and reason has been a matter of discussion for Islamic thinkers for many centuries. We can divide scholars in this regard into two categories: theologians and philosophers.

I. The theologians' position

The forerunners of the two schools of revelation and reason, in the history of Islam, were two theological groups, the Qadarites²⁷ and the Jabarites.²⁸ Their debate was essentially political and not theological in the strict sense of the term, at first. In the following generation, the debate between the neo-Qadarites and the neo-Jabarites began to concentrate on theological discussion. In the latter part of the second/eighth century a new group of theologians known as the Mu'tazilites appeared in Baṣrah. They established their

²⁷ The word "Qadarite" is derived from *qadar*, meaning "determination." "Qadarite" was used in the early period of Islam for a group of theologian who believed that Allāh determines everything including the *khayr* (good) and *sharr* (evil). Shahrīstānī, *Mawsu'ah al-Milal wa-al-Niḥal*, (Beirut: Mu'assisah Nāṣir al-Thaqāfah, 1981), p. 21.

²⁸ The word "Jabarite" is derived from *jabr*, meaning "compulsion." "Jabarite" was used in the early period of Islam for a group of theologian who believed in the negation of actions from people, as the Allāh's slave, and relating their activities to Allāh. In their view, Allāh is the real doer for every deed. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

doctrines during the reign of the Caliph al-Ma'mûn (d. 833). The Mu'tazilites lost their influence at court during the reign of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil (d. 847). However, they continued into the 12th century. Another group that came on the scene to respond to Mu'tazilites' doctrine was the Ash'arites. Its rise was associated with the name of Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'arî (873-935).²⁹

Mu'tazilites and the importance of reason

Mu'tazilites in general assign different levels of importance to reason in human affairs. Some of their thinkers; Bishr Ibn al-Mu'tamir (d. 828), head of the group in Baghdad, Abû 'Alî al-Jubbâ'î (d. 933), and others may have over-emphasized the role of reason, but others stated that the results of reason are sometimes not valid. However, all Mu'tazilites accepted that man can acquire knowledge and can distinguish between good and evil by the power of reasoning.

Abû al-Hudhayl al-'Allâf (d. 841) conceded that man should refer to revelation in matters where reason is in doubt, but he emphasized that reason leads to completely sound judgments on matters of general principles. However, if there is any contradiction between judgment made in accordance with reason and judgment made in accordance with revelation, the latter should be interpreted in a manner, which conforms to reason. Consequently, the Mu'tazilites did not accept the literal meaning of some revelation, which may be inconsistent with the explicit meaning of others.

²⁹ Majid Khadduri, *The Islamic Conception of Justice*, (The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1982), pp. 39-40.

We can also understand the importance of reason in Mu'tazilite opinion by referring to their beliefs concerning *al-ḥusn wa-al-qubḥ al-'aqlīyyān*, that is the independent understanding of good and evil by the intellect. They believe that if we consider the nature of actions by themselves, we will see that some actions differ from others by their natures, therefore, there are essential attributes in actions. There are good and evil (*ḥasan* and *qabīḥ*) in the nature of things prior to any elucidation brought by the revealed law (*shar'*). These facts, which can be understood by the intellect, called *al-mustaqillāt al-'aqlīyyah*. For example, telling a lie is evil and telling the truth is good. Human beings by nature are inclined to tell the truth rather than to lie. Even if one is threatened by telling the truth, or obliged to tell a lie, he recognizes that to tell the truth is right and to tell a lie is wrong. There is a moral obligation pressing a person to tell the truth rather than the lie. Therefore, we can understand good and evil by our intellect.³⁰

The Ash'arites' doctrine and the importance of revelation

Ash'arites generally emphasize the predominant rule of revealed law. They conceded that human beings should refer to revelation and not to reason in order to achieve understanding, especially in the case of a contradiction between revelation and reason. They tried in several cases to prove the insufficiency of reason in theological discussion. For example the founder of the Ash'arites' school, Abu al-Ḥasan Ash'arī, in one of his discourses asked Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī (d. 954) a question about the destiny of three

³⁰ Aḥmad Maḥmūd Ṣubḥī, *Fī 'Ilm al-Kalām, al-Mu'tazilah*, (Dar al-Naḥḍah al-'Arabiyyah, Lubnan, Beirut, 1985), p. 153.

brothers. One of these was pious, the second, wicked, and the third died in infancy. Jubbâ'î is reported to have answered that the first will be among the glorified, the second will go to the hell, and the third will be saved from the hell but will not be among the glorified. Jubbâ'î reasoned his opinion by saying that God knew that, if the infant had survived, he would have been wicked. Therefore, taking his life in infancy was for his or her benefit. Dissatisfied with the answer, Ash'arî asked why God did not cut off the second brother to save him from hell?³¹ The purpose of this discourse was to demonstrate the inadequacy of reason in providing a convincing answer. Ash'arî sought to prove his point that one had to fall back on revelation.³² Ash'arî later demonstrated for his followers, with the explicit meaning of the text, that reason is subordinate to revelation.

Ash'arites rejected the Mu'tazilites opinion concerning *al-ḥusn wa-al-qubḥ al-'aqliyyân*. They denied the existence of any attributes in the nature of actions prior to the revealed law (*shar'*), which was expressed by the Mu'tazilites. Consequently the Ash'arites stated that moral good and evil have no existence before the appearance of divine law. The good (*ḥasan*) and the evil (*qabîḥ*) can be understood only by God's action.³³ Therefore, if the *shar'* encourages people to do something, the action will be regarded as good (*ḥasan*) and if the *shar'* reproaches some action it will be considered as

³¹ 'Abd al-Rahmân Badawî, *Maqâlât al-Islâmîyyîn, al-Mu'tazilah wa-al-Ashâ'irah*, (Beirut: Dâr al-'Ilm lil-Malâyîn, 1971), vol. 1, p. 499.

³² Montgomery W. Watt, *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam*, (Luzac and Company Ltd., London, 1948), p. 137.

³³ L. Gardet, "Allâh" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 412.

evil (*qabîḥ*).³⁴ If God were to reverse the decision and declare good (*ḥasan*) what he has declared evil (*qabîḥ*) and vice versa, for example, telling the truth as a bad action and telling a lie as a good one, there would be no impediment. Ash'arites in reply to the Mu'tazilites' opinion concerning the existence of some moral values (*ḥasan*) and (*qabîḥ*) understood equally by all people throughout the world, stated that goodness and evil are relative and different, depending on various conditions, times and places and also depending on the learning of others. Therefore, God alone determines what is good or evil.³⁵

Ghazzâlî's position

One of the major figures in the criticism of philosophy in Islam is Abû Ḥâmid al-Ghazzâlî (1058-1111). This Ash'arite scholar completed the objections of other Ash'arites concerning the rationalism.³⁶ He divides the philosophers into three groups:

1. The Materialists, who deny the existence of an intelligent creator of the world. According to their view, the world has existed for all eternity and does not need any creator.

³⁴ Jalâl Muḥammad Mûsâ, *Nash'ah al-Ash'arîyyah*, (Beirut: Dâr al-Kitâb al-Lubnânî, 1982), p. 245.

³⁵ Şubhî, *Fî 'Ilm al-Kalâm*, p. 251.

³⁶ Sayyid Ḥusayn Naşr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1964), p. 166.

2. The Naturalists, who base their work on the study of nature, organic and inorganic. They admit the existence of God as a wise creator by analyzing the limbs and organs of animals. However, they deny the immortality of the soul, heaven, hell, resurrection and judgment. Ghazzâlî believes that these two groups of philosophers, Materialists and Naturalists, were atheists because true faith depends on acknowledgment of God and of the resurrection.

3. The third group are the Theists such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle who reject the systems of the Materialists and Naturalists but make use of inappropriate arguments.³⁷

Ghazzâlî divides the philosophic sciences into following sections: mathematics, logic, physics, metaphysics, politics and ethics. He believes that most of the philosophers' mistakes are found in the section of metaphysics. Ghazzâlî deals with these errors in his book, *Tahâfut al-Falâsafah*, "Destruction of the philosophers," (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'ârif, 1980.) According to him, they are guilty of 20 errors.³⁸ Among them the three following beliefs make the philosophers unbelievers:

1. Bodies do not rise again on the day of resurrection, therefore reward or punishment will not be physical but rather spiritual.

2. God's knowledge of what is happening in this world is universal, not particular. He does not know the details of the world.

³⁷ Ghazzâlî, *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalâl*, (Cairo: Maktabah wa-Maṭba'ah Muḥammad Alî Şabîḥ wa-Awlâdahû bi-Miṣr, 1952), pp. 17-19.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 17-19.

3. The universe exists from all eternity and will never end. Ghazzâlî tries to prove the religious limitation of philosophy by using philosophical means. His purpose is to clarify the necessary agnosticism of philosophy.³⁹

Another major figure who opposed philosophy was Ibn Ḥazm (994-1064), one of Ghazzâlî's contemporaries. Ibn Ḥazm not only repudiates every kind of analogy or deduction in jurisprudence but he also rejects all forms of scholastic theology, whether from the Ash'arites or Mu'tazilites as vain or useless.⁴⁰ Ibn Ḥazm's way of thought was followed more than two centuries later by Ibn Taymîyyah (1263-1328). He protests against the abuses of theology, philosophy and Aristotle's logic to a greater extent than Ibn Ḥazm. His major works against the logic is *al-Radd 'Alâ al-Manṭiqîyyîn* (Refutation of the Logicians). (Cairo: Maktabah al-Azhar, 1977). Both, Ibn Taymîyyah and Ibn Ḥazm believe that the sources of all religious truth can only be found in the Qur'ân and Tradition.⁴¹ Ibn Taymîyyah and Ibn Ḥazm are quite different in their position on Aristotle's logic from that of Ghazzâlî.

³⁹ M. J. Charlesworth, *Philosophy of Religion: The Historic Approaches*, (New York: Hender and Hender, 1972), pp. 95-96. For further information regarding Ghazzâlî's position against philosophy and Ibn Rushd's response to him, see: Riḍâ Sa'âdah, *Mushkilah al-Ṣarâ' bayn al-Falsafah wa-al-Dîn*, (Beirut: al-Dâr al-'Âlamîyyah lil-Ṭabâ'a wa-al-Nashr, 1981).

⁴⁰ Majîd Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 344-349.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 350-352.

II. The Philosophers' position

Abû Yûsuf Ya'qûb Ibn Ishâq al-Kindî (d. 866) is considered the first Muslim philosopher who attempted to reconcile revelation and reason. From his time on theologians started to pose the question of the relation between philosophy and Scripture against the philosophers.⁴² However, Kindî's philosophical tendency does not prejudice his religious beliefs. Where religion contradicts philosophy he favors philosophy.⁴³ In his view, the Qur'ân gives more certain and convincing argument than philosophy, which originates from human not from God. Therefore, the Qur'ânic arguments are superior to that of philosophical one. One of his certain argument can be found in his reply to the question of a non-Muslim who asked, "[W]ho will be able to give life to bones when the have reduced to dust?" The answer is, "[H]e Who produced them originally will give life to them."⁴⁴ We can also include Abû Naşr Fârâbî (d. 950) and Ibn Sînâ (d. 1006) among those who tried to reconcile revelation and philosophy. Fârâbî's theory of prophethood may be regarded as one of his important attempt for reconciling religion and philosophy.⁴⁵ Ibn Sînâ's view, in this concern can be understood in his Qur'ânic commentaries of some verses such as the verse of Sincere Religion (*Ikhlâş*).⁴⁶ For example he interprets the word

⁴² Ibid., p. 308.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 11.

⁴⁴ M. M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy with Short Accounts of Other Disciplines and the Modern Renaissance in Muslim Lands*, (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1983), vol. 1, p. 427.

⁴⁵ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 463.

⁴⁶ For Ibn Sînâ's interpretation of this verse see: Ibn Sînâ, "Tafsîr Surah al-Ikhlâş" in *Jâmi' al-Badâ'i'*, The secon treatises, (Cairo: n. p. 1335 A. H.)

huwa (he) in the verse (*Qul huwa Allâh-u aḥad*, meaning, Say: He is Allâh, the One) as necessary existent, which is a philosophical expression. He tries to adjust in this verse, a philosophical term on a Qur'ânic word.⁴⁷

Another figure who deals with the question of religion and reason more systematically than any of his predecessors is Ibn Rushd (1126-1198). He elaborates this problem by developing a stringent theological method.⁴⁸ According to him, the revealed law of Islam does not altogether prohibit studying philosophy and logic, rather, such study should be considered a duty.⁴⁹ In his view, the only group entitled to interpret the ambiguous verses of the Qur'ân is the philosophers. So obvious is the authenticity of this interpretation for the philosopher, that no believer should doubt it.⁵⁰ However, he advises philosophers not to explain the interpretation of unclear verses of the Qur'ân for other people. Averroes divides people, in this regard, into three groups, common people, theologians and philosophers. The first two groups do not deserve to hear this kind of interpretation, which is based on philosophical syllogism. Since they are not able to understand properly, hearing this version would make them unbelievers. These groups can

⁴⁷ Ḥasan al-ʿĀṣī, *al-Tafsīr al-Qurʾānī wa-al-Lughah al-Ṣufiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnâ*, (Beirut: al-Muʿassasah al-Jāmiʿah lil-Darāsāt wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzīʿ, 1983), p. 26. For further information of Ibn Sīnâ's book in Qur'ânic commentary, see: Jurj Shaḥānah Qanawātī, *Muʿallafāt Ibn Sīnâ*, (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1950), pp. 260-270.

⁴⁸ Fakhrī, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 302-308.

⁴⁹ Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-Maqāl fīnā bayn al-Ḥikmah wa-al-Sharʿah min al-Ittiṣāl*, with the introduction and footnotes of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Marrāq, (Tunis: al-Manshūrāt lil- Intāj wa-al-Tawzīʿ, 1991), p. 41.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 29.

understand only the apparent meaning of the Qur'ân and Tradition. According to Averroes, we should not explain the meaning of unclear verses in theological discussion, rather it is appropriate only in a philosophical text. He blames Ghazzâlî for discussing this point in an inappropriate place.⁵¹ Ibn Rushd compares the interpretation of ambiguous verses of the Qur'ân with food. All animals cannot eat the same food. What is eaten by some animals as their food, is considered by others to be poison. There are some edibles that put some animals in danger. The thoughtful material also is not useful for all people in the same level. There are discussions that are useful for a group of people and harmful for others. Philosophical interpretation should be considered as a kind of food for the philosopher but a poison for others.⁵²

Ibn Rushd has three major works concerning philosophy and logic and their relation with revelation:

1. *Tahâfut al-Tahâfut*⁵³ (The Incoherence of the Incoherence), (Beirut: Dâr al-Mashriq, 1992). The aim of this book is to clarify Ghazzâlî's assertion in the *Tahâfut al-Falâsafah* (The Incoherence of Philosophers), (Beirut: Dâr al-Mashriq, 1992). Ibn Rushd

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 75-77.

