

**THE DOCTRINE
OF THE IMPECCABILITY OF THE PROPHET
AS ELUCIDATED BY
BAKHR AL-DIN AL-RAZI**

by

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ABSTRACT

TITLE: THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMPECCABILITY OF
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This thesis is an attempt to come to grips with Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's assessment of prophethood through his concept of the prophet's impeccability. The first chapter examines the Qur'ānic descriptions of the characteristics of the prophet and the shaping of the doctrine of 'isma in Muslim Theology. The second chapter is an approach to Rāzī's theory of prophethood which underlies his concept of 'isma. In the third chapter Rāzī's arguments for the upholding of the 'isma are translated and discussed. The fourth chapter is a presentation of Rāzī's exegetical treatise with an eye to the relationship between his arguments and his interpretation of the Qur'ān to prove the prophet's 'isma. The conclusion reached is that for Rāzī the prophet, who is in himself perfect, is able to lead others to perfection, and his life is an example for the believer.

RESUME

TITRE: LA DOCTRINE DE L'IMPECCABILITE DES
PROPHETES SELON FAKHR AL-DIN AL-RĀZĪ
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Cette étude se propose d'examiner la vision de Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī sur la prophétie, en particulier par l'étude de sa conception de l'impeccabilité des prophètes. Dans un premier chapitre, l'attention se portera sur les descriptions coraniques du prophète et sur la genèse de la doctrine de 'isma en théologie musulmane. Un deuxième chapitre traitera de la prophétologie rāzienne, qui sous-tend sa conception de l'impeccabilité. Ensuite, un troisième chapitre portera sur les arguments sur lesquels Rāzī fonde le sens qu'il donne à l'idée de 'isma. Enfin, le travail exégétique qu'a entrepris Rāzī pour prouver le bien-fondé coranique de sa conception de 'isma fera l'objet d'un quatrième chapitre. L'étude se clôturera sur la conclusion suivante: pour Rāzī, le prophète, lui-même doué de perfection, est capable de mener les croyants à la perfection. Ainsi, sa vie et sa conduite sont déjà comme un exemple offert à l'imitation des croyants.

PREFACE

This thesis is the result of a further research in Muslim assessment of prophecy. I have collected the result of my previous research in a thesis entitled The Doctrine of the Impeccability of the Prophet and Its Appearance in Qur'ān Commentaries which I have written in partial fulfillment of the degree of Licentiate at the Pontifical Institute of Arabic Studies of Rome. During my previous research in Rome I came across Rāzī's 'Ismat al-Anbiyā' from which, however, I could not benefit much, since it was edited in Persian. At McGill University an Arabic copy of the same work was available and I decided to pursue my research on it. I have found that in his 'Ismat al-Anbiyā' Rāzī is more successful in presenting a coherent exposition of the doctrine of 'isma' than in the passages of his Mafātih al-Ghayb which I had been able to consult before. I have thus tried to gather the result of this research in the present thesis.

Of the many persons who have rendered possible the writing of the present thesis I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. R. Verdery who

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Although all these persons have rendered invaluable assistance, any possible mistakes and error in this study as well as shortcomings and inadequacies are due to the writer alone.

All translations from Arabic throughout the thesis are my own, unless it is otherwise specified in the notes. Transliteration in the thesis follows the system of the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University. Books and articles cited in the notes are given with the full title only in the first reference, and are generally abbreviated thereafter.

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INTRODUCTION

The doctrine of the impeccability of the prophet is a relatively minor issue in Muslim Theology. Muslim prophetology mostly deals with establishing the possibility and authenticity of prophecy. The major interest of Muslim prophetology is thus to establish the proofs for prophecy. This is shown by the fact that miracles (mu'jiza) are usually treated at length in the theological treatises, since they are considered the proof par excellence of the truth of prophecy. In comparison with it the discussion on the characteristics of prophethood only occupies a secondary place, since it supposes that prophecy itself has been authentically established. This notwithstanding, the issue of 'isma, which is part of the characteristics of prophethood, has however been treated with substantial result. It is in fact the result of the growing Muslim awareness of the meaning of prophecy. As far as the genesis of the doctrine is concerned, the labor of the Muslim thinkers has been necessary for the shaping of the elements that are contained in the Qur'an into a coherent idea. Needless to say many parties in the Community have contributed to its formation, each with the approach that is proper to it. However, the shaping of the doc-

trine would not have been possible without an insight that commands the whole vision. Those who most visibly contribute with such an insight are the falāsifa and the Mu'tazila. This is true as far as the upholding of the doctrine outside the Shī'ī circle is concerned. The Falāsifa contribute with their idea of the perfect nature of the prophet while the Mu'tazila with their idea of God's grace which underlies the prophetic mission (risāla).

It seems largely shared by the scholars that the use of the term 'isma is firstly adopted by the Shī'ites in connection with their doctrine about the Imām. The impeccability of the Imām is a dogma in Shī'ite Theology, whereas the use of the term 'isma in Sunnite Theology does not have the same extent of meaning, as we shall see in the present study. The term "doctrine" seems the best to describe an idea which is shared by many in the Sunnite Community without becoming the only opinion on the matter. It also makes sufficient room for an idea that is commonly shared by authors belonging to one school of thought. It is interesting to note in this connection that the Ash'arites, who do not share the basic insight of the Mu'tazila are also less eloquent on this particular matter, and the view that they hold about it is by far less sharply conceived than the Mu'tazilite view. The case of Fakhr

al-Dīn al-Rāzī seems exceptional; we shall try to look more into it in the present study.

The term "impeccability" used in the present study also needs some clarification. This is one of the terms that are used by the scholars to render the theological term 'isma. As will be seen more clearly later, this term comprises two notions, namely the notion of "immunity from error" and "immunity from sin". In the Shī'ite use the emphasis seems to be more on the aspect of the Imām's "infallibility", that is, on his "immunity from error" in guiding his Community, whereas the Sunnite use tends to lay more emphasis on the aspect of the "sinlessness" of the prophet himself, that is, on his "immunity from sin". The term "impeccability" has been adopted here for several reasons. First of all, it is to maintain the two aspects comprised in the term 'isma as have been given above. Secondly, it has been adopted because the less emphasized aspect in each of the two circles seems also to be considered by the authors as being part of the 'isma. Thus, when the Imām is said to be "infallible", it is implied that he is also immune from sin, and when the prophet is said to be "sinless" he is somehow also immune from error. Since we will be dealing mostly with the Sunnite use in this study, it should be borne in mind that whenever "impeccability" is used what is meant is the emphasis on the prophet's "sinlessness". However, when a particular aspect is

being discussed, the specific term for it will be used.

The term "prophet" in this study is to render into English the collective notion of those persons who are invested with the mission of prophecy (nubuwva) in Muslim Theology. This notion is not the same as the notion of "messenger" which is usually termed rasūl. In Muslim Theology a rasūl is a person who is invested with the mission of transmitting a message (risāla), and he may be a human being or an angel. However, since the prophets referred to in the Qur'ān are all known to be messengers, the terms "prophet" and "messenger" are sometimes used interchangeably by the authors. In this study, unless it is otherwise specified, or unless the context of a passage is clearly a discussion on the angel, "messenger" is used with reference to the prophet. One more thing can still be added. The collective notion of the English word "prophet" is also implied when the 'isma is predicated of the prophet. This means that the prophets are treated as a group that shares a common identity, and the argument that is achieved from the study on a given prophet can be applied to any other prophet.

In this study we shall thus look first into the elements which are taken from the Qur'ān as the basis of the formation of the doctrine, and the approaches of the various parties in the Community through which

the idea has come to be formulated. This will serve as an historical background for our subsequent investigations. We shall afterwards focus our attention on the basic concepts of Rāṣī's idea of prophethood, and in the third chapter Rāṣī's concept of 'isma itself will be discussed; this will include the arguments on which he grounds his upholding of 'isma. The fourth chapter will be exclusively dedicated to Rāṣī's exegesis of the Qur'ān in which he applies his arguments to respond to the objections that are usually raised against the 'isma in connection with certain Qur'ānic passages which have to do with the prophets. In this chapter Rāṣī's treatise will be followed closely and where necessary a translation will also be provided. The concluding chapter is an attempt to assess Rāṣī's achievement in the history of 'isma in Muslim Theology.

CHAPTER I

'ISMA IN THE QUR'ĀN AND IN MUSLIM THEOLOGY

'Isma in the Qur'ān

The concept of the prophet's "impeccability" has been termed 'isma in Muslim Theology. This basic concept comprises many specific aspects which together make up the "characteristics" of the prophet. As a matter of fact, this theological idea has been established only gradually in the history of Muslim Theology. Thus it is probably difficult to establish precisely whether the Qur'ān itself speaks about such a specific point of prophethood. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to see whether there is a relationship between this theological term and the Qur'ānic use of the word 'isma.

The word 'isma as such does not occur in the Qur'ān. The root 'sm and its derivatives are used thirteen times, meaning generally "to defend".¹ This is the meaning of the verb in its simple form. This verb is transitive and governs two objects, one direct, the other prepositional. The direct object is usually a person, whereas the indirect object is "something menacing" or "a precarious state".² The eighth derivative form de-

notes "to seek refuge in", and, since "refuge" is usually understood in the religious sense, Allāh, who is the only sure refuge for man, is usually the object of the verb.³ The tenth form occurs only once in the Qur'ān, and it means "to resist".⁴ A substantive, 'isam, occurs in sūra 60,10, in the context of the prohibition of marriage between a Muslim and unbeliever women. The Qur'ānic use of the root 'sm seems thus to suggest some kind of "preservation". However, it does not denote anything more specific beyond the idea of "preservation". It can even be said that the root 'sm in the Qur'ān does not have an explicit reference to the idea of the "preservation from error and sin" which has later become the meaning of the technical term 'isma.

However, though it seems impossible to find the idea of "preservation from sin" in the Qur'ānic use of the root 'sm, the Qur'ān might suggest some aspects which later came to be understood as constituting the "characteristics" of prophethood. It is impossible here to give a whole description of the Qur'ānic teaching about prophethood.⁵ Only those ideas will be dealt with that are closely connected with the idea of "preservation".

One way to understand the Qur'ān is to approach it in the perspective of communication that God establishes with mankind. This can be applied to the various

aspects of the Qur'ānic revelation, and we shall here take this approach in understanding the office of prophethood. The communication that God establishes with mankind is described in some instances in terms of God's "speaking" to men. At a point the Qur'ān says,

"It belongs not to any mortal that God should speak to him, except by revelation, or from behind a veil, or that He should send a messenger and he revealed whatsoever He will, by His leave; surely He is All-high, All-wise."⁶

The sending of messengers is here mentioned as one of the ways by which God establishes relation with mankind. It is also a sign, among others, that bears witness to this relation between God and men. What is more, the sending of messengers, among whom are the prophets, is a sign of something more specific, namely of God's "mercy" (rahma) towards mankind.⁷ In the Qur'ānic perspective creation already bespeaks God's grace to mankind. But it comes to a climax with the sending of prophets (risāla) one after another.⁸

The importance of the sending of prophets for mankind is shown by the content of the message which they are sent to deliver. In sūra 6,48 the messengers of God are called "announcers" (mubashshirūn) and "warners" (munthirūn). The thing that makes the importance of the mission in this respect is the fact that the messengers are sent to announce "reward and punishment".