⁵² Ibid., p. 29.

⁵³ Averros, *Tahâfût al-Tahâfut*. This book have been traslated into English entitled: *Tahâfût al-Tahâfut (The Incoherence of The Incoherence)*, Translated from the Arabic with the introduction and notes by Simon Van Den Bergh, London: Messrs Luzac & Company Ltd., 1986.

in his book proves that most of the arguments in *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* can not support Ghazzālī's positions regarding the twenty errors of philosophers.⁵⁴

2. *Kitāb Faṣl al-Maqāl fīmā bayn al-Ḥikmah wa-al-Shar'ah min al-Ittiṣāl*, (The book of decision, or distinction, of the discourse and a determination of what there is of connection between religion and philosophy), (Tunis: al-Manshûrât lil- Intâj wa-al-Tawzi', 1991).

3. *Al-Kashf 'an Manâhij al-Adillah*, "Discovering ways of proofs." (Cairo: Maktabah al-Maḥmûdiyyah al-Tajârîyyah, 1935).⁵⁵

⁵⁴ A. J. Arberry, *Revelation and Reason In Islam*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), p. 66.

⁵⁵ Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 305.

CHAPTER 3

Ṭabāṭabā'ī's View of Revelation and Reason in General

I. Ṭabāṭabā'ī's Position Concerning Logic and Philosophy

II. Ṭabāṭabā'ī's Approach to the Cases of Contradiction Between Revelation and Reason

Ṭabâṭabâ'î's View of Revelation and Reason in General

I. Ṭabâṭabâ'î's thought concerning philosophy and logic

The study of Ṭabâṭabâ'î's life shows that he was very concerned with developing philosophy and harmonizing it with religion. When he left Tabrîz (his birthplace in Iran) for Qum to start teaching and doing research, he preferred teaching philosophy. He believed that the city of Qum at that time did not have any advanced classes in Islamic philosophy. Moreover we may figure out Ṭabâṭabâ'î's thought concerning the importance of reason especially, logic and philosophy, in understanding revelation, by clarifying his view regarding various points such as the Qur'ân's invitation to the use of rational method, Ṭabâṭabâ'î's use of this method in the interpretation of the Qur'ân, and especial verse concerning the importance of logic. We will review these points as follows:

The Qur'ân's invitation to the use of rational method

According to Ṭabâṭabâ'î, the Qur'ân invites people to use the rational method correctly and to follow the path of thought and knowledge. He emphasizes on the role of thought and knowledge in human life when he states that, "[I]t is definite that human life is

a thoughtful life, which is not complete except by perception (*idrâk*), that we call it thought (*fikr*).⁵⁶ Based on the important role of thought in our life Ṭabâṭabâ'î believes that the more correct and perfect is the thought, the better and stronger is the life.

Ṭabâṭabâ'î supports his opinion by referring to the following verses:⁵⁷

1. Is he who was dead, and We have raised him unto life, and set for him a light wherein he walketh among men, as him whose similitude is in utter darkness whence he cannot emerge?⁵⁸

2. Are those who know, equal to those who know not?⁵⁹

3. Allâh will exalt those who believe among you, and those who have knowledge, to high ranks.⁶⁰

4. Therefore, give good tidings to My bondmen, who hear advice and follow the best thereof. Such are those whom Allâh guideth, and such are men of understanding.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabâṭabâ'î, *al-Mîzân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân*, (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-A'lamî lil-Maṭbû'ât, 1970), vol. 5, pp. 254-255, and Persian Translation by Muḥammad Jawâd Ḥujjatî Kirmâî, (Tehran: Bunyâd Fikrî va-'Ilmî 'Allâmah Ṭabâṭabâ'î, 1991) vol. 5, pp. 393-394.

⁵⁷ Ibid.,

⁵⁸ *Qur'ân*, 6: 123. In the following pages I use the translation by Muḥammad Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, (New York: New American Library, n. d.)

⁵⁹ *Qur'ân*, 39: 9.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 58: 11.

⁶¹ Ibid., 39: 17-18.

Appraisal

Ṭabâṭabâ'î does not clarify the connection between these verses and his thought. However, I may argue that these verses emphasize the importance of knowledge for human beings. Allâh in the first verse likens knowledge to a light that eliminates the way of life for mankind. In the three other verses, the Qur'ân divides people into two groups; those who make use of knowledge, and those who do not. Allâh puts the first group in a higher position than the second group. When Allâh prefers the way of knowledge and thought it may require utilization of the rational method for making correct knowledge.

Furthermore it seems to the present author that Ṭabâṭabâ'î's position here⁶² regarding the first verse⁶³ is not in harmony with his interpretation of this verse in another place of his *al-Mîzân*⁶⁴. He brings this verse here, to prove the importance of the way of knowledge in general and the application of the rational method of thought in the Qur'ân. However, he points out that the light in this verse does not mean every kind of knowledge, rather the knowledge that comes from belief. Ṭabâṭabâ'î supports this interpretation with a Tradition of the Last Prophet.⁶⁵ In this Tradition Muḥammad says, "[W]hosoever applies his knowledge, Allâh will give him or her new knowledge."⁶⁶ It seems to me that this maxim refers to the moral behavior, which has been recommended in Islam. Therefore, it

⁶² Ṭabâṭabâ'î, *al-Mîzân*, vol. 5, pp. 255-256, and Persian Translation vol. 5, pp. 393-395.

⁶³ Qur'ân, 6:122.

⁶⁴ See: Ṭabâṭabâ'î's interpretation of the verse 6: 122, in: Ṭabâṭabâ'î, *al-Mîzân*, (Tehran: Dâr al-Kutub al-Islâmiyyah, 1379 Q H) vol. 7, pp. 357-359, and Persian Translation, vol. 7, pp. 516-517

⁶⁵ Ṭabâṭabâ'î, *al-Mîzân*, Persian Translation, vol. 7, p. 516-517.

⁶⁶ Majlisî, *Biḥâr al-Anwâr*, (Beirut: Mu'assas al-Wafâ', 1983), vol. 40, p. 128.

argued that based on this interpretation of the verse, Ṭabāṭabā'ī cannot support his position by this verse. Because, according to him, the word “light” does not cover other forms of knowledge such as logic and philosophy.

The Qur'ân's emphasis on thinking

Ṭabāṭabā'ī also remarks that he can find more than three hundreds instances in the Qur'ân where people have been invited to think and to use their reason. Furthermore, the Qur'ân teaches Muḥammad methods of explaining the truth to people by using appropriate proofs. In other cases Allâh cites for Muḥammad the proofs that have been used by other prophets for their followers. Some examples of these verses are, as follows.⁶⁷

“Their messengers said: Can there be doubt concerning Allâh, the creator of the heavens and the earth?”⁶⁸ This verse demonstrates the existence of Allâh by considering the existence of the external world.⁶⁹

“When Luqmân said unto his son, when he was exhorting him, ‘O my dear son! Ascribe no partners unto Allâh. Lo! to ascribe partners (unto Him) is a tremendous wrong.’”⁷⁰

“And a believing man of Pharaoh's family, who hid his faith, said: Would ye kill a man because he saith: My Lord is Allâh, and hath brought you clear proofs from your

⁶⁷ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mġân*, vol. 5, p. 255, and Persian Translation, vol. 5, p. 394.

⁶⁸ *Qur'ân*, 14: 10.

⁶⁹ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mġân*, vol. 12, pp. 23-24, and Persian Translation vol. 12, pp. 36-37.

⁷⁰ *Qur'ân*, 31: 13.

Lord?”⁷¹ According to this verse, one of Moses’ followers points out that Moses brought with him clear evidence to prove the existence of Allâh as The Lord for all human beings.⁷²

“We choose you not above the clear proofs that have come unto us, and above Him Who created us. So decree what thou wilt decree. Thou wilt end for us only the life of the world.”⁷³ This verse points to the history of Moses when he brought clear proof to support his claim. After considering these evidences, unbelievers changed their mind and accepted Moses’ way. They left following Pharaoh, who was the main enemy of Moses, and finally addressed Pharaoh and said, “[W]e do not follow you any more after considering the clear proofs from Moses.”⁷⁴

Using rational method in the Interpretation of the Qur’ân

We can discover Ṭabâṭabâ’î’s preference for rational method in understanding revelation by looking at his interpretation of some Qur’ânic phrases such as the term *al-ṣirâṭ al-mustaqîm*.⁷⁵ This term, which means “right path,” has been used in different verses. Clarifying right path Ṭabâṭabâ’î states that it is a clear way in which there are no disputes, and there is harmony between its different parts. According to him, the Qur’ân

⁷¹ Ibid., 40: 28.

⁷² Ṭabâṭabâ’î, *al-Mîzân*, vol. 17, p. 329, and Persian Translation vol. 17, p.522.

⁷³ *Qur’ân*, 20: 72.

⁷⁴ Ṭabâṭabâ’î, *al-Mîzân*, vol. 14, pp. 180-182, and Persian Translation, vol. 14, p. 274.

⁷⁵ *Qur’ân*, 1: 6.

emphasizes correct thought and the right path, but does not explain this, except by referring people to their natural dispositions. In his view, we can confirm that the correct way of thought and the right path is logic, which explains the way of discovering unclear propositions through self evident one.”⁷⁶

The Qur’ân explains the criteria for its laws

Ṭabâṭabâ’î holds that there is not even a single verse in the Qur’ân that invites people to accept Islamic beliefs, or believe in them, blindly.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the Qur’ân explains the criteria for its laws to clarify the benefit of Islamic laws for human kind. Explaining the criterion for laws, the Qur’ân refers briefly to what is understandable to humans, because understanding the details of the common bases for Allah’s law is beyond human ability. Then Ṭabâṭabâ’î brings forth some verses that include the criterion of the rulings, as follows:⁷⁸

“Worship preserveth from lewdness and iniquity, but verily remembrance of Allâh is more important.”⁷⁹

“Allâh would not place a burden on you, but He would purify you and would perfect His grace upon you, that ye may give thanks.”⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 254-255, and Persian Translation pp. 393-394.

⁷⁷ Âlûsî, *Ṭabâṭabâ’î wa-Manhajuhû fî Tafsîr al-Qur’ân*, Persian Translation by Sayyid Iḥusayn Mîrjalîlî, p. 247.

⁷⁸ Ṭabâṭabâ’î, *al-Mîzân*, vol. 5, pp. 255-256, and Persian Translation, vol. 5, pp. 394-395.

⁷⁹ *Qur’ân*, 29: 45.

Ṭabâṭabâ'î does not clarify the relation of these two verses to his opinion. However, one can deduce that the first verse includes the benefit of prayer (*ṣalât*) for believers. Based on this verse prayer prevent them from performing lewdness (*faḥshâ'*) and indecency (*munkar*). The verse apparently refers to the criterion of the obligation of prayer, that is to control people from evil. The second verse points to the benefit of religious actions, that is, to complete Allâh's blessing on people and to purify them from evil.

Ṭabâṭabâ'î's position shows that the Qur'ân mentions the criterion for Islamic law in all cases. If he means that the Qur'ân brings individual criteria for all of its laws, I may argue that it is not true in some cases. We may find some general criteria, or reason, for all Islamic law but it does not require mentioning the criteria in all cases individually.

A Qur'ânic verse concerning the importance of logic

An important verse that Ṭabâṭabâ'î uses to prove his opinion regarding logic, is as follows:

“Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way. Lo! thy Lord is best aware of he who strays from His way, and He is Best Aware of those who go aright.”⁸¹

⁸⁰ Ibid.. 5: 6.

⁸¹ Ibid.. 16: 125.

To clarify his opinion we should consider that the issues, which are discussed in logic, can be divided into two parts. First is the studying of different forms of proofs and syllogisms, the formal conditions, which should hold between the premises of a proposition, the way to combine them and so on. Second is the studying of various matters, which are used in the premises. If the syllogism is made of premises that are certain, it is called *burhan* (demonstration), which has a conclusion that is certain.⁸²

According to Ṭabāṭaba'ī, the meaning of *ḥikmah* in this verse is demonstration. He supports his opinion by considering two points:

1. The word *ḥikmah* means understanding the truth and seizing it through knowledge and reason. The result of *ḥikmah* is knowing the truth without having any doubt, or ambiguity, which is demonstration.

2. Putting *ḥikmah* beside *maw'izah* and *jâdilhum*, which is the imperative form of *jadal*, shows that *ḥikmah* means demonstration, because according to logic these are three different methods of discussion. In this verse God asks His prophet, Muḥammad, to invite people to follow Allâh, by three methods, which have different results, as follows:⁸³

Maw'izah (admonition), means explaining moral characteristics and good works to people in a way that will influence the people's hearts and change their behavior. Whoever wishes to use this method in their speech, usually emphasizes on the following points. He

⁸² Ṭûṣî, Khwâjah Naṣîr al-Dîn, *Asâs al-Iqtibâs*, (Tehran: Mu'asasah Intishârât va-Châp-i Dânishgâh-i Tehran, 1987), p. 342.

⁸³ Ṭabāṭaba'ī, *al-Mizân* vol. 12, pp. 398-401, and Persian Translation, vol. 12, p. 571-4.

explains, on the one hand, the tremendous consequences of such evils as the telling of a lie, stealing, or cheating others and the history of the evil doer's life in order to prevent people from doing these actions. On the other hand, he clarifies the interesting live of good people and their characteristics.⁸⁴

Jadal (dialectics), is a kind of argumentation that does not illumine the truth, rather it is used in any controversy against someone who does not accept the truth and who insists on a wrong opinion. The user of this method does not base his debate necessarily on right premises, but rather on the premises that are acceptable to a listener or to groups of people.

Ṭabāṭabā'ī explains that this verse⁸⁵ does not allow people to use every kind of admonition or dialectic. Whoever wants to use the former to prevent people from evil, should be a good individual with good qualities. Also whoever wants to use the former, should respect the other's opinion. He should strongly avoid, affronting, or disparaging, others' position. However, it is better that people avoid dialectical discussion except in rare cases with utilizing the condition of best kind of dialectics.⁸⁶

The role of philosophy in understanding revelation

According to Ṭabāṭabā'ī, philosophy is a science, which helps us to understand revelation in a deep and proper way. There are philosophical issues in the Qur'ān and

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 398-401, and Persian Translation, vol. 12, p. 571-4.