In other words, on God's behalf the messengers announce "the good news" of reward for those who accept the message⁹ and warn the people who do not accept the message by pointing to the serious consequence of their refusal, namely the "punishment".¹⁰ Beside their announcements and warnings the messengers also convey the most important thing, which is God's guidance.¹¹ This guidance is contained in the Book, and it is to become the way by which man may come to salvation.

Notwithstanding the importance which the Qur'ān ascribes to risāla, it speaks very soberly about the nature of the prophet. In contrast with the lofty nature of the message that they are sent to convey the prophets are about ordinary human beings,¹² and as far as their daily life is concerned they are like other people; they "eat and drink and walk in the market".¹³ The Qur'ān emphasizes very much the humanity of the prophets and denies that they are angels.¹⁴ The word bashar which is used in this connection denotes ordinary human beings as distinct from other species of creatures.

In the Qur'ān man's nature is described in terms of its beauty and its weakness. On the one hand, Ādam, the father of the human kind is appointed by God to become His "vicegerent" on earth (khalīfa) above the angels. The "children of Ādam" are honoured by God above all creation (17,70), because man is created in the fairest

nature (95,4). Man's "vicegerency" is described in 33,72 as the mission, or "trust" (amāna), which God has offered to the heavens and the earth but which they refused while man accepted. On the other hand, man was created "a weakling" (da'if: 4,28), so that he is by nature unstable (70,19); he easily forgets God's kindness in time of danger (10,12) and denies His bounties (55,13-77). Adam, on account of his sin, was chased from Paradise (2,34; 7,24). So, to maintain the true relationship with God, or to be "religious",¹⁵ man must recognize that he is a servant of God ('abd).

As ordinary human beings the prophets are related to God as a servant ('abd) is to his master. And, as the term "servant" only makes sense in its relationship to the term "master", its use to describe what man is vis-à-vis God seems to suggest more man's dependence on God rather than his own weakness. On the other hand, because the Qur'ān also asserts that the human nature is weak, the prophet, too, is not exempt from weakness. This is particularly stated in the Qur'ān in several instances where it speaks about God's reprimand of the prophets on account of their errors.¹⁶ Repentance ensues on the part of the prophets, and the Qur'ān seems actually to suggest that the prophet's errors are real. This would seem more explicit from the fact that the Qur'ān even speaks about the "sin" of the prophets. The word

dhamb which has a general meaning of "sin" is used in some instances in the Qur'ān.¹⁷

The Qur'ān clearly emphasizes that the prophets are ordinary human beings. However, in various instances it also describes them as people whom God holds in praise. One such instance is when the Qur'ān speaks about al-mukhlashūn ("the purified ones").¹⁸ In sūra 38,82-83 the mukhlashūn are described as people over whom Satan has no power; among them are Ibrāhīm, Ishāq and Ya'qūb, whom God has made pure and who are thus God's "best servants".¹⁹

Another particular feature of the prophets is their "being chosen by God" (al-istifā').²⁰ This "being chosen by God" entails particular characteristics for the prophets, especially in their relationship to the peoples to whom they are sent. Ibrāhīm, Ishāq and Ya'qūb, for instance, have been appointed "leaders" (a'imma)²¹ and are set as "good examples" (uswa hasana) for the believers to follow.²² A special category of prophets is given in sūra 46,35, which speaks about the prophets "who possess constancy" (ūlū l-'azm). Their steadfastness in adverse times should be an example for the believers. Although in sūra 46,35 Muḥammad is enjoined to be patient like those ūlū l-'azm, namely Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, 'Isā and Nūḥ, he is usually counted also among them.²³ Indeed, sūra 33,21 mentions him as one prophet in whom is to be found also a "good example" (uswa hasana) for the believers.

Among the prophets of God Muhammad bears a unique title, namely the title of "the seal of the prophets" (khātam al-nabiyyīn), as is said in sūra 33,40. William Montgomery Watt has suggested that this title perhaps originally means "the prophet that confirms the one prior to him".²⁴ In point of fact the usual meaning of this title is "the one who closes the chains of prophets".²⁵ This meaning suggests the idea of a sequence in time in the sending of prophets. This sequence itself is not understood loosely as sendings that have nothing to do with one another, for the prophets are said to stem from one genealogical tree (3,33-34) and because in several instance (2,129; 7,157; 61,6) the Qur'ān seems to point to the finality of the sending of Muhammad. The latter idea, in conjunction with the Qur'ānic assertion that there is indeed a hierarchy among prophets (2,253) seems to base the idea that, being called khātam al-nabiyyīn, Muhammad's sending is the last and he himself is the greatest of the prophets.

We can thus conclude that the Qur'ān does not explicitly speak about the prophet's immunity from error and sin. It emphasizes that the prophets are ordinary human being, who are not exempt from weaknesses and even sin, and who, on this account, are reprimanded. On the other hand, it also speaks, as it were, about God's satisfaction with them, His praise of them and His

proposing them as good examples to the believer.

The development of the idea of "sinlessness" in Muslim Theology

The idea that the prophet is "sinless" does not seem to have been unanimously shared as a certainty in dogmatics by the early Muslim generation. It is very likely that, being a minor issue in the general discussion of prophethood, this point had not become a topic of discussion before the beginning of kalām itself. In his Muslim Creed,²⁶ Arent Jan Wensinck has suggested that, while traditions were gradually collected which became the nucleus of later books on "Characteristics of Prophecy", the issue of "the prophet's sinlessness" did not yet exist as an object of belief.

In this connection Tor Andrae²⁷ has mentioned some early hadīth-s in which it appears that in interpreting the Qur'ān some authors did not feel the need to assume that the prophets are exempt from human weakness and sin. Some of Andrae's examples reveal the divergent views that existed in the interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses which seem to deny the idea of "sinlessness".²⁸ One of the hadīth-s that Andrae cites has it that, about the word dallsm in sūra 93,7 Al-Suddī is said to assert that Muhammad follows the religion of his people during forty years before he is called to prophet-

hood. On the same sūra Al-Kalbī reportedly says that Muḥammad was an infidel before he was called to the prophetic mission. Al-Dabbāk interprets the word wisr^{an} of sūra 94,2 to mean Muḥammad's being a polytheist before his prophetic mission.

All this seems to suggest that the Muslim idea of the prophetic mission was still in the making and that in the beginning the sending of someone as a prophet was not held incompatible with his being a non-believer previously. In Louis Gardet's words,

"La première idée que l'Islām se fit du prophète, et la plus authentique peut-être en climat musulman, semble bien avoir été celle d'un 'homme comme les autres', mais chargé par Dieu de la mission d'"avertir" ses contemporains, de leur enseigner de par Dieu, ce qu'il faut faire et ne pas faire." 29

On the other hand, it seems that quite early there has been a tendency towards assuming that prophethood is incompatible with the elect's being previously a polytheist. It has not yet become a point of dogmatics, for it occurred only much later,³⁰ but it has become sufficiently clear an option to be a criterion for the screening of traditions about the prophet Muḥammad. This is in fact the reason which Andrae gives for the invalidation of the traditions which speak about Muḥammad's being a polytheist before his prophetic mission.³¹

The tendency to safeguard the prophet Muḥammad from any taint of polytheism is thus likely to be the

earliest discernible sign of the growing Muslim awareness of the meaning of prophethood. It could further be noted that, even though this awareness concerns particularly the prophet Muḥammad, it also implicitly applies to the other prophets, because from the beginning the prophets have been treated as a group³² which possesses common "characteristics".³³

The Mu'tazila and the concept of 'imā

Although the origins of the discussion of the 'imā will remain for the most part undisclosed before a through investigation is made on the Muslim thought during the pre-kalām period, we have a quite early source for it in the introduction of this idea into Shī'ism by Hishām b. al-Ḥakam in the eighth century.³⁴ He is an important figure in what later becomes the Imāmite Theology.³⁵ He appears to be in close relation with the earliest Mu'tazilites, such as Al-Nazzām,³⁶ on whom the former apparently has an influence, especially on the latter's philosophical outlook.³⁷

Hishām holds that, while the Prophet (Muḥammad) could commit, and indeed committed a sin by his action of taking prisoners at Badr, the Imām cannot commit sin. The reason he gives for this assertion is that, if the Prophet commits a sin, he is later admonished through revelation. Since revelation is not given to the Imām-s,

they must enjoy full immunity from error and sin. Thus they may not even fall into inattentiveness, which can induce misjudgment. Hishām in fact also holds that it is possible to say that the prophets can become inattentive and fall into misjudgment.³⁸

Abū l-Hudhayl, one of the earliest leaders of the Mu'tazilites of Bagra and possibly also a teacher of Al-Nazzām,³⁹ is a contemporary of Hishām. He is reported to have participated in the discussion on love in the salon of Yahyā the Barmakid, which Hishām also attended.⁴⁰ Abū l-Hudhayl teaches that the world has never been without a group of people who are close to God and who are God's "friends" (awliyā' Allāh). He says that these people enjoy God's preservation from error and sin; they moreover do not tell lies and are not guilty of major sin.⁴¹ By this special protection of God, these people constitute a group that is different from the rest of mankind, and by the exemplary purity of their lives they become "reliable reference (persons)" (hujja) for the rest of mankind.⁴²

It is unclear whether there is a relationship between Abū l-Hudhayl's concept of God's preservation and Hishām's concept of the Imam's 'isma. It can however be assumed that, by the time of Hishām b. al-Hakam who died somewhere between 795 and 815,⁴³ and by the time of Abū l-Hudhayl, who died between 840 and 850,⁴⁴ the con-

cept of 'isma had become a topic of discussion of the kalam. This will further be corroborated by the fact that Al-Nazzām, who is probably younger than Abū l-Hudhayl and who attends Hishām's lectures,⁴⁵ also holds a doctrine of the prophet's immunity from sin.⁴⁶ As we learn from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī,⁴⁷ Al-Nazzām holds that the prophet not only cannot commit sin, he cannot even have the intention to do so. He further maintains that the prophet cannot slip into error in interpreting revelation. He, however, admits that the prophet can become inattentive and forgetful, and only on this account he is reprimanded by God.

It is interesting to note the vast extent of Al-Nazzām's concept of 'isma, especially when one considers that with him we are still in the beginning of the history of this concept. It is not unlikely that on this matter he is also influenced by Hishām's concept of 'isma, the difference being that the latter concept has to do with the Imām. Al-Nazzām's closeness to the Shī'ites is also evidenced by his siding with the Zaydiyya in maintaining that 'Alī was in the right when he called for an arbitration in the battles of Siffin.⁴⁸

Thus, from the close affinity of the idea of 'isma held by the earliest Mu'tazilites with the Shī'ite acceptance and from the close relation that existed between both circles, it may be assumed that the intro-

duction of the concept of 'isma into the Sunnite circle was probably due to the influence of the introduction of the concept of the Imām's 'isma into Shī'ism. One thing can still be suggested in addition to this. The concept of 'isma had become an accepted idea in Muslim theology, yet an appropriate exegesis was still not undertaken to support it. Al-Naẓẓām has shed a light on what way the Qur'anic text should be interpreted when it speaks about God's reprimand of the prophets, yet in this period a close exegesis of the text was still lacking to support the idea of 'isma.

With the two Jubba'ī, Abū 'Alī (d. 915) and his son Abū Hashim (d. 933), the issue of 'isma was dealt with in such a way that their theory becomes the "classical" theory on this matter.⁴⁹ For Abū 'Alī, prophecy is a "favor" (luṭf).⁵⁰ This term designates something that is given by God to a person, not because He is obliged to give it but out of pure favor. As far as the 'isma is concerned, however, Abū 'Alī maintains that God is bound to give it to the prophet, because it is necessary for the benefit (maṣlaḥa) of mankind. Thus, even though according to Abū 'Alī God is not bound to do what is best (aṣḥab) for mankind in all matters, in this specific matter He is necessarily bound to do so. According to Abū 'Alī, 'isma is thus a "necessary grace" (luṭf waḥib), not in the sense that it is necessary for

mankind first of all, but in the sense that it is necessarily given, because Abū 'Alī holds that God is bound to do what is best for mankind in matters of religion.⁵¹ About the choice of someone in particular as a prophet, Abū 'Alī says that the calling to prophethood may be a "reward" (jazā') that God gives to the person whom He chooses as a prophet, or it can also be a "pure initiative on God's part" (ibtidā') which the person does not deserve.⁵²

Al-Shahrastānī informs us that the heart of the prophet's "impeccability" according to Abū 'Alī is the idea that the prophet cannot even harbor an intention to commit sin, and when he actually falls into error his error is but an error of interpreting revelation. Though Al-Shahrastānī finds that Abū 'Alī's view is exaggerated,⁵³ it is very much in line with another idea that Abū 'Alī holds, namely that the intention to commit sin is already a sin.⁵⁴

There is a passage in Kitāb al-Milal wa l-Nihāl where Al-Shahrastānī states that later Mu'tasilites do not adopt Abū 'Alī's idea but the idea of his son Abū Hāshim; this is particularly clear, he suggests, with the Mu'tasilite author 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 1025).⁵⁵ While Abū 'Alī maintains that minor sin causes aversion (munaḥḥira), his son holds that minor sin, even when it is committed with full intention, does not necessarily

cause aversion.⁵⁶ The point on which the two authors differ, however, is not on whether the prophet can perform deeds that cause aversion, for both maintain that God necessarily preserves him from performing such deeds,⁵⁷ but on the nature of minor sin itself. While both maintain that major sin necessarily jeopardizes the effectiveness of the mission,⁵⁸ Abū Hāshim, as in the classical Mu'tazilite theory, assesses minor sin as only diminishing the reward that the prophet will receive and does not in itself cause aversion.⁵⁹ In addition, in the classical Mu'tazilite theory the criteria by which the thing that causes aversion is known may vary from age to age.⁶⁰

As it is generally held by the Mu'tazila the 'isma is consistently understood in the perspective of the aim of the sending of the prophet. For the Mu'tazila, the aim of the mission being the benefit of mankind (maṣlaḥa), it is perfectly reasonable that those who are therefore sent ought to enjoy protection against whatever can impair the effectiveness of the mission itself. This "necessary grace" comprises thus the preservation of the messenger from committing major sin.⁶¹ Moreover, since the mission and the office of prophethood are a "favor" for the benefit of others, the Mu'tazilites also assume that it is necessarily a "favor" for the messenger himself. On this account, the Mu'ta-

sila assert that by virtue of the mission the prophet becomes the "best person" (afdal) of his time, though he may not have been so previously.⁶²

The meaning of 'igma that has so far been discussed revolves around the notion of the preservation that the prophet enjoys from committing sin. This is in fact the meaning that is commonly found in the Mu'tasilite discussion of the 'igma when it is applied to the prophet. There is another notion that the Mu'tasilites also include in their concept of 'igma. This is their idea that the prophet is necessarily (bi-qṭirār) protected by God from being killed.⁶³ This idea completes the aspects of 'igma, which thus comprises the prophet's being protected from himself or from betraying his mission, and from the aggression of others.

The concept of 'igma in the developing Sunni outlook

In his Muslim Creed Wensinck has shown that vis-à-vis the crises that faced the Muslim Community as a community since the early period of its history there have been attempts to formulate the articles of belief in response to each challenge that faced the community at a given time. The document Al-Fiḥ al-Akbar I, for instance, according to Wensinck, reflects the position of the Community vis-à-vis the sectarian dissension of

the Kharijites, Shi'ites and Qadarites.⁶⁴ Wensinck moreover seems to suggest that there has always been such an effort that can rally the opinions of many parts in the Community in reaction against the dissenting element and that the rallying opinion is reflected in the works of the creed-genre like Al-Fiqh al-Akbar I.⁶⁵

Besides this document, which is commonly attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa (d.767), the creed-genre work comprises also Wasiyya Abī Ḥanīfa, Al-Fiqh al-Akbar II and Al-Fiqh al-Akbar III.

In the ten brief articles that compose Al-Fiqh al-Akbar I the idea of the prophet's impeccability does not occur. This fact can be easily understood if it is borne in mind that, as Wensinck has also suggested,⁶⁶ it does not even speak about Allāh and Muḥammad. However, the document shows that discussion about prophet-hood already existed during the time it was written, since it speaks about the "hierarchy of prophets".⁶⁷

The Wasiyya Abī Ḥanīfa, a document posterior to Al-Fiqh al-Akbar I, also does not mention 'isma. This document has been dated to a period not later than 850 by Watt,⁶⁸ on the grounds that it deals with matters that could have been at the centre of the theological discussion only during the time of the Great Mu'tazilites. Probably for the first time in Muslim Theology,⁶⁹ this document has a mention of Muḥammad's intercession

on the Last Day. On the whole, however, it does not reflect an elaborate ordering of the materials as it can be found in later professions of faith, especially in the chapters dealing with Allāh and the prophets. The statements contained in this document seem to have been dictated by the need for defending the articles of faith that have suffered deviation under the thrust of sectarian movements.⁷⁰ It is quite probable, therefore, that a constituted body of creeds already existed by the time of the writing of this document.

The earliest mention about the prophet's impeccability occurs in the document which Wenginck calls Al-Fiqh al-Akbar II. On dating this document, he has suggested that the time of Al-Ash'arī may be called the terminus a quo of its origin.⁷¹ The reason he gives for this claim is that, according to him, the document is the embodiment of the final position of the Community vis-à-vis Mu'tasilism, which is fully achieved only with Al-Ash'arī. Watt, on the other hand, has suggested that at several points the document discloses matters that could become topics of theological discussion only during the late tenth century,⁷² thus a little later than the lifetime of Al-Ash'arī.

In Al-Fiqh al-Akbar II the idea of the prophet's impeccability is formulated as follows:

"Art.8. All the Prophets are exempt from sins, both light and grave, from unbelief

and sordid deeds. Yet stumbling and mistakes may happen on their part.

Art.9. Muhammad is His beloved, His servant, His Apostle, His Prophet, His chosen and elect. He did not serve idols, nor was he at any time a polytheist, even for a single moment. And he never committed a light or a grave sin." ⁷³

As dogmatical as the turn of the assertions may appear, it should, however, be understood in its proper context. Though it is dogmatically worded, the idea is not necessarily a matter on which there is large consensus in the Community. This is what seems to be suggested by the fact that much later Al-Juwaynī (d.1085) still can say that in this matter there is no unanimous opinion in the Community.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Wansinck is probably correct when he says that from the time of Al-Fiqh al-Akbar II onwards the idea that the prophet is impeccable belongs to the accepted dogmas of Islam;⁷⁵ this is true, of course, as far as the Sunnite acceptance of this dogma is concerned, and even more precisely, as far as the Ḥanafite-Māturīdite position is concerned. Further, it is worthy of note that the statement about the prophet's impeccability such as it is worded in this document is in fact shared by later authors, although it is not necessarily the one and only pronouncement of the Community on this matter.⁷⁶ One further reason why the dogmatic assertion of Al-Fiqh al-Akbar II is not to be understood as the unanimous pronouncement

of the Community on this matter has been suggested by Henri Laoust.⁷⁷ The latter believes that a fuller knowledge of the early creeds of Islām is yet to be sought for, because in his Muslim Creed Wensinck has not included the Ḥanbalite professions of faith. On the other hand, as far as the problem about when the 'isma has been accepted as an article of belief is concerned, Wensinck is probably still right, for Laoust also says that, when the Ḥanbalite qāḍī Abū Ya'la (d.1066) asserts that Muḥammad is infallible he thereby introduces a new doctrine into the Ḥanbalite dogmatics.⁷⁸ In this connection it is also worth noting that the concept of 'isma which is held by the Ḥanbalite theologians, such as Abū Ya'la and later authors like Ibn Taimiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, is not the concept which is maintained in Al-Fiqh al-Akbar II. As a matter of fact, the Ḥanbalite authors conceive of 'isma in the sense of "infallibility", namely the impossibility of slipping into error in transmitting revelation, and not in the sense of immunity from sin or "sinlessness".⁷⁹

Thus, we are dealing with two different concepts of 'isma. Al-Fiqh al-Akbar II, on the one hand, affirms "immunity from sin" but not from "error". On the other hand, the Ḥanbalite concept only comprises "immunity from error in transmitting revelation". To see if there

is a relationship between the two notions, it may be necessary to pose the question as to why the Hanafite-Maturīdites, as it appears in Al-Fiqh al-Akbar II, adopt the concept of "sinlessness" without at the same time affirming "infallibility". To answer this question the Hanafite-Maturīdite documents that we have mentioned throughout this section may shed some light.