⁸⁵ Qur'ān, 16: 125.

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 398-400, and Persian Translation, vol. 12, p. 571-3.

Traditions, which develop Greek philosophy.⁸⁷ We can find Ṭabāṭabā'ī's argument regarding these Traditions in his dialogues with Henry Corbin. He explains in these dialogues, philosophical issues that have been discussed in the Shī'ite Tradition such as the reason for God's existence and His unity, and God's attributes and their relation with His essence.⁸⁸ However, he remarks that we can not accept the thought of Greek philosophers except after considering and evaluating them properly.⁸⁹ Furthermore, he criticizes philosophers who try to change the apparent meaning of Qur'ānic verses and interpret them in a way that tallies with philosophical issues.⁹⁰

Answering questions, which have been raised against logic

Focusing on the importance of logic (*manṭiq*), Ṭabāṭabā'ī states that it is the accurate method of thought, which can be used for discovering revelation. He argues questions, which have been raised against the use of logic in the fifth volume of *al-Mīzān*. We may understand his position on logic by referring to his answers to these questions. Some of questions are, as follows:

⁸⁷ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, "Shī'ah," pp. 119-120.

⁸⁸ See: Ibid., pp. 118-190.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 57.

⁹⁰ Muḥammad 'Abd Khudā'ī, "Qur'ān va Hikmat" in *Yād-nāmah-i 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī* (Tehran: Mu'assasah Muṭāla'āt va-Taḥqīqāt-i Farhangī, 1983), pp. 208-209.

First question

According to one of questions, logic is used by some scholars to weaken people's religious beliefs. In answering this question Ṭabāṭabā'ī states that "[W]ho reasons in this way does not pay attention that making a way for an evil purpose or using it for indecent goal, is not inconsistent with its soundness by itself such as sword, which is used for killing an innocent person."⁹¹ Ṭabāṭabā'ī apparently means that the rules and principles discussed in logic should be considered as tools for thinking. These tools could be applied to demonstrate a true or a false opinion. It is like an sword that can be used to the benefit of a human being or to kill an innocent one. There is not anything wrong with the tool, the problem is with the one who uses the tool for evil purposes.⁹² In his view, we can take every true theory, which has been based on logic from non-Muslims. Being Muslim is not one of the conditions for true and logical thinking. What is important is the theory, not who expounds it. Therefore, it is not necessary that Muslims learn sciences, such as logic, philosophy, mathematics and so on, from Muslim scholars only.⁹³

We may find the roots of Ṭabāṭabā'ī's position concerning the permission of learning and teaching sciences from non-Muslims in the work of Ibn Rushd. He emphasizes that we can benefit from different sciences after evaluating their positive and negative aspects. In answering those who reject Greek logic and philosophy, Ibn Rushd asserts that it is not

⁹¹ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Ma'ānī*, vol. 5, p. 257, and Persian Translation, vol. 5, p. 398.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, "Shī'ah," p. 57.

necessary that we trust only Islamic logic. He clarifies his position by using an example from Islamic law; the method for killing animals. According to Islamic law, there are different conditions to be met for killing animals. One of them is that a tool such as knife be used. Ibn Rushd asserts that the knife in this regard could be provided by any country. Islamic law does not ask us to use a special knife, which is produced by Muslims. We may choose any kind of knife produced in any country. Philosophy and logic can be used as tools by a Muslim thinker. However, they should evaluate Greek logic and philosophy to see whether it is totally correct or not. If it is the latter they would then complete it.⁹⁴

Ṭabāṭaba'ī does not name the scholars who oppose the learning of these sciences and who consider them tools for weakening Muslim's religious beliefs. We may find some of these objections indirectly in Ghazzālī's works. Before going to more details of his view, we should regard the following point. He raises problems against mathematics in his *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*. Nonetheless it seems that he does not attack mathematics by itself and rather considered it quite innocuous. He clearly distinguishes between the inconsistent aspect of philosophy with the fundamentals of belief and those, which are not such as mathematics. What is his concern in his attack on mathematics is its use by wrong people believing that it weakens their religious beliefs. Therefore, in Ghazzālī's view, unlike metaphysics, which contain the majority of materials that are incompatible with

⁹⁴ Ibn Rushd, *Faṣal-Maqāl*, pp. 46-47.

Islamic beliefs, the propositions of mathematics are not pernicious from an Islamic point of view.⁹⁵

Ghazzâlî elaborates his objections of using mathematics by wrong people, by clarifying its relation to religious materials and two evil results, which come from it. He states that, “[M]athematics includes the sciences of calculation, geometry and the science of astronomy, and does not include anything for or against religion.”⁹⁶ In his view, mathematics does not have any connection with religious sciences. It, however, produces two evil results:

1. Whoever studies this science admires its clear proofs. Consequently, he would trust philosophers and think that all the philosophers’ positions are based on such clear proofs. So he could accept the philosophical beliefs, which contradict revealed law. Then he would say that if religious beliefs are right, why do these learned persons reject them? Finally he concludes that to deny religion is reasonable and he would reject the absolute imitation of divine law. According to Ghazzâlî, there are many people who deny religion for the reason that if it is true, it would not have been rejected by scientists and philosophers. These people cannot understand that being a specialist in a science does not imply being a specialist in other branches.

2. The second evil comes from sincere but ignorant Muslims who reject all philosophical sciences, even their theories of the lunar eclipses, and solar. They believe

⁹⁵ Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 347.

⁹⁶ Ghazzâlî, *al-Munqidh*, p. 19.

that the best way to defend religion is by rejecting all sciences related to the philosopher. When someone understands that these theories, such as solar and lunar eclipse, rest on infallible proofs, and they are rejected by some Muslims, he would believe that Islam depends on ignorance and the denial of scientific proofs. Therefore, his love of philosophy and his hatred of religion would increase. Then Ghazzâlî states that Islam does not make any positive or negative evaluation of these correct sciences.⁹⁷

Critique

In this author's view, the following observations could be made regarding Ghazzâlî's opinion of mathematics:

1. Regarding mathematics, Ghazzâlî mentioned that it has no connection with the religious sciences and proves nothing for or against religion. Then he added two negative results of learning mathematics. It seems that Ghazzâlî's position here is right if he means by connection between religion and mathematics, direct connection. In other word his opinion regarding mathematics is sound if he means that it does not cover directly any religious subject. It discusses several issues such as calculation, geometry and so on, which are not religious topics. However, if he wants to negates every kind of relations between mathematics and religion, his view seems not accurate. Mathematics can be considered a useful science from a religious point of view, by regarding the following points:

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

a) Islam encourages people to learn different sciences even from non-Muslims and mathematics is considered a science. There is a Tradition from Muḥammad that says; “[A]cquire knowledge even from China. Indeed, acquiring knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim”.⁹⁸ It seems that China has been mentioned in this maxim as an example of a place far remote from Muslim countries. Muḥammad emphasizes that Muslims should not limit themselves to learning science only from their own countries. If they can learn anything from other countries, even non-Muslim countries, such as China, they should do it.

b) According to Islamic law, learning the sciences that are needed for society, such as medicine, is obligatory. Without sufficient expertise in medicine there would be no guaranty for bodily health in society.⁹⁹ So the preliminary sciences needed for the medical profession, such as mathematics, would be also obligatory. Nobody can attain proficiency in a science without understanding the preliminary tools for that science.

c) Applying some individual acts of worship requires indirectly learning mathematics. For example Islam asks people to pray five times per day or to fast one month per year. To determine the exact time of these acts of worship depends on one's learning astronomy, which needs mathematics. One of the reasons that some Islamic thinkers, such

⁹⁸ Muḥammad Bâqir Majlisî, *Biḥâr al-Anwâr*, vol. 1, p.180.

⁹⁹ ‘Adâ Zayd al-Kilânî, *Maḥâḥ al-Ḥaq wa-al-Ḥurrîyyah*, (‘Ammân: Dâr al-Bashîr lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzî’, 1990), p. 209.

as Shaykh Bahâ'î (Bahâ' al-Dîn Muḥammad Ibn Ḥusayn al-Âmulî) (d. 1621) worked on astronomy was their consideration for the exact time for daily prayer, fasting and so forth.

d) Learning mathematics requires much thinking. It helps people to build up a strong mind. It seems that One of the reason that a philosopher and theologian, such as Ṭabâṭabâ'î, used to learn mathematics seems to be able to strengthen his mind. If Islam encourages the use of thought and reason, as remarked by Ṭabâṭabâ'î, it may be argued that Islam encourages the strengthening of the mind. This may be acquired through learning mathematics. The minimum result of studying mathematics is that one's ability to think will be enhanced.

2. Ghazzâlî mentioned two evil results that follow from learning mathematics. His objections may be right if he means that the evil result comes from learning mathematics by wrong people. However, if he intends to generalize this results to all Muslims his position apparently is not accurate. If Ghazzâlî is right to demonstrate the evil result of learning mathematics, then it is required that Muslims avoid learning physics, chemistry, medicine, engineering and other useful sciences. Because, on the one hand, there are many scientists that do not believe in Islam. On the other hand, whoever studies these sciences may understand that these scientists are geniuses and have sharp minds. He also may find many clear proofs in these sciences. Therefore, whoever studies these sciences, admires scientists and he says to himself that if there was truth in Islam, it would not have denied by these intelligent scientists.

We may understand from Ghazzâlî's clarification of evil results of learning mathematics that he does not want to generalize this results to all Muslims. Because in the first result he refers to the people who are not able to realize that being an expert in a science does not require being an expert in other fields. In the second result he also refers to ignorant Muslims who think that the best way to defend religion is by rejecting all sciences, which relate to philosophy.

Second question

Another question is that the result of logical or philosophical proofs is in opposition to the Qur'ân and Tradition. Replying to this question, Ṭabâṭabâ'î differentiates between the form (*ṣûrat*) and matter (*mâddah*) in a syllogism (*qiyâs*). The reason of contradiction between the rational way and religious issues does not come from the form rather the matter of syllogism. Therefore, a demonstrative syllogism, which is made by premises, that are certain, cannot be in contradiction with the Qur'ân and Tradition.¹⁰⁰

Third question

Another problem is that we do not need Greek logic because everything, which are needed for human beings, can be found in the Qur'ân and Tradition. Therefore, we can study Qur'ânic logic instead of Greek logic. Ṭabâṭabâ'î replies to this question by referring

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., vol. 5, p. 257, and Persian Translation vol. 5, pp. 398-399.

to several points. In one of them he states that if the Qur'ân includes principles of logic, we can not understand it except through a long discussion.¹⁰¹

It seems that by this point Ṭabâṭabâ'î means that discovering the Qur'ânic logic depends on a successful discussion of its verses which depends again on being aware of logic. Therefore, we need to know Greek logic to discover the principle of logic in the Qur'ân.

Furthermore, Ṭabâṭabâ'î makes out that we should distinguish between two facts, the need of the Qur'ân or Tradition to anything else to be completed, and people's need to tools to understand what do these divine sources mean. Although they are complete, their discovering need tools such as logic. Therefore, not only understanding logic itself but also discovering correctly every other issue from the Qur'ân needs a correct way of reasoning, which is logic.¹⁰²

One of Ṭabâṭabâ'î's common answers to various objections against the use of logic is that those who criticize its use, they themselves use it. If logic should be rejected they must not make use of it.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 257-258, and Persian Translation vol. 5, pp. 399-400.

¹⁰² Ibid., vol. 5, p. 258, and Persian Translation pp. 399-400.

¹⁰³ Muḥammad 'Abd Khudâ'î, "Qur'ân va Hikmat" in *Yâdnâmah-i 'Allâmah Ṭabâṭabâ'î*, pp. 228-

Similarity between Ṭabāṭabā'ī's and Ghazzālī's position concerning logic

In this writer's opinion Ṭabāṭabā'ī's position regarding the benefit of logic as a way of thought seems to be similar with that of Ghazzālī, though they have different position regarding philosophy. Ghazzālī apparently does not attack logic and rather considers it to be quite innocuous.¹⁰⁴ He has different works in logic such as : *Muqaddamah al-Tahāfut al-I'ālāsafah al-Musammâ bi-al-Maqâṣid al-Falâsafah, al-Manṭiq wa-al-Ilâhîyyat wa-al-Ṭabî'îyyat* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'ârif, 1961), which covers the philosophers' opinions regarding logic, nature and metaphysic, and *Mi'yâr al-'Ilm* (Beirut: Dâr al-Ândulus, 1980), which involves with the logical views with several Islamic examples.¹⁰⁵ He mentions two purposes for writing this book. The first aim is understanding variant ways of thought and being saved from rational mistakes, and the second point is being familiar with logical expression, which helps the readers to understand Ghazzālī's *Tahāfut al-I'ālāsafah* in a better way.¹⁰⁶ He discusses in his *Mi'yâr al-'Ilm* the benefits of logic, and in his *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalâl*, its relation with religion.

Although Ghazzālī supports logic in the former, he asserts in the latter that logic does not contain anything positive or negative about religion. Rather, it is the study of different ways of proofs and syllogisms, the way of holding the premises of a demonstration and the way to combine them and the conditions of correct definition. The

¹⁰⁴ Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 347.

¹⁰⁵ Rafiq al-'Ajam, *al-Manṭiq 'Ind al-Ghazzālī fī Ab'âdihī al-Araṣṭū'îyyah wa-Khuṣûṣîyyatihī al-Islâmîyyah*, (Beirut: Dâr al-Mashriq, 1989), p. 58.

¹⁰⁶ Ghazzālī, *Mi'yâr al-'Ilm fī Fann al-Manṭiq*, (Beirut: Dâr al-Ândulus, 1980), pp. 26-27.

discussion of logicians about conceptions, which arise from a definition or of assent, which comes from proofs, is like the discussion of theologians in this concern. The only difference is that the former gives extra details and a particular set of technical formula. Referring to a rule of logic, Ghazzâlî argues that, when it is said that every A is B, it requires that some of B are A. They consider this sentence a sample for a general logical rule, that is: contrapositive of a universal affirmative statement is a particular affirmative statement. Ghazzâlî emphasizes that such a statement does not have any connection to religious issues, therefore it is not needed to deny it.¹⁰⁷

Appraisal

In the present author's opinion the following points may be argued regarding Ghazzâlî's position on logic in his *al-Munqidh min al-Dalâl*:

Regarding logic Ghazzâlî remarked that it does not have any positive or negative point regarding religion. Then he added that the object of logic is the study of different ways of proofs and syllogisms, the conditions, which should hold between the premises of a fruitful demonstration, and so on. If Ghazzâlî tends to reject any kinds of relation between religion and logic, his view does not seem sound. The logic apparently can be helpful for discussing the existence of God, the necessity of prophethood and so on. Without logic how can someone demonstrate these basic religious beliefs?