We have noted in the foregoing that, as far as the Hanafite-Maturīdite creed is concerned, the first aspect of prophethood that is dealt with is Muḥammad's intercession with God on behalf of the sinful members of his community. This aspect has been dealt with as early as the writing of Wagīyya Abī Ḥanīfa.⁸⁰ Watt has suggested that this dogmatic point has probably been adopted to relieve despair caused by excessive moral earnestness which is predominant in the Khārijite and Mu'tasilitite outlooks.⁸¹ In several instances, in fact, the document reflects a struggle against these outlooks.⁸² The idea of Muḥammad's intercession appears again in Al-Fiqh al-Akbar II, (art.20), with the difference that in the latter document the intercession is extended to all prophets. Now, it is pointless to say that the prophets are allowed to intercede with God on behalf of the sinful members of their communities unless they themselves are immune from sin.⁸³ We have also seen above that the Hanafite-Maturīdite creed does

not explicitly affirm the idea of "infallibility". However, the assertion found in Al-Fiqh al-Akbar II (art.8) that "stumbling and mistakes may happen on the prophets' part" should not mean that they are "fallible in transmitting revelation", since the same document also asserts (art.1) that one of the pillars of faith is the belief in Allāh's books and in His Apostles, which is qualified "obligatory". It seems quite reasonable that this point should not become "obligatory", if it were conceivable that Allāh's books contain untruth and that the prophets can be unfaithful in transmitting revelation.⁸⁴ Thus, we may conclude that the idea of the prophet's "infallibility in transmitting revelation" is implied in Al-Fiqh al-Akbar II too, though it is not explicitly affirmed. On the other hand, the clause "yet stumbling and mistakes may happen on their part" is reminiscent of the Qur'ānic verses that record the prophets' mistakes.⁸⁵ This idea is more explicitly expressed in a commentary on Al-Fiqh al-Akbar called Sharh al-Fiqh al-Akbar,⁸⁶ and in another document called Al-Bawdat al-Bāhiya.⁸⁷ Referring to the clause "yet stumbling and mistakes may happen on their part" these documents give some examples from the lives of some prophets. Thus they say, for instance, that David made an error in that he did not wait for a revelation before he married Uriah's wife; Muhammad, however, was

saved from error when he married Zaynab, because he had waited for a revelation before. Thus, it seems clear that "stumbling and mistakes" cannot mean "being unfaithful in transmitting revelation". Indeed, the one concept of 'iḡṡa that is acceptable to both the Ḥanafite-Māturīdites and the Ḥanbalites is precisely the concept of "infallibility in transmitting revelation". On the other hand, when Abū Ya'ālā advocates the idea of "infallibility" he is thereby certainly not asserting that the prophets are immune from error in general, inattentiveness, forgetfulness and minor sins, for this would squarely contradict the Qur'ān as he thinks it does.⁸⁸

The Ash'arites appear to adopt the concept of "impeccability" also. Whether Al-Ash'arī himself held this idea is not fully attested.⁸⁹ As a matter of fact, the profession of faith contained in the Ibāna, which is one of Ash'arī's early works, and the Luma' does not make mention of it. On the other hand, there is a passage in Rāzī's Muhassal where the latter ascribes to Al-Ash'arī the concept of 'iḡṡa in the sense of the "gift of capacity of obedience".⁹⁰ Al-Baghdādī also reports that Al-Ash'arī maintains the idea of the prophet's impeccability by virtue of his mission.⁹¹ However, Wilferd Madelung believes that the attribution of this opinion to Al-Ash'arī may not be authentic.⁹²

Later Ash'arites, however, usually hold the

idea that the prophets are infallible in transmitting revelation. Further, they are also unanimous in affirming that major sin is incompatible with the office of prophethood. Opinions vary among them about whether the prophet is exempt from minor sin, and if not, whether he can commit sin with full intention. Regarding the time when the 'isma becomes effective, the Ash'arites usually hold that it is effective from the inception of the prophetic mission. Thus, in general the Ash'arites agree with the Mu'tazilites in both respects, regarding the prophet's infallibility in transmitting revelation and the incompatibility of major sin with the dignity of prophethood. They also hold the same opinion regarding the period when the 'isma becomes effective. The point where both schools differ from one another lies, however, on a deeper level. This is regarding the claim for the existence of rational basis for the upholding of the concept of 'isma. The Mu'tazila claim that there is such a rational basis, and they based their upholding of the 'isma on this supposition, whereas the Ash'arites deny the validity of such claim and base their upholding of 'isma only on the evidence of revelation.⁹³

CHAPTER II

FAKHR AL-DĪN AL-RĀZĪ AND HIS IDEA OF PROPHETHOOD

Some notes on Fakhr al- Dīn al-Rāzī

Born in Rayy, Iran, in 1149 Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī is a son of Diyā' al-Dīn Abū l-Qāsim, a jurist and preacher (khatīb) in the town. Rāzī's vast interest and education do not fail to be seen in the extent of his work that ranges from philosophy and theology to mineralogy and medicine.¹ As a theologian he is an Ash'arite, and is known to have memorized some works of his predecessors.² However, sometimes he shows little reluctance to criticize his fellow Ash'arites.³ He has also profound knowledge of falsafa, in particular the philosophy of Ibn Sīnā.⁴ His "Controversies" also shows the acquaintance he has with the Mu'tazila. He undertakes a journey to Khwārazm with the purpose of converting the Mu'tazilites there.⁴ Ignaz Goldziher has suggested that, being himself a fierce opponent of the Mu'tazila, Rāzī is in many respects influenced by them, and sometimes holds a theological position closer to the Mu'tazila than to the Ash'arites.⁵ His "Controversies" also shows his zeal

in defending Sunnism against the Karrāmites.⁶ There is even a report that he was poisoned by them.⁷

As Fathalla Kholeif has suggested,⁸ Rāzī appears mostly as a controversial figure. He is so not only in the sense that he gathers enemies around himself,⁹ but also that sometimes his independent cast of mind eludes all classification. His independent stand vis-à-vis his fellow-Ash'arites has been mentioned. Goldziher has also pointed out that Rāzī has a very personal judgment regarding the ḥadīth-s, including the ones that are generally regarded as reliable by Muslims; he even goes so far as to reject āḥād-traditions that contradict his view.¹⁰ Again, on occasions he simply goes beyond the general stand of the Ash'arites and comes closer to the Mu'tazilites.¹¹

It is also difficult to characterize Rāzī's personality from his attitude towards Ṣūfism. Goldziher has also suggested that Rāzī rejects the Ṣūfī allegories, while in other instances he does not seem to hold a view altogether foreign to the Ṣūfī view.¹² We learn that he is acquainted with Ibn Al-ʿArabī, who reportedly invited him to turn to Ṣūfism.¹³ He is also a contemporary of Al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl who has the same teacher of philosophy.¹⁴ It is also interesting to note that he is very much admired by the Syrian poet Abū l-ʿAlā' al-Maʿarrī, who has a strong Ismāʿīlite tendency.¹⁵

In their Introduction à la théologie musulmane,¹⁶ Louis Gardet and M.-M. Anawati place Rāzī's methodology in the line of development of the via moderna, namely the method of reasoning which admits an obligatory intelligible relationship between reasoning and knowledge. This method is characterized by the prevalence of "by which"-proof (propter quid) and the search for a universal middle term.¹⁷ The use of a middle term in reasoning marks the end of dialectical reasoning, which in kalām is characterized by the provision of proof by argument of "authority". The new method, however, does not reject arguments of "authority". With the application of reason and its evidential role it enriches the treatises with "rational" proofs where no facts are otherwise known except through revelation. Reason further exerts control on the historical accuracy of the facts given through revelation, where both instances, namely reason and revelation, provide data.¹⁸

We may pursue our investigation on the characteristics of the new method by posing the question whether in this new method "traditional" and "scriptural" arguments still have a role and if so, to what extent, that is, whether these arguments can lead to "sure knowledge". Rāzī answers by saying that "traditional" and "scriptural" arguments do not give "apodic-

tic" (qat'ī) but only "probable" (ẓannī) proofs.¹⁹ He ascribes also only "subsidiary" value to "traditional" sources (al-naqliyyāt) in matters dogmatic, and maintains that "sure knowledge" can only be obtained through rational proof.²⁰ The prevalence of the role of reason in Rāzī's approach to revelation is particularly clear in his Mubassal; in this work, as Gardet and Anawati put it,

"...les évidences et déductions rationnelles sembleraient devenir comme le 'lieu propre' par excellence, le Coran et les traditions ne jouant plus qu'un rôle soit de confirmatur dans la plupart des longs chapitres sur Dieu et ses attributs, soit de suppléance dans les quelques chapitres réservés aux questions 'traditionnelles'".²¹

Quite in this perspective Rāzī says that, for a "scriptural" text to be authoritative, it must sound reasonable and be philologically clear.²² Indeed he also asserts that for a "tradition" to be authoritative it may not have another "tradition" to prove its validity, for this is a vicious circle.²³ For Rāzī, an argument may not simply be naqlī but it must be at the same time ʿaqlī as well, so that an argument based on "tradition" should in fact mean a combination of arguments based on reason and "tradition".

It has so far been assumed that reason is always in accordance with revelation and vice versa. It is possible, however, that there be a conflict between the two instances. If this actually occurs, which

of these two should then be given preference and be held "authoritative"? Rāṣī's answer is somewhat striking in that he asserts that, if the conflict cannot be averted, the "scriptural" argument must yield, because, either it has been established by inducing a wrong methodology or because it is incorrectly deduced from its premisses.²⁴

As may be expected, Rāṣī's option gives rise to much criticism. Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, for instance, does not spare criticism against him, as can be seen in his commentary of Rāṣī's Mubassal.²⁵ Ibn Taimiyya criticizes him for introducing "profane" techniques,²⁶ and disdains his Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb;²⁷ further, he also asserts that in his "testament"²⁸ Rāṣī makes an avowal of the failure of his approach to the true understanding of revelation.²⁹ However, more specifically, Rāṣī may be criticized, as Josef van Ess has suggested,³⁰ for drawing too rapid conclusions and for using sophistries in basing his arguments, also for lack of systematic rigour and for remaining superficial. This notwithstanding, his works have their own merit and do not fail to provoke admiration beyond the boundary of Muslim intelligentsia.³¹ Last but not least, he is recognized as a prominent figure in the history of Muslim Theology. This may be suggested by the fact that he is believed to be the sixth "remover of the faith",

according to a saying attributed to the Prophet.³²

Some features of Rāzī's theory of prophethood

It is convenient to look first into Rāzī's general theory of prophethood before we deal with one of its aspects, namely with his concept of 'isma. This section is meant to be a general background for the following chapters in which Rāzī's concept of 'isma will be discussed.

As in other aspects of Rāzī's thought,³³ it is difficult to circumscribe his theological insight into prophethood. This is because sometimes Rāzī holds opinions that are close to the falāsifa, especially in the perspective of Ibn Sīnā, and yet in other works he departs from them and criticizes the opinions that he advocates in some of his previous works. By way of example, it can be suggested that in his Sharh al-Ishārāt Rāzī criticizes the falāsifa's teaching about the necessity of prophecy, although in a previous work, namely in his Al-Mabāhith al-Mashriqiyya, he advocates the very same teaching.³⁴ There is apparently an evolution in Rāzī's thought. This is at least what seems to be suggested by the example above.