¹⁰⁷ Ghazzâlî, *al-Munqidh*, pp. 21-22.

Ghazzâlî referred to one logical rule, that is: the contrapositive of a universal affirmative statement is a particular affirmative to a logical rule. He wants seemingly to make a general conclusion that logic does not relate important religious issues. I may argue that we can find in every science some issues that are more important than others. Saying that one science is more useful for understanding religious fact, does not mean that all single issues in that science have the same importance for religion. For instance, Ghazzâlî agrees that knowing the Arabic language and grammar is necessary for understanding the Qur'ânic texts. Does it mean then that all rules in Arabic language and grammar play the same role in this concern? We can find grammatical points that are not necessary for understanding the Qur'ân.

Similarity between Tabâtabâ'î's and Ibn Rushd's position concerning both logic and Philosophy

We may find likeness between Tabâtabâ'î's and Ibn Rushd's position concerning the importance of both logic and Philosophy, although they differ in some aspects. Ibn Rushd's position in this concern can be discovered through the following points:

A. According to Averroes, studying philosophy and logic (*manṭiq*) is either obligatory (*wajib*) or recommended (*mandûb*) because philosophical research is nothing more than studying the existents as God's creation and as signs for God's existence. The more knowledge about creations, the more knowledge about the creator. Therefore, we can increase our knowledge about God by making use of philosophy. The revealed law

also encourages human beings to consider the creation of God's signs and increase their knowledge about Him.¹⁰⁸

He supports his idea by referring to this verse: "[H]ave they not considered the dominion of the heaven and the earth, and things Allâh hath created, and that it may be that their own term draweth nigh? In what fact after this will they believe?"¹⁰⁹ Ibn Rushd states that, "[T]his verse is explicit in stimulating people to study all existents."¹¹⁰ He apparently tries to approve by this verse, the obligation of studying God's creations, which helps people to acquire better knowledge about His power over the world. He also approves the obligation of using syllogism, which is a logical rule, by referring to the Qur'ânic phrase "[S]o learn a lesson, O ye who have eyes"¹¹¹ as an explicit verse in this regard.¹¹²

He clarifies his opinion in another passage with two premises.

1. Human beings are legally obliged to study the creation by their intellects.

¹⁰⁸ See: Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-Maqâl*, p. 40, and Gilson, *Reason and Revelation*, p. 41.

¹⁰⁹ *Qur'ân*, 7: 184.

¹¹⁰ Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-Maqâl*, p. 41.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 59: 2. The complete verse is, as follows: "He it is who hath caused those of the people of the Scripture who disbelieved to go forth from their homes unto the first exile. Ye deemed not that they would go forth, while they deemed that their strongholds would protect them from Allâh. But Allâh reached them from a place whereof they recked not, and He cast terror in their hearts so that they ruined their houses with their own hands, and the hands of the believers. So learn a lesson, O ye who have eyes!"

¹¹² Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-Maqâl*, p. 41.

2. This studying is nothing more than deducing the unknown from known materials, which are either the syllogism itself or what is acquired by syllogism. According to these two premises, he draws the conclusion that it would be obligation from divine law that human beings study the existence by making use of syllogism. Ibn Rushd considers this kind of study of creation the perfect way of looking at the world.¹¹³

Despite the long interval between Ibn Rushd and Ṭabāṭabā'ī, we can find a similarity between their positions. Before going to any detail regarding the relation between Ṭabāṭabā'ī and Ibn Rushd we should consider, as a general point, that Ṭabāṭabā'ī does not mention directly the name of Ibn Rushd during his discussion of revelation and reason. However, he is apparently aware of Ibn Rushd when Ṭabāṭabā'ī refers to him as one of famous Arab philosopher.¹¹⁴ Therefore, one might argue that although they have almost the same position in several issues, Ṭabāṭabā'ī may not have been influenced by him. Ṭabāṭabā'ī probably has reached to the same result with his own reason. Their similarity regarding the importance of logic and philosophy can be explained, as follows:

1. Both hold the same idea regarding the importance of logic in Islam. However, Ṭabāṭabā'ī does not prove his opinion in this regard in the same way as Ibn Rushd does. Ibn Rushd bases his reason on the Qur'ānic phrase "therefore take heed, you who have

¹¹³ Ibid. p. 42.

¹¹⁴ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān*, vol. 5, p. 280 and Persian Translation vol. 5, p. 431.

eyes.”¹¹⁵ Unlike Ibn Rushd, Ṭabāṭabā’ī does not mention this verse as a definite reason to establish the obligation of making use of syllogism in discovering religious matters. He elaborates his position by referring to other verses as expounded earlier.¹¹⁶

2. Unlike Ibn Rushd, Ṭabāṭabā’ī does not claim the obligation of learning philosophy. Nonetheless, he emphasizes the importance of philosophy in understanding revelation.

Although Ṭabāṭabā’ī does not reject Ibn Rushd’s reasons directly concerning the role of philosophy and logic, he elaborates his position by other reasons. It seems that Ṭabāṭabā’ī does not agree with Ibn Rushd’s proofs because they are not definite enough to establish his position.

Critique

As far as Ibn Rushd’s proof regarding the obligation of philosophy and syllogism is concerned, the following points can be mentioned:

1. Ibn Rushd gave two premises to approve the obligation of utilizing the syllogism. According to the first premise, human beings are obliged to study creation. It seems that this premise depends on the Qur’ānic verse: “[H]ave they not considered the dominion of

¹¹⁵ *Qur’ān*, 59: 2. The complete verse is as under: “It is He who expelled from their habitations the unbelievrsd among the People of the Book at the first mustering. You did not think that they would go forth, and they thought that their fortresses would defend them against God; then God came upon them from whence they had not reckoned, and He cast therror into their hearts as they destroyed their houses with their own hands, and the hands of the believers; therefore take heed, you who have eyes.”

¹¹⁶ See: Chapter three, Part one, of this thesis.

the heaven and the earth, and what things Allâh hath created, and that it may be that their own term draweth nigh? In what fact after this will they believe?¹¹⁷ He mentions that this verse is explicit in encouraging people to study and looking at the creations as God's signs.

This verse does not seem to prove the necessity of studying the creation. The jurists have also not mentioned this point as one of the obligatory commands of revealed law. The obligatory law is something that if someone does not apply it, he would be punished in the world to come. Of course, studying the creation and looking at them as God's sign is recommended by Islamic law but is not an obligatory action.

2. In the present author's view seems that Ibn Rushd limits philosophical researches to looking at existence as the sign and the creation of God. If he means by philosophy, Islamic philosophy, this does not seem to be accurate. The issues, which are discussed in Islamic philosophy, can be divided into two parts, physics and metaphysics. There are some issues in the former that are not involved in any way with looking at existence as a sign or the creation of God. Also, some of the philosophical subjects in the latter do not deal directly with considering existence as God's creation such as causality. Causes are divided into four categories, material, formal, final and efficient causes. The first two kinds of causes do not make the creations, the signs of God.

¹¹⁷ *Qur'ân*, 7: 184.

3. If we may say that looking at creations is not legally obligatory, therefore, his first premise would be incomplete. Consequently, his conclusion would be incomplete, since any changes in the premises will change the conclusion.

‘Abd al-Karīm al-Marrāq¹¹⁸ points out that according to Ibn Rushd, the result of his two premises entails the obligation of studying philosophy. He believes that Ibn Rushd means by his conclusion, that it is obligatory to look at creation by means of syllogism, and obligatory to use philosophy. Although Marrāq does not give any proof for his commentary on Ibn Rushd’s idea, he may be right. The reason is that when Ibn Rushd tries to prove that using philosophy is obligatory in understanding Islamic revelation, he does not separate philosophy and syllogism.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Marrāq edited and added an introduction and footnotes to Ibn Rushd’s *Faṣl al-Maqāl fīmā bayn al-Ḥikmah wa-al-Shari’ah min al-Ittiṣāl*. For al-Marrāq’s introduction see: Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, Edited by Abd al-Karīm al-Marrāq, pp. 10-39.

¹¹⁹ Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, pp. 23-24.

II. Ṭabāṭabā'ī's approach to the cases of contradiction between revelation and reason

After clarifying Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view, on the importance of reason and philosophy in understanding revelation, we now turn to a question, which naturally comes up with regard to this matter. That is the case of conflict between revelation and reason. What should we do when it seems that a statement of revelation is not in harmony with a philosophical or scientific opinion? What is Ṭabāṭabā'ī's position concerning this? Before discovering his opinion we should have a glance at his view of legal proofs and the bases of the creditability of reason, as follows:

Legal proofs

Ṭabāṭabā'ī emphasizes that there are just three legal proofs (*ḥujaj shar'īyyah*) for human beings: the Qur'ān, Tradition and the clear understanding of reason. He means that we are responsible to understand God's law through these three sources in order to apply them in our life. It seems that he not only limits the legal proofs to these three sources but also the way of discovering truth. The reason is that Ṭabāṭabā'ī distinguishes, in another passage, between two means of discovering the truth: religion and philosophy.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, "Shī'ah," pp. 52.

According to him, philosophy discovers the truth through reason and religion finds it through revelation. Human beings can understand revelation from the Qur'ân and sound Traditions.¹²¹

Ṭabâṭabâ'î's position here, in limiting legal proofs and the way of understanding truth to three sources, depends on his Islamic and Shî'ite beliefs. Muslims believe that the Qur'ân is the word of God and contains no mistakes. The Qur'ân has been sent to people by Muḥammad as a messenger of God. Ṭabâṭabâ'î's idea also depends on his Shî'ite position. He believes that, in addition to Muḥammad and his daughter, Fatimah, God has chosen twelve successors, to explain for Muslims unknown, or ambiguous religious issues after Muḥammad's death. What these leaders have said is considered a definite Tradition, which has two characteristics. It should first include enough documents to prove the correct chain of transmission of the Tradition. Its meaning, secondly, should be clear.

Ṭabâṭabâ'î does not mention here the role of experimental sciences in understanding the truth. There are facts that are acquired by mathematics, physic, chemistry and other experimental sciences. We can understand his opinion in this regard in another part of his work. It seems that according to him, the results of experimental sciences in many cases are not definite. Therefore, we cannot trust them for finding the truth except in cases with definite results.¹²²

¹²¹ Ibid., pp. 52-53.

¹²² 'Abd al-Karîm Surûsh, *'Ilm va-Dîn*, Unpublished manuscript lectures on deposit of the library of Baqir al-Ulûm Cultural Foundation, Qum, 1989, p. 281.

The basis of the creditability of reason

Ṭabâṭabâ'î based the creditability of reason on the authenticity of the Qur'ân and sound Tradition. According to his thought, we can trust our intellect because there are many cases in the Qur'ân and Tradition that refer people to reason.¹²³

I may argue that we can not base the credibility of reason on the authenticity of the Qur'ân and Tradition. There is a kind of priority for reason over the others. We prove the existence of God and the credibility of the Qur'ân and Tradition by use of reason. If we based the credibility of reason on the Qur'ân, it would be a vicious circle.

The condition for the impossibility of conflict between revelation and reason

As an introduction to Ṭabâṭabâ'î's view of the cases of contradiction between revelation and philosophy, we may divide these cases into two groups, the cases where both philosophy and revealed law give us a special opinion and the cases where only philosophical demonstration or revealed law gives us an opinion. There is no contradiction between philosophy and revelation in the second case. Therefore, a solution is not needed for the latter. It is needed for the former if the result of philosophy contradicts the revealed law.

¹²³Ṭabâṭabâ'î, "Shî'ah," vol. 2, p. 51-51.

According to Ṭabāṭabā'ī, it is impossible for there to be any conflict between the conclusive result of revelation and the conclusive result of reason. This idea could be approved by both the Qur'ān and reason. The Qur'ānic proof can be discovered by referring to the verses that consider reason as legal proof and give validity to it. It would be impossible for the Qur'ān to be in conflict with reason, which has been considered by the Qur'ān itself as a legal proof. The reasoning proof combines of three premises: a) Both the Qur'ān and reason are different means for finding out the truth and reality. b) It is impossible to be more than one truth. c) The existence of two contradictory truths in one subject is impossible. For instance the rule of causality, which denotes the relation between cause and effect, is either exist in this world or not. We cannot say that this rule exist and does not exist. Considering these points Ṭabāṭabā'ī concludes that it is impossible for there to be any conflict between the conclusive result of revelation and the conclusive result of reason.¹²⁴

We can find this idea, that is, the absurdity of any disharmony between revelation and reason, in the work of Ibn Rushd. He states that the true result of philosophical demonstration can not be in contradiction with Islamic revealed law. For both are truth, and one truth, that is, philosophy, is always in harmony with the other truth, that is, revealed law. However, Ṭabāṭabā'ī elaborates his opinion in this concern with more

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 52-53.

details. In addition to intellectual reasoning, he tries to support his opinion with Qur'anic verses.

The solution in cases of contradiction between revelation and reason

In Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view, the conflict would be just between the hypothetical result of revelation and a conclusive result of reason. In this case we should interpret revelation in a way that is consistent with reason.¹²⁵

Ṭabāṭabā'ī's way of dealing with the cases of conflict between revelation and reason, seems to be close to Ibn Rushd's position. In this writer's opinion, Ṭabāṭabā'ī's approach to a solution seems similar to the meaning of *ta'wīl*, which had been used by Ibn Rushd. However, there are differences between their positions. Giving definition about *ta'wīl*, Ibn Rushd states that, "[T]he meaning of *ta'wīl* is changing the indication of a word from its real indication to its allegorical one, without making any trouble to the rule of Arabic language in allegorical discourse."¹²⁶ Therefore, changing the true meaning of a word or sentence should not be applied out of the common rules of language in allegorical discourse.¹²⁷ Ibn Rushd does not apply *ta'wīl* in the bases and principles of religion such as the existence of God, His unity and the prophethood of Muḥammad, Jesus, Moses and

¹²⁵ Ibid. p. 52-53.

¹²⁶ Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, p. 53.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 53.

other messengers of God. He also limits the permission for this kind of interpretation to philosophers, not theologians or other groups of people.¹²⁸

Although Ṭabāṭabā'ī believes that we should understand the apparent meaning of revelation differently in cases of conflict between it and the definite result of reason, he does not call this *ta'wīl*. In his view, *ta'wīl* does not refer to the words and meanings of the Qur'ān and Tradition, but rather to the actual events and results of which God has sent the revelation to people.¹²⁹ Moreover, unlike Ibn Rushd, Ṭabāṭabā'ī does not allocate the interpretation of unclear verses of the Qur'ān to the philosophers. Rather, he emphasizes that philosophers should not impose their philosophical position on the Qur'ān.¹³⁰

In order to clarify the reason for Ṭabāṭabā'ī's preference for the definite results of philosophy on revelation in the case of contradiction between them, we should consider the difference between religious text and rational proof. The result of the former is conclusive if it is based on demonstrative premises. However, the result of the latter is not conclusive since it is based on understanding the appearance of the Qur'ān or Tradition which gives a presumptive result. Our understanding from religious text are often hypothetical. In cases of conflict between the conclusive results of reason and the

¹²⁸ Ibid., pp. 65-66.

¹²⁹ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-MÊân*, vol. 3, p. 49, and Persian Translation, vol. 3, p. 90.

¹³⁰ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 6-8, and Persian Translation vol. 1, pp.4-5. For further information regarding the problem of imposing the philosophical opinion to the Qur'ān see: Tawfiq al-Ṭawīl, *Qaḍāyâ min Riḥāb al-Falsafah wa-al-Dîn*, (Cairo: Dâr al-Nahḍah al-'Arabîyyah, 1986), pp. 155-193.

hypothetical results of revelation, the former would be preferred, because of the privilege of conclusive understanding over hypothetical understanding.¹³¹

I may argue that Ṭabāṭabā'ī's approach to the cases of conflict between revelation and philosophy is similar to Ibn Rushd's discussion of *ta'wīl*, although Ṭabāṭabā'ī does not mention Ibn Rushd's name and does not agree with his analyses in this regard. According to Ibn Rushd, we should apply *ta'wīl* in these cases, because of the comparison between syllogism (*qiyās-i 'aqlī*) and judicial reasoning by analogy (*qiyās-i shar'ī*). This comparison makes clear the correctness of using *ta'wīl*. Judicial reasoning by analogy is used by jurists for the issue where they can not find special ruling from the Qur'ān or Tradition. In this case they try to find another ruling from these sources for issues similar to this issue. Therefore, judicial reasoning by analogy is a comparison between the case that has specific ruling in revealed law with the case that has no ruling. Based on comparison between the two cases, a jurist generalizes the law for the latter from the former. He states that since jurists apply *ta'wīl* in many cases to understand revealed law, the philosophers ought to apply it even more. This is because the syllogism, which is used by philosophers, leads to certainty but what is used by jurists is hypothetical.¹³²

Because of the Shī'ite position Ṭabāṭabā'ī does not agree with Ibn Rushd. Having different positions than Sunnites, Shī'ites do not apply judicial reasoning by analogy to

¹³¹ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, "Shī'ah," vol. 2, p. 53.

¹³² Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, p. 52-53.

discover the revealed law. In their view, a jurist cannot generalize the law from one issue to another if they seems to be similar.

To complete Ṭabâṭabâ'î's view of *ta'wîl* I may refer to a question in this concern. One of the questions, which is posed against *ta'wîl*, is the impossibility of changing the apparent meaning of the Qur'ânic and Traditional texts. In answer to this question, it may be argued that keeping the apparent meaning of the Qur'ân and Tradition as it is in all cases is not necessary. This point has been accepted by all Muslims including the Ash'arites who do not advocate the legitimacy of *ta'wîl*.

The problem of consensus

One of the sources for understanding Islamic issues is consensus (*ijmâ'*), that is, the agreement of Muslim scholars on the same position. When all jurists, for instance, agree on a law, later jurists usually agree with that law, even if they do not find support in the Qur'ân or Tradition. Of course, the condition for acceptance of consensus differs among Muslim thinkers. In support of his idea Ṭabâṭabâ'î tries to remove a problem in this regard. The problem is the cases in which all Muslim scholars have consensus that the apparent meaning of revealed law should not be changed and yet, the apparent meaning contradicts reason. Applying *ta'wîl* in these examples would not be in opposition to consensus. According to Ṭabâṭabâ'î, in such cases reason should be preferred and the

ostensible apparent meaning of the Qur'ân or Tradition should be changed.¹³³ Ṭabâṭabâ'î says:

We do not rely on consensus in the principle of (Islamic) knowledge. Because the validity of consensus, as it has been clarified in the *uṣūl* (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), comes from considering it as a *khavar al-wâḥid* or something similar to it, and since *khavar al-wâḥid* does not give more than *hypothetical* result, and what we need for the principles of (Islamic) knowledge is the conclusive result, therefore there is no any validity for consensus in the principles of (Islamic) knowledge. The consensus is valid only for legal laws.¹³⁴

Khavar al-wâḥid, which is used in Ṭabâṭabâ'î's argument of consensus, is a Tradition that has only one or a few transmitters (*ruwâṭ*) in every stage (*ṭabaqah*)¹³⁵ of its *isnâd*.¹³⁶ This kind of Tradition considered legal proof (*ḥujjat*), if there is one reliable transmitter (*râwî*) at every stage of its *isnâd*. The reliability of the transmitters depends on having various qualities such as strong faith, truthfulness, being able to grasp and memorize the meaning and exact wording of the Tradition.¹³⁷

¹³³ Ṭabâṭabâ'î, "Shî'ah," p. 52-53.

¹³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 52.

¹³⁵ *Ṭabaqah* means generation, or category. "In Tradition, the men included in one *ṭabaqah* are those who have heard Traditions from those in the preceding one and have transmitted to the members of the following category." Heffening, "Ṭabaqât" in *First Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (Leiden, New York: E. J. Brill, 1913-1936, Reprint in 1987) vol. 9, Supplement, pp. 214-215.

¹³⁶ *Isnâd*, or chain of authorities, is an basic part of the transmission of a Tradition. The jurists in the earlier period of the Islamic history, were little need to understand *isnâd*, because they could realize the Islamic law directly from the Prophet. In the later generation jurists were more need to discover the stating of transmitters (*ruwâṭ*), who quote the Tradition for the next generation." J. Robson, "Isnâd" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 4, p. 206.

¹³⁷ G. H. A. Juynboll, "Khavar al-Wâḥid" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 4, p. 896.

In Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view we can trust on *khavar al-wāḥid* (Tradition with a single transmitter), as well as consensus, for discovering Islamic practical law not Islamic beliefs. Ṭabāṭabā'ī does not go to the details of the reason for this argument. Rather he trusts on what has been discussed in the knowledge of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. Clarifying this issue I refer to a work of Shaykh Anṣārī (1800-1864), a famous Iranian Shīite expert in jurisprudence and its principle. Referring to the reason for the relation between consensus and the Tradition with a single transmitter, he holds that according to many of Shīite jurists, the reason for this relation is that what makes a reliable *khavar al-wāḥid* legal proof is its indication of the saying of the Prophet or Imām. The same reason is applicable for consensus, which is another true way for discovering the true saying of Prophet or Imām. This is because based on the Shīite's *uṣūl al-fiqh*, the valid consensus is the agreement of all Shīite jurists including the Prophet or Imām on an Islamic law. The consensus of a group of jurists, which does not include the opinion of the Prophet or Imām does not have any validity. Therefore, who narrates a valid consensus of jurists on a law he narrates that law indirectly from the Prophet or Imām which exists among them.¹³⁸

Based on the previous introduction I may summarize Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view of the role of consensus in discovering religious beliefs, as follows:

a) The validity of consensus originates from the validity of a Tradition with a single transmitter.

¹³⁸ Skaykh Anṣārī, *Frā'id al-Uṣūl*, Edited by `Abd Allāh Nūrānī, (Qum: Mu'assasah al-Nashr al-Islāmī al-Tābi'ah li-Jāmi'ah al-Mudarrisīn, 1985), p. 77.

b) The ultimate result of a Tradition with a single transmitter is hypothetical, because it has only one transmitter in every generation.

Ṭabâṭabâ'î deduces from last two promises that the ultimate result of the consensus is also hypothetical. Then he adds that what we need in the principles of Islamic knowledge is conclusive result. Hence we can not rely on consensus in this regard. He does not claim that he breaks the consensus of Muslim jurists and thinkers regarding Islamic laws. Rather he rejects the credibility of consensus in understanding Islamic beliefs. He differentiates in this concern, between Islamic practical laws and Islamic beliefs. The former deals with social and individual laws, which should be applied by a Muslim in his life. Jurists, usually, try to deduce these laws through the Qur'ân and Tradition. The latter deals with the Muslim world-view, cosmology, anthropology and so on.¹³⁹

Appraisal

As far as Ṭabâṭabâ'î's view on consensus is concerned, the following points may be argued:

1. We may find the roots of Ṭabâṭabâ'î's objection to consensus in the work of Ibn Rushd. He hold almost the same differentiation between Islamic practical law and its theoretical beliefs. He states that, "[I]n interpreting texts allegorically we must never violate Islamic consensus, when it is certain. But to establish it with certainty with regard

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 52.

to theoretical texts is impossible, because there have always been scholars who would not divulge their interpretation of such text.”¹⁴⁰ Ibn Rushd, like Ṭabāṭabā’ī, limits his critique of consensus to the field of Islamic beliefs. In this author’s view, both Ibn Rushd and Ṭabāṭabā’ī apparently deny the usage of consensus in this field. However, their ways to prove their position are different from each other. The former denies the existence of consensus in the theoretical beliefs not its validity. The latter rejects the validity of consensus in this field. The reason that Ṭabāṭabā’ī rejects the credibility of consensus in discovering Islamic beliefs is the hypothetical result of consensus. According to him, Islamic beliefs should be approved by the method, which leads to conclusive and definite knowledge, not to hypothetical result.¹⁴¹

2. It seems to this author’s view that Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s position here is not complete. If he rejects the consensus because of its hypothetical result he should also reject the credibility of the Qur’ān and Tradition with a single transmitter to prove Islamic theoretical opinions. This is because the Qur’ān and Tradition also apparently give hypothetical results. There seems no way to understand the Qur’ān and Tradition except through the apparent meaning of the sentences, which give mostly hypothetical results. Furthermore most of

¹⁴⁰ Ibn Rushd, *Averroes on the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy, A translation, with introduction and notes, of Ibn Rushd's Kitāb faṣṣ al-maḳāl, with its appendix (Ḍamāna) and an extract from Kitāb al-kashf ‘an manāḥij al-adilla*, by George F. Hourani, (London: Luzac & Consensus. Ltd., 1961), p. 52.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., and Ṭabāṭabā’ī, “Shī’ah,” p. 52

available Traditions are *khabar al-wāḥid* (Tradition with a single transmitter), which give hypothetical results.

CHAPTER 4

Ṭabâṭabâ'î's View of Freedom in Islam

I. Definitions of Freedom

II. Ṭabâṭabâ'î's View of Social Aspect of Freedom

III. Ṭabâṭabâ'î's View of Freedom of Thought and Belief

Freedom in Islam

Preface

One controversial issue involving revelation and reason is freedom (Arabic: *ḥurrîyyah*). The term freedom, as it is used and discussed in the modern world, is a new term, even if in its widest sense it has been used from the very beginnings of human life. Freedom has variant aspects: theological, mystical, ethical, legal and social. The main propose of this chapter is to expound Ṭabâṭabâ'î's view of the social aspect of freedom as a case of contradiction between revelation and reason. Before going into more details it will be useful to have a glance at the definitions and scopes of various aspects of freedom.

I. Definitions of freedom

The Arabic word for freedom, (*ḥurrîyyah*) is an abstract formation derived from *ḥurr* (free). It corresponds to the Hebrew, *ḥôr*, and Syriac, *ḥêr*. The Hebrew form is also used in Jewish Aramaic.¹⁴² We may find evidence that *ḥurrîyyah*, with its abstract meaning of “freedom” had been used by pre-Islamic Arabs. This word was used by Dhû al-Rummah (around 700) in a verse in the meaning of “noble.”¹⁴³ The word “free” (*ḥurr*) was also current in pre-Islamic times with its metaphoric meaning of “noble” and “good” and as a legal term denoting the opposite of “slave” (*‘abd*).¹⁴⁴ Freedom has different aspects, which can be described, as follows:

The theological meaning

In the theological sense, a technical term for freedom is *ikhtîyâr*,¹⁴⁵ (choice, free will). At this level the center of discussion refers to the question of how much free will could be

¹⁴² Franz Rosenthal, *The Muslim Concept of Freedom Prior to the Nineteenth Century* (Netherlands: E. J. Brill, Leiden) pp. 7-8. For more information see: A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford, 1923), index, s. v. *hr*.

¹⁴³ Dhû al-Rummah, *The Dîwân*, Edited by Carlile Henry Hayes Macartney, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1919), p. 449.

¹⁴⁴ Franz Rosenthal, “Ḥurrîyyah” in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 3, pp. 589. and Ibid, pp. 9-10

¹⁴⁵ For more information concerning the meaning of compulsion (*jabr*) and choice (*ikhtîyâr*) see: Miskawayh and Abû Ḥayyân al-Tawḥîdî, *al-Hawânil wa-shshawânil*, Edited by Aḥmad Amîn and Aḥmad Şaqr. (Cairo: Maṭba‘ah Lujnah al-Ta’lîf wa-al-Tarjumah wa-al-Nashr, 1951), pp. 220-226. Miskawayh (d. 1030) in this book explains the meaning of compulsion and choice to Abû Ḥayyân al-

vouchsafed to human beings in view of the omnipotence of God. Can human will initiate its own activity? The theological aspect of freedom addresses the question of a human being's ability to perform his own actions, whether by compulsion or by delegation. This aspect of freedom has been discussed in a variety of ways by different groups of Islamic theologians such as the Ash'arites, Mu'tazilites, as well as Shī'ites. The basic difference between these schools is found in their positions on revelation and reason. The Mu'tazilites in general assigns various levels of importance to reason in human affairs. The Ash'arites generally emphasizes the predominant rule of revealed law. Ash'arites advocated the doctrine of predestination and determinism. According to this position, the will of an individual can not determine his acts. All actions depend on Allāh's will, not on our will. The Mu'tazilites advocated the doctrine of free will.¹⁴⁶ There are certain similarities between their view and liberal thinkers in our modern period. Mu'tazilites believed that human will could determine activities.¹⁴⁷ Ṭabāṭabā'ī supports a middle position, which has been taken by Shīite thinkers, between free will and predestination. According to theologians of this group, the omnipotence of Allāh does not contradict the role of the human will to determine human activities. Ṭabāṭabā'ī tries to elaborate what

Tawhīdī (d. After 1009). See, for general information, W. Montgomery Watt, *Free will and Predestination in Early Islam*, (London: Luzac and Company Ltd., 1948).

¹⁴⁶ Rosenthal, "Ḥurriyyah" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 3, p. 589. For more information see: W. Montgomery Watt, *Free will and Predestination in Early Islam*, (London: Luzac and company Ltd., 1948) pp. 61-87 and pp. 135-164.