About the aim of prophecy there are several aspects that Rāzī emphasizes in some of his works. Muḥammad al-Ḥalīḥ Al-Zarkān has compared Rāzī's ideas

of prophethood that he holds in his Al-Mabāhith al-Mashriqiyya, Sharh al-Ishārāt and Al-Maṭālib al-‘Āliya, and believes that on this point Rāzī's idea has also undergone an evolution.³⁵ In Al-Mabāhith al-Mashriqiyya, according to Zarkān, Rāzī views the sending of prophets in terms of the need of mankind for a law to govern and regulate human intercourse; this lawgiver is actualized in the prophets. However, according to Zarkān, in Sharh al-Ishārāt Rāzī asserts that it is not necessary that God send a messenger with a law. Finally, in Al-Maṭālib al-‘Āliya the idea that the aim of the prophetic mission is a law-giving mission is eclipsed, according to Zarkān, by the idea that the aim of prophecy is to turn man's eyes from the creatures towards the Creator, and to call mankind from the care for the world towards the care for the Akhira.³⁶

Underlying Rāzī's idea that the aim of prophecy is a law-giving mission is the idea that the prophet is given special intellectual capacity above the ordinary human capacity. This is an idea that is also held by Al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. For the former, the prophetic intellect is extraordinarily ennobled, so that without an external instructor it ascends by nature to the stage of the "acquired" intellect, through stages that are also the stages of the ascent of ordinary human intellect. At this stage the prophet's in-

telleet becomes ready to enter into relation with the Active Intelligence and this is the point where revelation takes place.³⁷ The idea of the extraordinary intellectual endowment of the prophet is taken over from Al-Fārābī by Ibn Sīnā. The latter, however, does not describe prophetic revelation as the end of the process of noetic ascent as does the former, but as happening suddenly, somewhat like an intuition, whereby the prophet receives all knowledge at once.³⁸ According to Ibn Sīnā, the prophet receives by nature the faculty which allows him to be in continuous contact with the Universal Intelligence through emanation from the Active Intelligence;³⁹ by virtue of this relation the prophet acquires the function of ruling over the Community. Rāzī's argument for the need of mankind for a law is in line with Ibn Sīnā's thought.⁴⁰ His starting point is the idea that human life is essentially social; the good of human intercourse requires a law to govern it and this need is fulfilled in the law-giving mission of the prophet.⁴¹

In his Muhassal Rāzī still maintains the idea of the extraordinary intellectual performance of the prophet for guiding his Community; this function is even extended to domains that are not strictly speaking religious, such as to matters that usually lie in the purview of natural sciences. Under the category of

"the benefits of the sending of prophets" (fawā'id al-ba'tha) Rāzī distinguishes two things, namely the revelation of things that are in the purview of reason ('aql), and the revelation of things that are beyond the reach of reason.⁴² Rāzī holds that the role of the prophetic mission in matters that can be known by reason is to corroborate the achievement of reason with "revelational" evidence (ta'kid al-'aql bi dalīl al-naql). As for the benefits of the prophetic mission in matters that are beyond the reach of reason, one of them is the relieving of the believer's mind from fear and uncertainty. It also includes, surprisingly, "profane" matters like précis of astronomy which human observation cannot afford to reach.⁴³ Finally, from the sending of prophets mankind also enjoys the benefit of the transmission of skills, such as dressmaking⁴⁴ and shipbuilding.⁴⁵ At this point Rāzī is in fact following the idea held by Ash'arite scholars before him.⁴⁶

The idea that the prophet is endowed with particular intelligence is also held by Al-Ghazālī. According to him, the thing that shows the necessity of the sending of prophets for mankind is that with its own intellect mankind cannot reach ultimate values, and the prophetic mission precisely fulfills what is unattainable by ordinary human intelligence. Among the

concrete things that the prophetic mission brings to mankind is precisely the law which should regulate human intercourse.⁴⁷ In his Al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl Al-Ghazālī actually asserts that there are matters that the intellect cannot reach; both can ex professo be perceived by the prophet by virtue of his particular intellectual endowment.⁴⁸

The emphasis on the particular intellectual endowment is, however, more familiar with the falāsifa than with the mutakallimūn. The former emphasize that this faculty is abiding with the prophet, while the latter consider the particular prophetic characteristics in terms of the prophet's function, namely in terms of the conveying of God's guidance to mankind. Al-Juwaynī, for instance, while maintaining that the prophetic mission is a grace likely to arouse faith even among intelligent people, does not explain the capacity of the prophet's intellect in terms of the prophet's extraordinary nature, but in terms of God's act realized in the sending itself. With this emphasis on grace Al-Juwaynī avoids to view the sending of prophets as something which is necessary on God's part. For Al-Juwaynī as for the Ash'arites in general, the sending of prophets is something "possible", that is, "not impossible" in the sense that it is not unrealizable, and it is not bad in itself.⁴⁹

The idea of the prophet's particular intellectual endowment can also be seen in Rāzī's theory of the degrees of the human being. He divides the human being into three categories. First of all, there are people whom he calls "deficient" human being (nāqis). This is the condition of "the common people" (al-ʿamma). The second category is the category of the "perfect" human being. This is the condition of the awliyā'. These people are themselves perfect but do not have the ability to lead others to perfection. The highest category is the category of the prophet. The condition of the prophet is described as "being himself perfect" (kāmil fī dhāti-hi) and "able to lead others to perfection" (yaqdur ʿalā takmīl ḡayri-hi). The attribute "perfect", which applies to the awliyā' and to the prophets comprises two aspects, namely the perfection of the intellectual faculty (al-quwwa al-nazariyya) and of the active faculty (al-quwwa al-ʿamaliyya). The highest perfection of the intellectual faculty is "the knowledge of God" (maʿrifat Allāh), and the highest degree of the active faculty is "the obedience to God" (tāʿat Allāh). In addition to "being himself perfect" in these two aspects, the prophet is "able to lead others to perfection" those who are weak or "deficient" in these two aspects too.⁵⁰

There is a passage in Rāzī's Ma'ālim which can shed more light on the notions of "perfection" and "ability to lead others to perfection". This is when Rāzī speaks about "the degrees of souls" (marātib al-nufūs).⁵¹ To classify "the souls" Rāzī considers two aspects. The first aspect is the intellectual faculty. The highest of them is the soul that is characterized by the profoundest knowledge of divine things (al-'ulūm al-qudsiyya al-ilāhiyya). Less high than the former is the degree of the soul which comes to the true belief in the divine things not through "sure proof" (al-burhān al-yaqīnī) but through "conviction" (al-ignā' iyyāt) or "imitation" (al-taqlīd). A degree lower is the condition of the soul which does not have true or false belief, and the lowest of all is the condition of the soul which is laden with false beliefs. The second term of classification is the aspect of the active faculty. Here Rāzī distinguishes three degrees. The highest is the degree of the soul that is characterized by excellent moral character (al-akhlāq al-fādila). The intermediate degree is the condition of the soul that is neither morally excellent nor depraved. The lowest is the condition of the soul that is morally depraved (al-nufūs al-mawṣūfa bi l-akhlāq al-radī'a), and whose chief characteristic is the love for the world of matters (hubb al-jismāniyyāt).

In the perspective of what has been said above, Rāzī defines the prophet as "a man who has reached the perfection of the intellective and of the active faculties to the extent that he is able to help people who are particularly weak in these two aspects".⁵² Rāzī further holds that among the awliyā' as well as among the prophets there is a hierarchy, namely according to the degree of their "perfection" (kamāl) and the degree of their "ability to lead others to perfection" (takmil al-ghayr). The highest degree of the dignity of the prophet is achieved, according to Rāzī, in the person of Muḥammad; he is "the master of the prophets" (sayyid al-anbiyā') and "the model of the elect" (qidwat al-asfiyā').⁵³

The falāsifa also ascribe a particular "imaginative" faculty to the prophet. This faculty is, for them, the way in which the universal simple truth that is perceived by the prophet's intellect is represented in the form of particular, sensible images and words.⁵⁴ They moreover hold that this particular faculty is active in many domains and that its field of operation is as such not limited to the domain of religious truth. In the latter domain, however, the prophet, by virtue of his mission, becomes able to render the religious truth accessible to the common people. The way in which the prophet's "imaginative" faculty proceeds is de-

scribed as the evocation of symbols, which facilitates the understanding of the people. Fazlur Rahman believes that this aspect of prophethood is distinct from the "inspiration" (ilhām) that is acquired by some of the pious believers. This is because the prophetic "imaginative" faculty is an abiding faculty that becomes like a channel through which the emanation from the Active Intelligence takes place so that it engenders real verbal revelation and religious law.⁵⁵

According to Zarkān, Rāzī's idea of the prophet's "imaginative" faculty undergoes an evolution.⁵⁶ Zarkān believes that, in his Al-Mabāhith al-Mashriqiyya Rāzī only takes over the idea held by Al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā on this matter. This is because Rāzī asserts that the images which only the prophet can perceive do not have external appearance, and they can only be perceived by the prophet's internal senses, namely by the power of his "imagination".⁵⁷ Zarkān further states that, in his later works, namely in his Mulakhkhas and Sharh al-Ishārāt, Rāzī implicitly negates the idea which he holds in his work previously mentioned by postulating that the images perceived by the prophet should have external reality.⁵⁸

It is interesting to note in this connection that Rāzī also holds a theory of "families of souls". In his Ma'ālīm Rāzī asserts that there are various

groups of "rational souls" (al-nufūs al-nāṭiqa), that ramify into species (nau'), and each species is made up of "persons" (ashkhās). Each one of the species is like a child to one of the "celestial spirits" (al-arwāḥ al-samāwiyya) that is responsible for the improvement of the conditions of the souls that constitute the species. This spirit is an angel. He may adopt manifold ways to give guidance to the souls that are under his responsibility, sometimes through "intimate communication" (al-munājāt), sometimes through "inspirations" (al-ilhāmāt) and sometimes by breathing into their hearts (bi tarīq al-naṭh fī l-rū').⁵⁹

The mutakallimūn are usually reluctant to view prophethood in terms of a nature essentially distinct from the ordinary human nature. Underlying this reluctance is undoubtedly the Qur'ānic idea that the prophet is a man like other men.⁶⁰ However, there is an aspect of prophethood which is understood by the mutakallimūn as something distinct from the ordinary human nature, and this is precisely the aspect of the prophet's "being sent". As we shall presently see, the idea of risāla allows the mutakallimūn to ascribe particular characteristics to the prophetic nature.

We have seen in the foregoing the importance that the Mu'tazila give to the idea of risāla. We have also seen that this key-idea is precisely the basis of

the Mu'tazilite upholding of the 'isma. To avoid unnecessary repetition we may simply restate here the key-ideas which lead to the Mu'tazilite postulate of 'isma and the links with which those key-ideas are related to one another.