¹⁴⁷ Watt, *Free will and Predestination*, p. 7.

has been discussed already by Shīite thinkers. He seeks to reconcile revelation and reason in this issue.¹⁴⁸

The mystical meaning

In Muslim metaphysical speculation, *ḥurrīyyah* came to occupy a rather significant position through Ṣūfism. The Ṣūfī definition of freedom appears in the *Risālah* of al-Qushayrī (986-1072). In the mystical sense *ḥurrīyyah* means freedom from everything except Allāh and devotion to Him. One essential basis for a mystic is to recognize his or her essential relationship with God and the master.¹⁴⁹ Al-Jurjānī (d. 1413) gives his definition of *ḥurrīyyah*, as follows:

In the technical terminology of the people of true reality (i.e., Ṣūfis) freedom means leaving the slavery of the *essentia* and abandoning all ties and changes. It has several degrees. There is the freedom of the common mass from the slavery of animal desires; the freedom of the elite from the slavery of anything willed because of annihilation of the will in the will of the Truth; and, finally, the freedom of the special elite from the slavery of marks and traces, because they are absorbed in the revelation of the Light of Lights.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ For more information see: Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān*, vol. 1, pp. 93-109, and Persian Translation vol. 1, pp. 117-140.

¹⁴⁹ Rosenthal, *The Muslim Concept of Freedom*, p. 25.

¹⁵⁰ Alī Ibn Muḥammad al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt*, (Beirut: Maktabah Lubnān, 1990), pp. 90-91, Translation from: Rosenthal, *The Muslim Concept of Freedom*, pp. 25-26.

The ethical meaning

In the ethical sense *ḥurriyyah* means to have noble qualities. We can find this definition in the work of al-Râghib al-Iṣfahânî, (ca. 1100), a lexicographer who wrote his famous dictionary of the Qur'ân, *al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân*. He distinguishes in this book, between the legal and ethical meaning of freedom after considering *ḥurr* (free) as the opposite of *'abd* (slave). He defines the former as being free from ugly characteristics such as avarice and the desire for worldly possessions. From the ethical point of view, a person who is dominated by such qualities is not free.¹⁵¹

In the present writer's opinion seems that al-Jurjânî limits himself to the mystical usage of *ḥurrîyyah*. He does not refer to other aspects of this word, which have been discussed by the Muslim thinkers. Moreover it may be argued that both the ethical and mystical meanings of freedom (*ḥurrîyyah*) refer to the same meaning. The mystical meaning of *ḥurrîyyah*, which is freedom from everything except God, is considered the best quality in the ethical sense. Also its ethical meaning, which is not being dominated by ugly characteristics, such as greed and the desire for worldly possessions, is very close to the Şufî definition of freedom. Perhaps the reason that some Muslim thinkers, such as Râghib al-Iṣfahânî, mentioned just one of these two aspects refers to its having both aspects the same meaning.

¹⁵¹ al-Râghib al-Iṣfahânî, *al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân*, (Karachî: Kârkhânî Tajârat Kutub.1961), pp.109-110. Translation from: Rosenthal. *The Muslim Concept of Freedom*, p. 24.

The legal aspect

The legal aspect of freedom, as well as its ethical aspect, were known in the pre-Islam period, and is widely used in Muslim languages.¹⁵² Referring to the legal aspect, al-Râghib al-Iṣfahânî defines freedom as not being subject to any authority as opposed to *'abd* (slave). Concerning this issue al-Tahâwî, the eighteenth-century Indian scholar, distinguishes between legal and mystical meanings of freedom. According to him, freedom in its legal sense is a kind of judicial purity that relieved people of any claims, which others might make upon them. The opposite meaning of *ḥurrîyyah* is *riqâq*, (slavery).¹⁵³

The social aspect

"The concept of interpersonal or social freedom refers to relationships of interaction between persons or groups, namely, that one actor leaves another actor free to act in certain ways."¹⁵⁴ Freedom of actors in a society covers various activities such as, freedom of thought, belief, speech, religious liberty, and political freedom. Freedom although much discussed in different angles, its social aspect has not been elaborated by Muslim thinkers in details. For example al-Iṣfahânî and al-Jurjânî mention nothing in this regard in their definitions of *ḥurrîyyah*. In this writer's view seems that we may consider the social aspect

¹⁵² Rosenthal, "Ḥurrîyyah" in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 3, p. 589.

¹⁵³ Muḥammad A'lâ Ibn 'Alî al-Tahâwî, *Kashshâf Iṣṭilâḥât al-Funûn*, (Beirut: Maktabah al-Islâmîyyah, 1966), vol.2, p. 291.

¹⁵⁴ Felix E. Oppenheim, "Freedom" in David L. Sills (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 5, p. 555.

of freedom a subdivision of its legal sense. The legal meaning of freedom covers, in its wide meaning, every social and individual law that has been legislated by the Qur'ân and Tradition.

II. Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view of the social aspect of freedom

Freedom in general, especially its social aspect, is one of the controversial issues involving revelation and reason. Islam like other religions, has laws for life that limit the liberty of human beings. It prohibits actions such as marriage with mother and sister or purchasing wine, and recommends the performance of other actions. Ṭabāṭabā'ī apparently tries to elaborate that there is no contradiction between revelation and reason in the Islamic view of social freedom. He does not discuss clearly his position in any part of his written works. However, it can be discovered from different parts of his works, especially from *al-Mîẓân*, that he bases his view regarding social liberty on different points including the natural liberty of human being, the necessity of social life, the necessity for the limitation of human freedom in a society. These bases can be described as follows:

The natural liberty of the human being

In Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view, God has given natural freedom to human being. One of basic element in his view of freedom, is its root in human creation. He holds that, "[H]uman being from his (or her) creation point of view, is a being, which has perception (*shu'ūr*) and will (*irāḍah*), and he (or she) is able to choose for himself (or herself) every thing that he (or she) wants."¹⁵⁵ We can understand Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view regarding these two elements (perception and will) by referring to another part of *al-Mîẓân* when he considers freedom

¹⁵⁵ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mîẓân*, vol. 10, pp. 387-388, and Persian Translation, vol. 10, pp. 563-564.

an innate characteristic of human beings. He clarifies that God has given natural freedom (*al-ḥurrîyyah al-fiṭrîyyah*) to human being, which he call it “gift freedom” (*al-ḥurrîyyah al-mawhûbah*). This natural freedom comes from two natural roots, differentiation between pleasures and pain by inner perception (*al-shu'ûr al-bâṭinî*) and the will, which tends toward pleasures. Therefore, the roots of natural liberty are in human creation.¹⁵⁶ People’s desires stimulate them to achieve their pleasures. They can perform everything they want. In Ṭabâṭabâ’î’s view, will is a basic characteristic for people. Taking will from human beings would separate them from their humanity.¹⁵⁷

He emphasizes that these two elements, will and inner perception concerning pleasure and pain, are equal in all people. There is no difference in this regard, between different classes of people in a society such as the rich or the poor class, the powerful or the weak. We may find people who try to oppress others to perform an action or prevent them from it. However, an oppressive person can not prevent others’ hurt from tendency and desire to achieve their will. Every one tends to get to his desire, whether he can or can not do it. The poor people also like what the rich class desires. There is not any connection between a weak and a powerful person in their will. If a powerful person tries to limit other’s will so that they only desire unless what he or she wants, he or she would be defeated.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., vol. 6, p. 369, and Persian Translation, vol. 6, p.556.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., vol. 4, p. 116, and Persian Translation vol. 4, p.197.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., vol. 6, pp. 369-370, and Persian Translation vol. 6, pp. 556-557.

These two characteristics, will and inner perception concerning pleasure and pain, which are an inborn basis of freedom, require an appropriate law that would give liberty in social life. When God creates people with the ability to perform their wishes freely it is people's right that God device appropriate laws for it. Otherwise they would not be able to use God's blessing in their social life. On the other hand, equality of people in their will and inner perception requires their equality under law. Any discrimination between people concerning the law, in spite of their equality in these two characteristics, would be an injustice.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, an appropriate law should remove any kind of slavery and superiority between people. It also should make people equal in their rights. Nobody should be able to impose his opinion on others. Nobody has the right of superiority over others or the right to impose his opinion on others. Ṭabâṭabâ'î supports his position in this regard by the verse "[N]one of us shall take other people for lords beside Allah,"¹⁶⁰ and the verse "[I]t is not (possible) for any human being to say unto mankind: be a slave to me instead of to Allah."¹⁶¹ In these two verses Allāh negates any kind of superiority between people, which leads them to have control over others.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Ibid..

¹⁶⁰ Qur'ân, 3:64. The complete verse is, as follows: "O people of the Scripture, come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him)."

¹⁶¹ Qur'ân, 3:79. The complete verse is, as follows: "It is not (possible) for any human being (unto whom Allah had given the Scripture and wisdom and the prophethood that he afterwards) says unto

The necessity of social life

In Ṭabāṭabā'ī's thought, the tendency to live together in a society is an inherent quality. People can satisfy their needs in a society, which has been built by cooperation between them. He advocates his position by referring to the history of human beings, as well as Qur'ānic verses. He states that, "[T]he history and the ancient monuments of the previous centuries indicates that human being have lived always in a society and all together. The Qur'ān in many cases informs us this issue."¹⁶³ Ṭabāṭabā'ī supports his view by several verses including, "[W]e created you male and female and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another."¹⁶⁴ He does not clarify that how this verse approves his view. However, it seems to the present author's view that the words "nation" and "tribe" in this verse, which indicates social life, show that nation and tribe

mankind: Be a slave to me instead of to Allah. (but what he said was): Be ye faithful servants of the Lord by virtue of your constant teaching of the Scripture and of your constant study thereof."

¹⁶² Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mizān*, vol. 10, pp. 387-388, and Persian Translation vol. 10 pp. 563-564. For further information regarding natural freedom see: Mortimer J. Adler, *The Idea of Freedom, A Dialectical Examination of the Controversies about Freedom*, (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 148-157. It seems that the same idea of human's natural freedom has been developed also by Mortimer J. Adler. He identifies natural freedom by three characters, as follows: "A freedom that is natural is one which is (i) inherent in all men, (ii) regardless of the circumstances under which they live, and (iii) without regard to any state of mind or character which they may or may not acquire in the course of their lives." Ibid., p. 149.

¹⁶³ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mizān*, vol. 4, p. 92, and Persian Translation, vol. 4, p. 157.

¹⁶⁴ Qur'ān, 49: 13.

stem from God's creation. If living in a society links with God's creation of human beings it should have began from the early period of human's life in the world.

The necessity for the limitation of human freedom in a society

Referring to limitations on human freedom, Ṭabâṭabâ'î distinguishes between two kinds of relation, which people have with other creations: relations with the causes, which affect his or her existence, and relations with other people. Human beings are free in their relations with other people. However, they have limitations with respect to their causes. Everybody has past different stages in his or her mother's womb. These stages have been imposed involuntarily on his or her creation. Thus they cannot change inherited qualities such as the color of their skin. In addition people are born with various organs and bodily systems. They must satisfy their natural needs to remain alive. They are not independent of natural causes and their requirements such as eating, drinking, sleeping, having appropriate clothes for different seasons, and so forth. These needs can be obtained in a society. Therefore, human beings are not free concerning the requirement of their natural needs. One of the natural needs is to live in a community.¹⁶⁵

Based on the two previous introductions, natural liberty and the necessity of social life, we are faced with two natural characteristics, individual freedom and the tendency to

¹⁶⁵ Ṭabâṭabâ'î, "Islâm va-Âzâdî" in *Majmû'ah-i Maqâlat va-Pursishhâ va-Pâsukhhâ*, (Tehran: Daftar-i Nashr va-Farhang-i Islâmâî, 1992) vol. 1, pp. 209-210, and Ṭabâṭabâ'î, *al-Mêân*, vol. 10, pp. 387-389, and Persian Translation vol. 10, pp. 564-565.

live in a society. Can we keep human freedom together with social life? The answer is negative. These two innate qualities contradict each other. We can not satisfy them simultaneously. In Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view, living in a society requires that people's freedom be limited. We need, in order to live, to possess different things such as cloth or edibles. Taking possession depends on the ownership of the things. Ownership of everyone limits the freedom of others. When someone owns a cloth, it is impossible for others to put on the same clothing simultaneously. If two persons wish to own and take possession of one thing, it may lead to a quarrel. Many cruel actions and conflict, which occur in societies, stems from the desire to possess the same thing. The history of struggles and conflict between people is as long as the history of their appearance in this world. These struggles prove that no one can have all of his desires met in a community. Therefore, if everyone insists on pursuing his or her wishes, no community can possibly be established. In order to have a functioning society we must apply rules. These rules require us to forgo a number of our individual desires. Every community prefers the rules of society over the desires of individuals. This is a reason why countries have judiciary systems, which punish the people who do not respect the social laws. Therefore, such limitations on individual freedom are not considered unreasonable.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān*, vol. 6, p. 370-372, and Persian Translation vol. 6, pp. 557-560.

Source of legislation

After considering the necessity for setting limitations on human freedom with rules, we should try to find a special source in this regard. There are different countries with various laws, which depend on the domain of rules and the methods of applying them in the communities. However, all societies try to observe a social common good. Therefore, it is not irrational that we limit our individual freedom to make a good society.¹⁶⁷

In Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view, the public interest can be understood by listening to the advice of every source that limits our individual freedom to enhance our public interest. One of the sources in this regard is God Who has absolute power over the world. Although everyone is equal with other people, no one is equal with God. Ṭabāṭabā'ī emphasizes God's absolute power over and ownership of human beings. Consequently God can be a good source for legislation. He also bases the authenticity of the Qur'ān and Tradition on the authenticity of God. Therefore, following these two sources would be considered obeying God.¹⁶⁸

In Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view, Islamic law depends on two bases: monotheism (*al-tawḥīd*) and moral virtues (*al-akhlāq al-fāḍilah*). These bases require a kind of limitation for social and individual freedom in human life. However, he asserts that "[I]n Islam human being is free

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., vol. 6, pp. 371-372, and Persian Translation vol. 6, pp. 559-560.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., vol. 10, pp. 389-390, and Persian Translation vol. 10, pp. 565-566. For further information regarding the authenticity of Tradition in Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view, see: Ibid., vol. 4, pp. 387-401, and pp. 408-414, and Persian Translation vol. 4, pp. 561-579, and pp. 588-595.

from the slavery of everything but Allāh”¹⁶⁹. In his view, though this statement is a short sentence, but it has a deep and wide meaning, which could be understood from the Islamic practical way of life.¹⁷⁰

Sayyid Ḥusayn Naṣr apparently refers to this core when he discusses freedom in Islam. According to him, it is difficult to understand the concept of freedom in the context of a Traditional civilization such as that of Islam. The notion of freedom in Islam depends on the notion of a human being in this context. So any serious discussion about the meaning of freedom in the Islamic context depends on a clarification of the concept of the human being in Islam.¹⁷¹ Naṣr remarks that:

Humans are, according to the Islamic perspective, created in the “image of God” and are also God’s vicegerents (*khalāʾifah*) on earth. But they are both, by virtue of their servitude to God, which makes it possible for them to receive from Heaven and to administer on earth. By virtue of their centrality in the cosmic scheme, proven in reverse if proof is necessary for the skeptic by the nearly complete destruction they have brought upon the environment, they participate in the Divine freedom, and by virtue of being earthly creatures they are beset by all the limitations, which a lower degree of existence implies.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Ṭabāṭabāʾī’s original Arabic words are, as follows: “*Lil-Insān fīhi al-ḥurrīyah ‘an qayd al-‘ubūdīyah ‘an ḡayr Allāh*” Ibid., vol. 4, pp. 116-117.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., vol. 4, pp. 116-117, and Persian Translation vol. 4, p. 198.

¹⁷¹ Naṣr, *Islamic Life and Thought*, p. 16.

¹⁷² Ibid., pp. 16-17. Haider Naqavī, a contemporary Pakistani writer, also like Sayyid Ḥusayn Naṣr considers being human being God’s vicegerent on Earth, as one of bases for freedom in Islam. For further

In Naṣr's view, pure freedom and pure necessity may be only found in God. However, a human being as the "image of God" has his or her share in both of two aspects. His or her true freedom is based on becoming liberated from everything but God.¹⁷³

General permission for using God's blessings

In support of his notion of freedom, Ṭabāṭabā'ī remarks that Islam allows people to benefit and take pleasure from various kinds of God's blessings. However, they should not go to extremes in satisfying their desires and appetites.¹⁷⁴ Then he supports his position with the verse, "[H]e is Who created for you all that is in the earth."¹⁷⁵ and the verse, "[H]e hath made of service unto you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth."¹⁷⁶ In his view, these verses give freedom to make use of God's blessing.

information see: Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi, *Individual Freedom, Social Welfare and Islamic Economic Order*, (Islamabad: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, 1981), pp. 6-7.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁷⁴ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, "Islām va-Āzādī" in *Majmū'ah-i Maqālat*, vol. 1, pp. 211-212. For further information see: Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān*, vol. 4, pp. 116-117, and Persian Translation, vol 4, pp. 197-198.

¹⁷⁵ Qur'ān, 2:29

¹⁷⁶ Qur'ān, 45:13. Qur'ān refers in two verses here to God's blessing to the people. The complete verses are, as follows: "Allah it is who hath made the sea of service unto you that the ships may run thereon by His command, and that ye may seek of His bounty, and that haply ye may be thankful. And hath made of service unto you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. It is all for Him. Lo! herein verily are portents for people who reflect." Qur'ān, 45: 11-12.

He does not clarify exactly how these verses prove his opinion. However, in the present author's opinion, these verses apparently imply freedom of making use of God's blessing for human beings. It seems that these verses refer to the creation of various facilities for human beings as God's blessings. If people are not free to use them at all, it would be of no benefit for them in these creations.

Muṣṭafā Abū Zayd Fahmī, a contemporary Arab writer on Islam's view of freedom, considers taking the benefit of God's blessing as a general principle of freedom in Islam. He advocates this point by referring to a rule in Islamic jurisprudence. This rule gives permission (*ibāḥah*) in making use of everything except what has been mentioned in the Qur'ān or Tradition as prohibited.¹⁷⁷

Observation

As far as Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view of social freedom is concerned, in this writer's opinion the following examination can be made:

1. Ṭabāṭabā'ī identifies natural liberty, as the first basis for his discussion, by referring to two natural qualities, will and the inner perception, which differentiates between pleasure and pain. He considers these two characteristics the inborn roots of natural freedom. However, there is apparently no harmony between this part and another part of

¹⁷⁷ Aḥmad Jalal, *Ḥurrīyah al-Ra'y fī al-Maydān al-Siyāsī fī al-Islām*, (Cairo: Dār al-Wafā' lil-Ṭabā'ah wa-al-Nashr, 1987), p.90. For further information see: Muṣṭafā' Abū Zayd Fahmī, *Fann al-Iḥkām fī al-Islām*, (al-Maktab al-Miṣrī al-Ḥadīth), p. 480.

al-Mîẓân. Elsewhere he emphasizes that will is the genetic root of natural liberty. He does not mention inner perception as the second root.¹⁷⁸

2. Ṭabâṭabâ'î apparently has influenced Muṣṭafâ' Kawâkabîyân, a contemporary Iranian writer, in his view of freedom in Islam. Kawâkabîyân clarifies his position of freedom by referring to natural liberty as one of the basis of freedom. However, unlike Ṭabâṭabâ'î, Kawâkabîyân advocates this point by referring to revelation rather than reason.¹⁷⁹

3. One of the Qur'ânic verses, which Ṭabâṭabâ'î uses to support his position on the necessity of social life, is: "[W]e created you male and female and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another."¹⁸⁰ This verse seemingly does not uphold the necessity of social life. It seems that it merely explains the reason for the creation of different nations and tribes. We may understand from it that the creation of various nations does not permit discrimination between them. God has created various nations to know each other so that they may help themselves in their social communication.

4. Ṭabâṭabâ'î gives the right of legislation to God because of His absolute power and ownership over this world. 'Umar 'Abd al-Raḥmân, a contemporary Arab Muslim writer,

¹⁷⁸ Ṭabâṭabâ'î, "Islâm va-Âzâdî" in *Majmû'ah-i Maqâlât*, p. 209, and *al-Mîẓân*, vol. 4, p. 116, and Persian Translation vol. 4, p. 197.

¹⁷⁹ Muṣṭafâ' Kawâkabîyân, *Dimocrâsî dar Nazâm-i Walâyat-i Faqîh*, (Tehran: Sâzimân-i Tablighât-i Islâmî, 1991), pp. 99-101.

¹⁸⁰ Qur'ân, 49: 13.

apparently follows the same way in order to approve God's right for legislation.¹⁸¹ He supports his opinion with the verse: "[S]ay: O Allah! Owner of Sovereignty! Thou givest sovereignty unto whom Thou wilt, and Thou withdrawest sovereignty from whom Thou wilt. Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt and Thou abasest whom Thou wilt. In Thy hand is the good. Lo! Thou art Able to do all things."¹⁸² He also refers in this regard to the following verse: "[T]he day when they come forth, nothing of them will be hidden from Allah. Whose is the sovereignty this day? It is Allah's, the One, the Almighty."¹⁸³ In 'Abd al-Rahmân's view, these two verses emphasize Allâh's absolute power over the world. Then he concludes that Allâh is the only source of legislation. The second verse does not seem to support his opinion. It points to Allâh's power in the hereafter, not in this world. The promise that is needed to approve Allâh as a source of legislation, is Allâh's power in this world, not in the world to come.

¹⁸¹ 'Umar 'Abd al-Rahman "Ḥatmîyyat al-Sharî'ah" in *al-Islâm Da'wah al-Taḥrîr*, (Cairo: al-Zahrâ' lil-A'lâm al-'Arabî, 1987), pp. 121-122.

¹⁸² Qur'ân, 3: 26.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 40: 16.

III. Freedom of thought and belief

The freedom of thought and belief is one of the individual and social freedoms, which human beings need most intensely in order to develop their potentials. What is the Islamic point of view on this issue, according to Ṭabâṭabâ'î? How does he deal with this question, with respect to revelation and reason. It can be understood from different passages of *al-Mizân* that he distinguishes between thought and belief. He advocates the freedom of thought not belief.

Freedom of belief

I'tiqâd is the act of adhering firmly to something. Its synonyms in English may be the word "belief." Belief is the result of a deep conviction, which is different from simple "thinking " or "opinion."¹⁸⁴ Ṭabâṭabâ'î elaborates his position concerning the freedom of belief by referring to the quiddity of belief and the process of its existence. He differentiates between belief and its consequences. The former is an essential understanding that can not be made by force since it is not arbitrary. We are not able to force anyone to believe in something. He remarks that:

"There is no compulsion in the religion" negates and disapproves compulsion and coercion in religion. Religion is a set of truths, which are believed in, and some of them are then acted upon. In short, religion is belief and faith, it is a matter of conscience, and such a thing cannot be created by coercion and compulsion. One may

¹⁸⁴ F. Raḥmân "'Aql" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 341.

force someone to do a certain physical action against his will but he cannot be forced to believe against his will. Belief follows reason and understanding; and nothing but reason and understanding can create it.¹⁸⁵

According to Ṭabāṭabā'ī, a true religion should not suggest the imposition of belief on people and the use of any kind of force.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, in his view, a belief cannot be forbidden or recommended by Islamic law or any other authorities because belief in something is not arbitrary. Nevertheless the consequences of a belief can be forbidden, recommended or become subjected for any other law. For instance, it is possible rationally for a government to forbid or recommend the writing of a book, publishing articles or propagating an idea. However, it is impossible to force anyone to believe in a particular opinion.¹⁸⁷

Ṭabāṭabā'ī follows the same method in the interpretation of the following verse: "[T]here is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error."¹⁸⁸ He interprets it by using reason and referring to the qualities of belief. In his view, there are two possibilities for the meaning of the sentence, "[T]here is no compulsion in religion." It gives a piece of legislation, or information, about a creative decree. If it is the latter we would understand from it that there is no compulsion in the

¹⁸⁵ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzân*, English Translation by Sayyid Sa'īd Akhtar Ridwī, (Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Services, 1982), vol. 4, p. 171.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 131, and Persian Translation, vol. 4, pp. 224.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 116-117, and Persian Translation vol. 4, pp. 198-199.

¹⁸⁸ Qur'ân, 2:257

religion and belief. If it is the former it will give us the prohibition that compulsion should not be used in matters of faith and belief. In Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view, this prohibition is based on the fact that the changes of the heart and conscience, unlike physical actions, cannot be created by compulsion.

Preferring the first alternative he makes out that, "[A]pparently, this alternative is more correct, because the next sentence, "[T]ruly the right way has become clearly distinct from error" gives the reason for this legislation."¹⁸⁹ According to this Qur'ānic phrase, people should be free with regard to matters where the advantages and disadvantages are clear. There is no need for compulsion for the acceptance of these issues. The examples of these matters are religious facts, which have been clearly expounded by revelation and prophetic Tradition. Therefore, there is no need to compel others to follow the religion.¹⁹⁰

According to Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view regarding the impossibility of forcing or preventing others to believe in something, we may reject the interpretation of Jamīl Munaymanah, a contemporary Arab writer, regarding the verse, "[T]here is no compulsion in the belief." He considers this verse as a reason for the freedom of belief. He apparently considers belief, which is a matter of heart, similar to the bodily actions, which cannot be forbidden or recommended.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzan*, English Translation, vol. 4, pp. 171-172.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Jamīl M. Munaymanah, *Mushkilah al-Ḥurūf fī al-Islām*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Lubnānī, 1982), vol. 2, p 17.

Freedom of thought

According to Ṭabâṭabâ'î, thought (*fikr*) is a human faculty that arises in the intellect and science. The human being is a rational and thinking being. He or she has the ability to think about anything he or she wants. Islam not only acknowledges the right to think but also considers thought a human duty. Reflection is an act of worship in Islam.¹⁹² Distinguishing between belief (*i'tiqâd*) and thought (*fikr*) Ṭabâṭabâ'î advocates freedom of thought. He supports his position with the Qur'ânic verses, which suggest various steps as a way of studying religious knowledge. As the first step, the Qur'ân encourages people to discover their beliefs by employing thought and reason within a collective effort. If people can not solve all ambiguous points with regard to religious cognition, they should refer to the Qur'ân. This is considered the second step, a step, which may help people find answers. In the case where problematic religious points remain, people should refer to Muḥammad or His successors. Ṭabâṭabâ'î confirms his position with the verse: "[W]ho hear advice and follow the best thereof. Such are those whom Allâh guideth, and such are men of understanding." ¹⁹³

Critique

In the present author's view, the following observation could be made regarding Ṭabâṭabâ'î's opinion on freedom of thought and belief:

¹⁹² Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 254-256, and Persian Translation vol. 5, pp. 393-395.

¹⁹³ Qur'ân, 39:18.

Ṭabāṭabā'ī's reason regarding freedom of thought seems incomplete. He mentioned different steps for discovering religious cognition including, participation in a group discussion, and referring to the Qur'ān and then to the Prophet or his successor. However, these steps are not enough to prove the freedom of thought in Islam. It would be completed if Muslims were allowed to study other religions and refer to their sources and reasons. Ṭabāṭabā'ī does not comment on this point directly but there are two points he makes, which lead to this understanding. First, he emphasizes the importance of thought before referring to the Qur'ān, which would require that people be free to study different religions and think about them.¹⁹⁴ Secondly, this point can be grasped from one of the verses, which Ṭabāṭabā'ī uses to support his position regarding freedom of thought. The verse is, as follows: "[W]ho hear advice and follow the best thereof. Such are those whom Allāh guideth, and such are men of understanding."¹⁹⁵ Ṭabāṭabā'ī does not clarify the connection between this verse and his opinion. However, it may be argued that this verse encourages people to listen to various opinions from one or different religions and schools of thought. Then they accept the best one according to their reflection.

Ṭabāṭabā'ī rejects freedom of belief by saying that it is not the subject of freedom or force. He emphasizes that since belief in something is not arbitrary it cannot be forbidden or recommended by any authorities. It seems that for the same reason, we are not able to

¹⁹⁴ Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view, on the importance of thought was discussed in Chapter three of this thesis, pp. 41-58.

¹⁹⁵ Qur'ān, 39:18.

force anyone to think about something. It is his or her choice to start thinking. Therefore, by his reasoning in proving the impossibility of belief being subject to force or freedom, the same can be said for thought.

There is another difference between belief and thought that Ṭabāṭabā'ī does not mention. Apparently we not only can not force people to believe in something but also, belief is not made by people themselves. What is under the control of everyone is the preparation of such preliminaries as learning, studying and thinking. We are not able to force ourselves to believe in something that we wish. As far as "thought" is concerned, it seems to be different in one of these two aspect. We are not able to force others to contemplate a subject, but we may force ourselves to do it. Unlike bodily actions that can be subjected to force, thinking depends on everyone's choice.