The importance of risāla for the Mu'tazila is particularly salient in their idea that, although the "good" and the "bad" for them reside in the essence of the thing itself, only the sending of a prophet makes moral values accessible to human reason by making them explicit.⁶¹ The idea of the "necessity of the sending of prophets" is placed by the Mu'tazila within their general idea of "welfare" (maṣlaḥa). This means that the sending of prophets is one of the things that are necessary for the welfare of mankind. Since the Mu'tazila also maintain that God necessarily wills the welfare of mankind, the sending of prophets becomes incumbent on Him. However, the Mu'tazila also acknowledge that "necessity" is not the only aspect that is found in the sending of the prophet, because it is also a "grace" (luṭf). Both aspects are expressed in the Mu'tazilite idea that the sending of prophets is a "necessary grace" (luṭf wa-jīb).

The second idea which emphasizes the importance of risāla for the Mu'tazila and which more directly commands their upholding of 'isma is their postulate

that the acceptance of the mission by the people should be secured. To remove all obstacles the Mu'tazila postulate the removal of all obstacles on the part of the messengers themselves. This is the essence of their claim that God must remove from His messenger all matters that may cause aversion on the people's part

(al-munaffirāt).⁶² The latter concept comprises many aspects, one of which is "bad reputation", in particular the reputation of being an "infidel" (kāfir) before the mission, as well as the reputation of being a "great sinner" (fāsiq).⁶³ The necessity of the removing of al-munaffirāt is also the basis of the Mu'tazilite claim that, by virtue of his mission the prophet enjoys God's protection against committing major sin.⁶⁴

But the importance of risāla in the Mu'tazilite view becomes more evident from the fact that the Mu'tazila include many details under their concept of "the things that cause aversion" (al-munaffirāt). This concept comprises such traits as "rude temperament" (ghilza) and "boorishness" (fazāza),⁶⁵ the bad reputation of telling lies and stealing.⁶⁶ As far as its non-implementation arouses aversion, the messenger must not have an ugly appearance.⁶⁷ The implementation of all these conditions explains why the prophet, by virtue of his mission, becomes the best man of his time.⁶⁸

The relationship between the Mu'tazilite idea of prophethood, in particular in connection with their claim of 'isma, with Rāzī's concept of 'isma should become clearer in the following chapter. However, it can already be stated at this point that the importance of the risāla which, for the Mu'tazila, ultimately necessitates the existence of specific traits in the person of the messenger himself, is to a great extent also the importance which Rāzī holds for his upholding of the 'isma, and which underlies the exegesis of the Qur'ān that he uses to prove his point.

To complete our panorama of the ideas of prophethood we may add some features peculiar to Rāzī's theological school. The Ash'arites flatly reject the Mu'tazilite idea of the "necessity" of the sending of prophets as something incumbent on God; for them, God is beyond the obligations or necessities of reason.⁶⁹ They conceive of prophethood more in terms of something that is "possible", morally (jawāz) as well as rationally (imkān).⁷⁰ Al-Ghazālī conceives of the necessity of prophecy in terms of its real existence and as a response to the inability of the human intellect to reach ultimate values. The need of the human intellect for guidance⁷¹ is met, in the Ghazalian perspective, in the person of the prophet, who possesses "a guiding and guided intellect which is above all normal intelli-

gence".⁷² We have also seen that this feature is one that is commonly predicated of the prophet by the falāsifa. Al-Ghazālī, however, differs from them in that he views the prophetic dignity not as something that can be acquired by nature but only by divine favor.⁷³ This point is also suggested in Al-Ash'arī's Maqālāt where the mutakallimūn discuss whether the prophetic mission is a "reward" (thawāb) or "pure initiative on God's part" (ibtidā').⁷⁴ In this respect, Ghazālī's opinion falls between the two possibilities. On the one hand, he maintains that the prophetic dignity is a divine favor, while on the other hand, he also says that it is not given at random or indiscriminately to all people,⁷⁵ and that the effort of the person that is chosen does not really count for its being obtained. However, Al-Ghazālī also asserts that, once the prophetic mission is imparted to a person, it engenders in him a sound constitution and excellent character.⁷⁶ This idea seems to be one that is generally held by the Ash'arites. Further, as we learn from Al-Shahrastānī,⁷⁷ the Ash'arites maintain that, on the one hand, the sending of prophets is in itself a thing "possible". On the other hand, when a person is sent as God's messenger he is necessarily corroborated by miracles and protected against committing major sin. Al-Shahrastānī even emphasizes that, not only the risāla

is important, for it is "mercy and kindness" to mankind,⁷⁸ but also the messenger, for he is "mercy personified".⁷⁹ It is also worth noting that Al-Shahrastānī establishes a relationship between the pre-prophetic life of the messenger and his actual calling to the prophetic mission. He maintains that the messenger really deserves the mission, because in his pre-prophetic life the prophet's body and soul already possess natural perfection and moral "beauty",⁸⁰ and that he is sent, as it were, by virtue of the perfection that he already possesses before the mission. Al-Shahrastānī further thinks that the extraordinary condition of the prophet's pre-mission life is preserved and enhanced during the mission, because the mission guarantees him immunity from major and minor sins, and enables him to perform miracles, if they are necessary to prove the authenticity of his mission.⁸¹

CHAPTER III

FAKHR AL-DIN AL-RĀZĪ AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMPECCABILITY OF THE PROPHET

Stating the problem and Rāzī's methodology

Before we deal with Rāzī's concept of 'isma it seems useful to sum up briefly what we have so far seen about Rāzī's theory of "prophethood" and, in this light, to state the problem that we shall deal with in this chapter. We have so far seen that Rāzī is undoubtedly familiar with the theory of prophethood held by Al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, in which prophethood is considered as a nature distinct from the ordinary human nature. This basic view allows for particular characteristics of the prophet in matters of "intellect", "act" and "imagination". Further, the relationship between these prophetic characteristics and the ordinary human is described as necessary to promote the latter to perfection. The two aspects of the philosophers' idea of prophethood, namely the prophet in himself and the prophet in relation to the ordinary human being, also emerge as basic aspects of Rāzī's idea of prophethood.

The "philosophical" aspect is, however, not the only component of Rāzī's theory of prophethood. Indeed, the vast extent of his work does not reveal him only as a philosopher; he is also a theologian and exegete. Nevertheless, even in his theological works, such as Muhassal and Ma'ālim Uṣūl al-Dīn where he deals with tenets of belief, Rāzī's philosophical outlook is unmistakably dominant.

This is particularly clear in his idea of the relationship between revelation and human reason. As we have seen earlier, Rāzī maintains that "traditional" and "scriptural" arguments must be provided with "rational" arguments in order to reach sure knowledge.¹ He also uses this methodology in his 'Ismat al-Anbiyā'. The largest portion of the latter work consists in an exegesis of the Qur'ānic passages that deal with the prophets, in particular those passages that seem difficult to reconcile with the upholding of the idea of 'isma. The problem which Rāzī intends to deal with in his 'Ismat al-Anbiyā' can thus approximately be stated as follows: Can the idea of the prophet's impeccability be based on "scriptural" and "traditional" arguments? In other words, since for Rāzī "scriptural" evidence must be supported by "rational" evidence: What evidence can be found in the Scripture and Tradition that can prove the idea of the prophet's impeccability?

One more element is useful for the understanding of Rāzī's concern about this specific theological issue. This is what Rāzī describes as the charge of the Ḥash-wiyya, who hold an idea diametrically opposed to his idea. This point will be clarified in the following section. It may be useful, however, to state at this point the direction to which Rāzī will lead us in his discussion of the 'iṣma, which he briefly summarizes in his Ma'ālīm Uṣūl al-Dīn, as follows:

"all the (Qur'ānic) verses that occur on this matter (i.e. the verses that speak about the prophets' "errors" and "sins") are either to be interpreted as "the dereliction of a better course of action" or, if the action (that a prophet commits) cannot but be a sin, it is to be understood as to take place only during his pre-prophetic life."²

Some notes on Rāzī's 'Iṣmat al-Anbiyā'

Rāzī's 'Iṣmat al-Anbiyā'³ is a treatise about the prophet's sinlessness, and is divided into three parts. The first part is a report of the opinions of Muslim authors on the issue of the prophet's impeccability. The second part is Rāzī's own opinion and the arguments for its upholding. The third part is the largest part of the work, which is an exegesis of Qur'ānic passages about the prophets dealt with in chronological order.

Rāzī also has another work, in which he deals

with the same problematics; this is the thirty-second chapter of his Arba'īn fī Usūl al-Dīn.⁴ The division of the 'Iḡṣat is also used in the Arba'īn. When one further compares both works the similarity between them is not too difficult to see, in particular because each part of both works deals with the same objections and provides in each case nearly the same solutions. In other words, the structure of the passages dealing with the same problems is the same for both works. It can be added that in both works the "impeccability" of the angel is discussed. The passage in the Arba'īn that deals with this problem has more abundant elaboration than what is found in the 'Iḡṣat on the question. This is quite exceptional, because in general the 'Iḡṣat deals more extensively with a problem than it is dealt with in the Arba'īn. This point can be easily explained by the fact that, since the 'Iḡṣat is intended more specifically as a treatise on the prophet's impeccability, it could hardly be expected that in it Ḥāṣī would also discuss whether the angel is immune from error and sin. The discussion of the angel's impeccability appears to be of secondary importance in the purpose of the writing of the 'Iḡṣat.

It may also be noted that some instances in the 'Iḡṣat are difficult to comprehend, which can more easily be understood by consulting the corresponding passage in the Arba'īn. It sometimes occurs in the 'Iḡṣat that a sentence seems to have been changed without the necessary

adjustment being made to the structure of the new sentence. Some words also seem to have been dropped without new ones being inserted to fill the gap. This would seem clear if one compares the exegetical part in both documents where Adam's sin is being discussed. Without a notice that so far one has been dealing with the first problem, at a certain point the second problem is announced.⁵ The structure of the whole passage on Adam is clearer in the Arba'in.⁶ On several instances the Arba'in is useful to bridge the gaps that are left open in the 'Ismat,⁷ as well as some alterations of words, which make the reading difficult.⁸

One more thing can be said about the aim of the work. In the khutbat al-kitāb (foreword) of the 'Ismat, Rāṣī states briefly that the work has been written with the intention of refuting the Ḥashwiyya, who

"... attribute sins and offences to the prophets and ascribe disgraceful and vile deeds to them; the truth is that all this attribution is unfounded".⁹

Unfortunately, Rāṣī does not specify further who they are. It is also vain to look for more information about them in his I'tiqādāt Firq al-Muslimīn. Josef van Ess has suggested that the Ḥashwiyya are those people who, among other things, consider all kinds of speculation an offence against true trust in God.¹⁰ It appears that this name is attributed to a great many individuals,¹¹ so that it is probably no more than an epithet¹² designating sometimes "extreme literalists"¹³ and sometimes "anthropomorphists".¹⁴ Some

authors have suggested that the Hashwiyya are mostly found among the Hanbalite extremists.¹⁵ On the other hand, Rāṣī also relates what the Hashwiyya hold about prophethood. According to him,¹⁶ these people hold that the prophets can commit major and minor sins; some of them even say that Muḥammad was an unbeliever (kāfir) before his prophetic mission.¹⁷