Ṭabāṭabā'ī's influence on Murtaḍā Muṭahharī (1920-1979)

Murtaḍā Muṭahharī, (1920-1979) a modern Islamic thinker, has been influenced by Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view regarding the freedom of thought and belief. Muṭahharī divides the beliefs into two categories: the belief that is based on proper reasoning and that which is not. He differentiates, as well as Ṭabāṭabā'ī, between thought and belief. However, he is not in agreement with Ṭabāṭabā'ī regarding the second category of belief. In Muṭahharī's

view, Islam advocates freedom of thought in general and freedom of belief that is based on proper reasoning.¹⁹⁶

Referring to the importance of reflection in Islam, Muṭahharî remarks that the Qur'ân includes many verses, which ask people to think about different issues such as history, creation, God, resurrection and so forth. For example we read: “[H]ave they not pondered upon themselves? Allâh created not the heavens and the earth, and the which is between them, save with truth and for a destined end.”¹⁹⁷

Islam regards thinking, especially about such principles of Islam as God's existence, prophethood, and the world to come, as an intellectual duty of every one. God does not accept belief in Islam's principles if it is a verbal declaration without intellection.¹⁹⁸

In Muṭahharî's view, there is a difference between thought and belief. Concerning the meaning of *'aqîdah* he states that, “[*A*]qîdah is derived from *i'tiqâd*, which is derived from *'aqd*, in *'iqâd*, and so on, meaning “to tie,” “to knot,” or “to congeal” and “to be concluded.” One's heart may be tied to something in two ways: either as a result of reasoning and thought, or as a result of emotional and irrational attachment.”¹⁹⁹ According to Muṭahharî, this attachment creates fanaticism, stagnation, apathy and

¹⁹⁶ Murtadâ Muṭahharî. “Islam and Freedom of Thought and Belief,” in *al-Tawhîd, A Quarterly Journal of Islamic Thought and Culture*, vol. 9, No. 2, (Tehran: Sâzmân-i Tablîghât-i Islâmî, 1991), pp. 145-146.

¹⁹⁷ Qur'ân, 30: 8.

¹⁹⁸ Muṭahharî, “Islam and Freedom of Thought and Belief,” pp. 144-147.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 147.

passiveness in human beings, which prevent understanding of facts and truths. He supports his position with a Tradition, which says “[Y]our love of a thing makes you blind and deaf.”²⁰⁰ Muṭahharî considers some beliefs such as the worship of idols or cows as examples of that, which is not based on rational thought. Rather, these are the results of superstition that has been handed down from generation to generation on the basis of imitation.²⁰¹

In Muṭahharî’s opinion, freedom of thought does not include this kind of belief because the primary characteristic of this kind is to hinder the course of free thought. Referring to the same point, he says that, “[I]t is beliefs such as these that put thought in bondage.”²⁰² Therefore, they are chains of habit, custom and imitation. In the same way as a man bound in chains is unable to release himself and requires that someone else free him, people that are captive in the chains of such beliefs need another power that is able to emancipate them. This is the greatest service that can be done to mankind. Of course, we should consider that releasing someone from their chains does not mean binding them with a new chain.

In general, in Muṭahharî’s view, freedom of thought exists in Islam, as well as the freedom to hold a belief that is based on proper reasoning. However, there is no freedom

²⁰⁰ Majlisî, *Bihâr al-Anwâr*, vol. 77, p. 164.

²⁰¹ Muṭahharî, “Islam and Freedom of Thought and Belief,” p. 147-148.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 148.

in Islam for a belief that is not based on rational thought, for such a freedom amounts to a license for slavery and bondage.²⁰³

Critique

As far as Muṭahharī's view of freedom of thought and belief is concerned the following observation can be made:

Muṭahharī differentiates between two kinds of beliefs, those based on reasoning and those based on emotional and irrational attachment. His main reason for rejecting freedom of belief for the latter was that it leads to fanaticism, stagnation and so on. It seems that all kinds of beliefs, either rational or irrational gradually become strongly attached to the believer. This is not a characteristic of irrational ideas only. Of course, the attachment in rational beliefs should be based on reasoning and intellect, not fanaticism. If Muṭahharī intends to reject freedom for all beliefs that creates attachment, he should apparently reject the freedom of all kind of beliefs. Furthermore, Muṭahharī's division of beliefs into two categories does not seem to be helpful when applied in a society. Everyone can claim that his or her beliefs are based on proper reasoning.

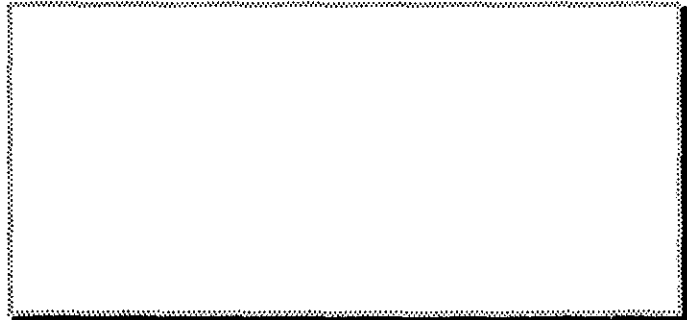
Ṭabāṭabā'ī rejected freedom of belief by saying that it is not the subject of freedom and force. In his view, it is just optional actions that can be forbidden or recommended by the authorities. Based on Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view, Muṭahharī's division of the beliefs into those

²⁰³ Ibid., pp. 147-150.

based on reasoning and attachment, would not be correct. All beliefs have a common characteristic, which is are not arbitrary, and consequently can not be subjected for to any social laws.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion



Conclusion

Ṭabâṭabâ'î's life and work indicates that he is very concerned with developing the philosophy and interpretation of the Qur'ân. His general approach to the question of revelation and reason shows that he advocates neither the primacy of reason nor the primacy of revelation. Rather, he tries to reconcile them. Ṭabâṭabâ'î followed several activities in elaborating his view of reconciliation. For example when he came to Qum to start teaching Islamic issues, he preferred to teach simultaneously both philosophy and the interpretation of the Qur'ân.²⁰⁴ Following in this vein he participated in the discussion of Islamic thinkers about the relation between philosophy and religion at Tehran University. He also followed the same topic in his regular sessions with Henry Corbin.²⁰⁵

Furthermore, referring to his written works, we see that Ṭabâṭabâ'î apparently tends to show the Qur'ân to be a divine book, which emphasizes the importance of using rational method correctly and the following of the path of thought and knowledge. This could be the reason why he investigates in the several instances in the Qur'ân where people have been invited to think and to use their reason.²⁰⁶ He also introduces the Qur'ân

²⁰⁴ Bîdhindî, "Zindigî-i Âyat Allâh 'Allâmah Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn 'Ṭabâṭabâ'î," pp. 48-49.

²⁰⁵ Sayyid Ḥusayn Naṣr, *Traditional Islam in the Modern World*, (London: KPI Limited, 1987), p.277.

²⁰⁶ Ṭabâṭabâ'î, *al-Mîzân*, V. 5, pp. 254-255, and Persian Translation, vol. 5, pp. 393-394.

as a book that explains the criteria for its laws.²⁰⁷ Discussing these issues apparently helps him to bring Islamic revealed law nearer to human rational faculty.

Ṭabāṭabā'ī's position on harmony between revelation and reason, apparently, originates from his position regarding the negation of any sort of conflict between them. In his view, there is no disharmony between the conclusive result of revelation and the conclusive result of reason because they are both two different ways of understanding the truth. Although Ṭabāṭabā'ī tries to reconcile revelation and reason, I may argue that his position requires the preference of reason over the most cases of revelation. On the one hand, he prefers the conclusive result of reason over the hypothetical result of revelation. On the other hand, our understanding from the apparent meaning of the Qur'ān and Tradition is mostly hypothetical. Therefore most of our understanding from Islamic texts is hypothetical. Furthermore, Ṭabāṭabā'ī prefers reason on consensus in the case of their contradiction. The reason for this preference refers to the hypothetical result of consensus.

Ṭabāṭabā'ī's position concerning the role of reason and logic in the interpretation of the Qur'ān is different from that of philosophy. He emphasizes the importance of reason in discovering the revealed law. He also considers logic to be a true means for understanding truth, a means which could be followed every time. According to him, the Qur'ān emphasizes correct thought and the right path. He explains this by referring people to their

²⁰⁷ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān*, vol. 5, pp. 255-256, and Persian Translation, vol. 5, pp. 394-395.

natural dispositions. In his view, we can confirm that the correct way of thought and the right path, is logic, which gives the way of discovering unclear propositions through self evident ones".²⁰⁸ However, he does not take the same position for philosophy. His position regarding philosophy seems to be inconsistent. In the very beginning of his *al-Mêân* he objects to the philosophers who try to interpret the Qur'ân in a philosophical manner. He emphasizes that we should avoid imposing our presupposition from different fields of knowledge including philosophy, into the interpretation of the Qur'ân.²⁰⁹ Nonetheless in another place of his works he considers philosophy to be a science, which helps us to understand revelation in a deep and proper way.²¹⁰ We can remove this apparent inconsistency in his position by saying that he means that we can make use of philosophy in order to interpret revelation in a better way. However, we should avoid to justifying our philosophical presuppositions with the Qur'ân and imposing them on the interpretation.

Ṭabâṭabâ'î's attempt concerning revelation and reason seems to be similar to that of Ibn Rushd in one aspect, and to Ghazzâlî in another aspect. It seems that Ṭabâṭabâ'î has a middle position between them. When Ṭabâṭabâ'î tries to explain the importance of philosophy and logic and talk about their harmony, he is close to Ibn Rushd. Though unlike Ibn Rushd, Ṭabâṭabâ'î does not claim the learning of philosophy to be an obligation

²⁰⁸ Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 254-255, Persian Translation pp. 393-394.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., vol. 1, pp.6-7, and Persian Translation, vol. 1, pp. 4-5.

²¹⁰ Ṭabâṭabâ'î, "Shî'ah" pp. 119-120.

and does not consider it as a main source for the interpretation of ambiguous verses of the Qur'ân. Furthermore, the way that Ṭabâṭabâ'î proves his opinion regarding the role of philosophy and logic differs from that of Ibn Rushd. However, when Ṭabâṭabâ'î objects to the philosophers for their incorrect method of interpreting the Qur'ân, he seems to be close to Gazzâlî.

We may also understand from Ṭabâṭabâ'î's discussion about freedom, a controversial issues which deals with revelation and reason, that he tries to reconcile them. He tends to expound his opinion of freedom by using reason, which does not depend necessarily on revelation. Perhaps this is the reason for his elaboration of his position through three rational bases; natural liberty, the necessity for social life and the requirement for the limitation of human freedom in a society. He prefers to follow his discussion about freedom more frequently with a discussion on reason and contemplation. However, he supports his position by using the Qur'ân and Tradition. His involvement with reason is not to be found only in the rational bases but also in his method of clarifying the bases. Ṭabâṭabâ'î's use of reason and revelation regarding the basis of freedom can be explained through the following points:

1. He sets natural liberty as the first basis for his position, not by referring to revelation, but rather by considering the innate characteristics of human beings, inner perception concerning pleasures and pain, and will, which tends toward pleasures. Then he concludes that these characteristics require an appropriate law for liberty in social life.

Ṭabâṭabâ'î tries to reconcile revelation and reason with regard to the necessity of removing any discrimination between people. He interprets such verses as, "[n]one of us shall take other people for lord beside Allâh",²¹¹ as a reason to negate discrimination. Then he elaborates his view regarding this verse by referring to the equality of all people in their natural qualities, will and inner perception concerning pleasures and pain.²¹²

2. He then discusses the necessity of social life as a second basis for his position. He tries to elaborate that there is no contradiction between revelation and reason. Ṭabâṭabâ'î supports his opinion of the necessity of social life by referring to historical evidence, the Qur'ân and human's inherent tendency to live in a society. He does not limit himself to a discussion of his view by revelation alone. Rather he reconciles the verses, which indicate the necessity of social life by using historical proof and factoring in the natural need to live in a society.²¹³

3. Ṭabâṭabâ'î expounds the necessity of the limitation of human freedom in a society, as the third basis, by reason not revelation. He tries to approve human limitation with regard to his causes, inherited qualities and natural needs. He considers social life to be one of the necessary needs, which can only be satisfied through a restriction of individual freedom. He proves his view regarding this basis by referring to a logical reasoning, that

²¹¹ Qur'ân, 3:64.

²¹² As they were discussed in chapter four.

²¹³ Ibid., vol. 4, p. 92, and vol. 6, pp. 369-370, and Persian Translation vol. 4, p. 157, and vol. 6, p. 556.

is, the impossibility of satisfying simultaneously two contradictory natural needs, human natural liberty and the need to live in a society.²¹⁴

4. Ṭabâṭabâ'î also follows the way of reasoning in rejecting freedom of belief. He elaborates his position by referring to the quiddity of belief and the impossibility of using force to make people believe in something. He applies the same method to interpret the Qur'ânic verse "[T]here is no compulsion in religion."²¹⁵ Ṭabâṭabâ'î adjusts the negation of compulsion in religion with the rational impossibility of using force with regard to belief. However, he advocates freedom of thought with Qur'ânic verses.²¹⁶ Therefore Ṭabâṭabâ'î tries to reconcile revelation and reason in various parts of his discussion of freedom.

Among the different bases in which Ṭabâṭabâ'î's grounds his discussion of freedom to reconcile revelation and reason, the first three bases, the natural liberty of the human being, the necessity of social life, and the necessity of the limitation of human freedom in a society, are apparently general. They can be used to approve various ways of life in a society, not necessarily the way of Islam alone. However, the other bases that he elaborates on, which are: considering God as a source of legislation, and referring to the general permission for using God's blessings, are not general. Furthermore, when

²¹⁴ Ṭabâṭabâ'î, "Islâm va-Âzâdî" in *Majmû'ah-i Maqâlât*, and *Ibid.*, vol. 6, pp. 370-373, vol. 10, pp. 388-389, and Persian Translation, vol. 6, pp. 557-560, and vol. 10, pp. 564-565.

²¹⁵ Qur'ân, 2:257.

²¹⁶ Ṭabâṭabâ'î, *al-Mîzan* Persian Translation, vol. 2, pp. 483-484.

Ṭabāṭabā'ī discusses the former it seems that he tries to expound his opinion of social freedom by referring to its mystical aspect. This point can be understood by his emphasis on monotheism and moral characteristics as two bases for liberty. He also considers independence of everything but God, to be the core of the Islamic view of freedom. Therefore, it may be argued that Ṭabāṭabā'ī's main point to reconcile revelation and reason in his argument of social freedom is making a close relationship between the social and mystical dimensions of freedom in Islam.

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