In the Introduction to Rāṣī's 'Imṣat al-Anbiyā' 'Abd al-'Azīs 'Uyūn al-Sūd says that Rāṣī has the great merit of curbing the "anthropomorphists" and the Hashwiyya in Herāt.¹⁸ Al-Subkī¹⁹ has recorded an event during Rāṣī's stay at Herāt, where the Hashwiyya is said to have manifested hostility against him and accused his son and wife of dissoluteness.²⁰ Rāṣī's answer suggests that the Hashwiyya are those people usually described as "anthropomorphists" in Muslim Theology. In Rāṣī's words,

"This lampoon states that my son is a ne'er-do-well and a fornicator; this is to be expected of youth, it is a kind of madness, and we pray that God may send reform and repentance. As for my wife, women are like that unless God makes them chaste; I am an old man who has nothing to offer to women. All this is possible. But as to me, by God I have never said that the Creator is a body, and I have never likened Him to what He has created, nor ascribed position in space to Him".²¹

Rāṣī ended his travels in Herāt and lived there for six years until he died in 1209.²² There is no mention, however, that the 'Imṣat al-Anbiyā' was written in this period of his life nor is there sufficient evidence to infer that it was intended to refute the Hashwiyya of Herāt.²³

Nevertheless, the following conclusions may be suggested. The points of similarity and difference between the Arba'īn and the 'Iṣmat suggest that there is a relationship between them. This is shown by the fact that in both documents the same problematic is discussed, with the adoption of the same structure and by using the same sets of arguments. Viewed in this perspective there is no major point of difference as such between them except that the Arba'īn is more readable.

As regards the purpose of the writing of the 'Iṣmat, Rāṣī himself states that it was intended to refute the Ḥashwiyya. He however does not give further specification. His biographers also give us only scanty information about Rāṣī's conflict with the Ḥashwiyya, namely only the one reported of Herāt. All this, indeed, is not enough evidence to say that the 'Iṣmat was written during Rāṣī's stay at Herāt. On the other hand, we learn from Rāṣī himself what these people hold, in particular regarding prophethood. Thus we might conclude that Rāṣī's conflict with the Ḥashwiyya at Herāt may serve as evidence for the historical actuality of his defence of the idea of the prophet's impeccability.

On the nature of 'isma

We come now to the discussion of 'isma itself.

The three following sections will deal with three particular aspects: the nature of 'isma, its content and Rāzī's arguments in favor of it. In this section we shall present Rāzī's account of the discussion of the nature of 'isma among the Muslim thinkers. Some passages from his Muhassal will be translated here, in which he summarizes the opinions of the scholars before him.²⁴

"The following are the opinions of those who hold the idea of the prophet's immunity to sin. First of all, there are people who hold that someone who is ma'sūm is a person who cannot commit sin. Secondly, there are people who say that someone who is ma'sūm still has the power to commit sin.

"Among the upholders of the first view there are those who believe that someone who is ma'sūm is a person who in his body or soul is endowed with a characteristic nature which necessarily precludes him from committing sins. However, there are also those who hold that, as far as his bodily nature is concerned, the ma'sūm is like other people, and they interpret 'isma as the capacity of obedience (al-qudra 'ala al-tā'a). This is the teaching of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī.

"Those who do not deny (the existence of) free will²⁵ interpret 'isma as something which God may do to His servant, and teach that (it could be accepted that) by virtue of this act of God the person that is ma'sūm will not purposefully commit sin; but this special act of God should not be understood as a constraint (iljā') on him. The upholders of this view refute the first view on several grounds.

"The 'rational argument' for their refutation is that, if it were as they say, the ma'sūm, who receives 'isma (from God), would not deserve praise (madh), and the tenets of 'prescription and proscription' and of 'reward and punishment' would as well lose their meaning.

"The 'Traditional argument' for their refusal is the following words of God: "Say, 'I am only a mortal, like you are';"²⁶ "Set not up with God another god";²⁷ "And had We not confirmed thee, surely thou wert near to inclining unto them a very little";²⁸ and "Yet I claim not that my soul was innocent".²⁹

"The upholders of the first view further maintain that the 'occasions of 'isma' (asbab al-'isma) are four. Firstly, the body or the soul of the person that is ma'sum possesses a characteristic which renders the (existence of) habitus (malaka) obligatory in him, which prevents him from doing disgraceful deeds (fujur); the difference between God's act and the habitus is known. Secondly, in him is engendered the knowledge of the baseness of sin and the loftiness of obedience. Thirdly, this knowledge is strengthened by God's uninterrupted revelations and clarifications. Fourthly, if an action of the kind of 'the dereliction of a better course of action' occurs on his part, or that at a certain moment forgetfulness overtakes him, this is not left unheeded; on the contrary, he is thereby reprimanded and warned by God; and this act of God makes him feel depressed.

"(They also maintain that) when these four elements exist together in one individual, he is effectively immune from sin. For, when the 'habitus of purity' (malakat al-'iffa) is existent in the essence of the soul and, with it, a perfect knowledge that happiness lies in obedience and that perdition lies in sin, this knowledge becomes a help to him to realize the requirements of the habitus of the soul. Revelation also makes this perfect, and a little sense of fear of being blamed enhances alertness. The essence of 'isma is thus guaranteed by the existence of these four elements in the individual."

Rāzī does not state explicitly his stance. But it seems quite safe to infer, on base of what we have seen above,³⁰ that for him the 'isma really means the impossibility of the prophet's committing sins. This seems in line with his view that the prophet is a perfect being in various aspects of his personality. Here we may take up again Rāzī's argument on the intellectual, active and imaginative faculties of the prophet. The ability to lead others to perfection, which is proper to the prophet,³¹

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is inconceivable without the prophet's being habitually in a state of purity. The impossibility of the prophet's performing disgraceful deeds is in conformity with the fact that the prophet's soul is in the highest degree of perfection, which is characterised by an excellent moral character (al-akhlāq al-fādila).³² In another respect, the prophet's intellective faculty is also typically characterized by perfection which is "the knowledge of God" (ma'rifat Allāh) and the "knowledge of divine things" (al-'ulūm al-quḍaiyya al-ilāhiyya).³³ These go hand in hand with the perfection of his active faculty which materialises in the "obedience to God" (ṭā'at Allāh). All this is completed with the perfection of his imaginative faculty, which is an abiding faculty with him, through which he is in continuous contact with the Active Intelligence. From this continuous contact revelation takes place.³⁴ The three aspects of the prophet's perfection meet the first three "occasions of 'isma" (asbāb al-'isma) which are mentioned by Rāṣī in the passage translated above. The remaining aspect that is lacking is God's reprimand and warning, if the prophet eventually leaves a better course of action. We will come across this argument in Chapter Four, where Rāṣī's exegesis will be more specifically dealt with.

On the content of 'igaa

With regard to matters in which 'igaa is effective there are also various opinions among the Muslim authors. Rāzī has a report of this in the chapter which opens his 'Iḡnat al-Anbiyā'. It is intended as the general context for his arguments defending the prophet's immunity from sin. These opinions as well as Rāzī's own arguments will be translated in the two following sections.³⁵

"The controversies that exist on this problem (i.e. on the issue of the prophet's impeccability) can be classified into four categories.

"Firstly, there is the controversy that is related to (the prophet's being preserved from error in) their belief (al-i'tigādiyya). The Community is unanimous in maintaining that the prophet is preserved from 'unbelief and innovationism' (al-kufr wa l-bid'a), except the Fudayliyya(?), a branch of the Khawārij, who admit the possibility of 'unbelief' on the prophet's part. This is because they conceive that the occurrence of sin is possible for the prophet and, since they also believe that every sin is unbelief, they admit that unbelief is possible on the prophet's part. As for the Rāwafid, they admit (only) the possibility that the prophet pronounces the word unbelief (if need be) to conceal (his true faith) ('alā sahl al-taḡiyya).³⁶

"Secondly, there is the controversy that is related to (the prophet's being preserved from error in) matters of Divine laws and provisions (al-Sharā'i' wa l-ahkām min Allāh ta'ālā). The Community is unanimous in maintaining that it is not conceivable on the prophet's part to falsify and betray them (al-tahrīf wa l-khiyāra), either purposefully and/or by inadvertence (ilā bi l-'aḡd wa lā bi l-'aḡw). Were it not so, not one thing of the Divine laws could be relied upon.

"Thirdly, there is the controversy that is related to (the prophet's being preserved from error in) his 'legal pronouncement' (al-fatwa). The Community is unanimous in maintaining that it is inconceivable that the prophet make a mistake intentionally. There are various opinions, however on whether they can make a mistake by inadvertence.

"Fourthly, there is the controversy that is related to (the prophet's being preserved from error in) his deeds and conditions (af'alu-hum wa shu'alu-hum). The controversy on this matter correspond to five schools:

1. The Hashwiyya maintain that it is permissible for the prophet to decidedly commit major and minor sins (al-icdan 'ala l-kaba'ir wa l-sagha'ir).

2. The majority of the Mu'tazila maintain that it is categorically to be excluded that the prophet harbor an intention to commit major sin (ta'ammud al-kabira). They, however, maintain that it is possible that the prophet intentionally commit a minor sin, on the condition that it is not one that causes aversion. If this minor sin does cause aversion, it must be held impossible for him, such as being stingy about a thing that is below the measure of a habba.³⁸

3. Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī maintains that it is impossible that the prophet harbor an intention of committing major or minor sin; however, he may commit a sin because he interprets a piece of revelation erroneously (al-khata' fi l-ta'wil).

4. Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Sayyār Al-Ḥaṣṣan maintains that it is inconceivable that the prophet commit major sin intentionally or due to erroneously interpreting revelation.³⁹ However, he believes that it is possible that the prophet become inattentive and forgetful (al-sahw wa l-nisyan); and it is on this account that he is reprimanded (by God). When his awareness is greater, it is obligatory on him to do his utmost to remain alert.⁴⁰

5. The Shī'a⁴¹ maintain that it is not conceivable that the prophet commit any sin, either major or minor, either purposefully or by erroneously interpreting revelation, either inattentively or by forgetfulness.

"There is also a controversy around the problem of when the (existence of) 'isma is to be considered necessary. Some people maintain that 'isma is given from the time of birth until death. Most people, however, believe that 'isma is necessary only during the period of the prophetic mission. The latter one is the opinion of our fellows (the Ash'arites)."

Rasī's defence of the Prophet's immunity from sin

The passage that is here translated to present Rasī's defence of the prophet's immunity to sin is taken from his 'Imnat al-Andiyā''.⁴¹ As has been mentioned previously,⁴² in its khutbat al-kitaḅ Rasī says that he has undertaken to write this work to refute the hashwiyān, who hold that the prophet is not immune from sin.

"We maintain that the prophet enjoys preservation from intentionally committing major and minor sins during the time of his prophetic mission. As for the sin that is due to inattentiveness (we believe that) it is possible to happen to him. The following are the proofs for the necessity of 'immunity'."

"1. If it could occur on the prophet's part to commit sin, his liability for blame would be effective in this world ('al-dunya') and punishment would be his lot in the future ('al-akhirah') to a greater measure than the liability of the sinful members of his community to both matters. This inference is undoubtedly untenable; so it is also false (to maintain) that sin can occur on the prophet's part. This is because the greatest of God's favor to His servants is His granting them the grace of the mission and prophethood.⁴³ It follows that the greater the grace that a person receives the more abominable is the sin that he commits. Plain reason makes it clear. Three Scriptural arguments further support this idea.

"The first is God's word: "Wives of the Prophet, you are not as other women",⁴⁴ and, "Wives of the Prophet, whoever among you commits a flagrant indecency, for her the chastisement shall be doubled."⁴⁵

"The second is the principle (in fiqh) that the sound and adult Muslim (muḥarrag) is to be stoned (if he commits an adultery), while he who is not is to be flogged.⁴⁶

"The third is that (it is known that) the punishment of a slave is the half of a free man's."

"What we have so far mentioned suffices to establish that, if sin did occur on the prophet's part, his liability to blame would be effective in this life and in the future he would receive punishment to a greater measure than what is due on the whole of the sinful members of the Community. Since by immunity it has been established that the latter assumption is false, so it cannot be said that the prophet's condition is greater in God's eyes (than the condition of the simple believer) and, at the same time, that his condition is in fact lower than the condition of

any one (in the community of the believers). Thus, this evidence shows that sin (dhanb) really cannot happen on the prophet's part.

"2. If it were possible that sin (dhanb) occur on the prophet's part, his testimony should not be accepted. This assumption is based on God's word: "O believers, if an ungodly man comes to you with a tiding, make clear."⁴⁷ Thus, God gives us the order that the truth of the witness of a great sinner be verified and that we abstain from giving credit to it.⁴⁸ This, however, cannot apply to the prophet, because when a man is not to be given credit for his witness in matters of this world,⁴⁹ how can his witness be accepted in matters of religions that last until the Day of Resurrection? Besides, God also confirms that Muhammad - God's blessing and peace be upon him - is a witness for all men on the Resurrection Day, when He says: "Thus We appointed you a midmost nation that you might be witness to the people, and that the Messenger might be a witness to you".⁵⁰ So, how could a man who is to be a witness to all the messengers on the Day of Resurrection be in the condition of a man whose witness is not acceptable (even) in less important matters?⁵¹

"3. If the prophet could commit sin (dhanb), it would be obligatory that they be rebuked, because proofs⁵² point to the necessity of the ordering of the good and the prohibition of the evil. However, the rebuking of prophets is invalidated by God's word: "Those who hurt God and His Messenger - then God has cursed in the present world and the world to come."⁵³ Thus, the possibility that the prophet commit sin is also disproved.

"4. If it were true that the Prophet Muhammad - God's blessing and peace be upon him - commit sin (fiqq), two things should ensue:

- a. either we are given order to imitate him (also in this respect), which is inadmissible,
- b. or we are not ordered to imitate him (in the general sense), which is also untrue, because God says: "Says: 'If you love God, follow me, and God will love you',⁵⁴ and, 'So follow him'." As the assumption that the possibility that the prophet can commit sin leads to these two things that are false, so it also cannot be said that the occurrence of sin on his part is also possible.

"5. If it could occur that the prophets commit sin (ma'giya), the menace of hell should apply to him, for God says: "Whoso disobeys God, and His Messenger, and transgresses His bounds, him He will admit to a Fire, therein dwelling forever, and for him there awaits a humbling chastisement".⁵⁵ The curse of God would also be upon him, for He says: "Surely the curse of God shall rest upon the

evildoers".⁵⁷ However, with unanimity the Community has established that this is untrue. Thus, it is also untrue that sin may occur from the prophet.

"6. The prophets are ordered to perform works of obedience (al-ta'at) and to abstain from sin. If they desisted from obedience and committed sin, they would certainly be affected by this word of God: "O you who believe, wherefore do you say what you do not? Very hateful it is to God, that you say what you do not",⁵⁸ and, "Will you bid others to piety, and forget yourselves?"⁵⁹ It is known that all this is utmost ignominy. Likewise, God says that His Messenger Shu'ayb - God's blessing and peace be upon him - is pure from it, as he (Shu'ayb) says, "I desire not to come behind you, betaking me to that I forbid you."⁶⁰

"7. God says about Ibrāhīm, Ishāq and Ya'qūb: "Truly they vied with one another, hastening to good works",⁶¹ the definite article (of al-khayrat in the verse [here translated "good works"]) being a collective particle designating a thing in general. Thus, "good works" comprises the accomplishment of appropriate deeds and the abandoning of inappropriate deeds. This proves that they (Ibrāhīm, Ishāq and Ya'qūb) are among those who perform acts of obedience and abstain from sinful acts.

"8. God says: "And in Our sight they (Ibrāhīm, Ishāq and Ya'qūb) are of the chosen, the excellent".⁶² The two words, "the chosen" (al-mustafayna) and "the excellent" (al-akhyār) comprise all doing and leaving (in the absolute sense)⁶³ for it would be possible to add a clause of exception; for instance one could say: "This person is among the chosen and the excellent except in this or that respect." The exception thus takes out of the affirmation an aspect which, if it is not explicitly said, would normally become part of the affirmation. Thus, the above verse (which does not explicitly mention an exception) indicates that they (Ibrāhīm, Ishāq and Ya'qūb) are among the chosen and the excellent in all respects. This, in turn, excludes the occurrence of sin from them.

"God also says: "God chooses of the angels Messengers and of mankind",⁶⁴ and, "God chose Adam and Nuh and the House of 'Ismā' above all beings".⁶⁵ Further, about Ibrāhīm God says: "Indeed, We chose him in the present world, and in the world to come he shall be among the righteous".⁶⁶ About Mūsā God says: "I have chosen thee above all men for My Messages and My Utterance".⁶⁷ God also says: "Remember also Our servants Ibrāhīm, Ishāq and Ya'qūb - men of might they and of vision. Assuredly We purified them with a quality most

pure, the remembrance of the Abode".⁶⁸

One cannot say that God's purification does not prevent someone from committing sin on the grounds that God says: "Then We bequeathed the Book on those of Our servants We chose; but of them some wrong themselves, some of them are lukewarm, and some are outstrippers in good works by the leave of God",⁶⁹ and that in this verse the chosen are divided into those who wrong themselves, the lukewarm and the outstrippers in good works. We maintain that the personal pronoun (damir) "but of them" (fa-min-hum) refers to its preceding noun, namely "of Our servants" (min 'ibadi-na) not to "those We chose" (al-ladhina stalayna), for it is obligatory that a pronoun refer to the closest thing mentioned previously.

"9. About Iblis God says: "Said he (Iblis), 'Now, by Thy glory, I shall pervert them all together, excepting those Thy servants among them that are the purified ones'.⁷⁰ Thus, those who are "the purified ones" are exempted from Iblis seduction, and perversion. God also solemnly affirms that Ibrahim, Is'haq and Ya'qub are among "the purified ones" when He says: "Assuredly We purified them with a quality most pure".⁷¹ And about Yusu'f God says: "He was one of Our purified servants".⁷² Therefore, by the fact that Iblis acknowledge that he cannot mislead "the purified ones" and that God Himself solemnly affirms that these above mentioned persons are among "the purified ones", it is proven that Iblis's perversion and seduction do not affect them. This, in turn, proves that there is absolutely no occurrence of sin on the prophet's part.

"10. God says: "Iblis proved true his opinion of them, and they followed him, except a party of the believers".⁷³ This "party of the believers" who do not follow Iblis may be either the prophets or the other believers. If it is the latter, it necessarily means that ordinary believers are better people than the prophets, for, at a point God says: "Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most god-fearing of you".⁷⁴ However, the Ijma' of the Community holds that it is not admissible to attribute superiority to the believers above the prophets.⁷⁵ Therefore, it is absolutely obligatory that "the party of the believers who do not follow Iblis" refer to the prophets, because everyone who commits a sin does by the very fact follow Iblis. Thus, this point also shows that the prophets did not commit sin.

"11. God has divided the believers who are under the obligation of observing the precepts of religion (al-mukallafin) into two "parties", namely "the party of Satan" (hisb al-Shaytan) and "the party of Allah" (hisb Allah). He says: "Those are Satan's party; why, Satan's party, surely, they are the losers!"⁷⁶ and, "Those are God's party: why, surely God's party - they are the prosperers."⁷⁷ There is no doubt that "Satan's party" are those who do what Satan wills and orders. Therefore, if it could occur that the prophets commit sin, it would be true that they be among Satan's party. It would also be true that they be "the losers". On the contrary, what God says would likewise be true of some pious members of the Community (al-subḥān al-Umma) that they be "the prosperers". On this assumption, we would be obliged to say that any one of the members of the Community may be by far superior to the prophet. However, there is no doubt that this assumption is false.

"12. Our fellows (the Ash'arites) have established that the prophet is superior to the angel. It has likewise been shown⁷⁸ that the angel did not venture into doing something sinful. Therefore, if it could happen that the prophet commit sin, there would be no ground to assume that the prophet is superior in merit above the angel, for God says: "Or shall We make those who believe and do righteous deeds as the workers of corruption in the earth, or shall We make the god-fearing as the transgressors?"⁷⁹

"13. To Ibrāhīm God says: "Behold, I make you a leader for the people!"⁸⁰ A leader (imām) is indeed someone who can be followed as a model (al-ladhī yuq-tada bi-hi). If Ibrāhīm did commit sin, it would be obligatory on the creatures to follow him in the sin, too. This is obviously false.

"14. God says: "My covenant shall not reach the evildoers."⁸¹ It results that if one boldly commits a sin, he thereby wrongs himself, as God says.⁸² We can go further and state the problem as follows: the covenant which, as God has established shall not embrace the evildoers may either be the covenant of prophethood ('ahd al-nubuwwa) or the covenant of imāma ('ahd al-imāma). The former is in fact what is meant, although the latter seems more readily understood.⁸³ This is because the covenant of imāma is of a lower degree than the covenant of prophethood. Hence, since the covenant of imāma does not embrace the evildoers, how much more does the covenant of prophethood exclude the evildoers.

"15. It is reported that (on one occasion) Khusayma b. Thabit al-Angari.⁸⁴ testified about the veracity of the Prophet's claim,⁸⁵ although he did not know exactly what had really happened. He said: "I believe the truth of what you say about heavenly things; am I not willing to believe what you say about this matter?" When he had thus spoken, the Prophet declared that he was truthful and named him "possessor of two witnesses" (dhi l-shahadatayn).⁸⁶ Thus, if it were possible that the Prophet commit sin, Khusayma's testimony would be valueless.

"We have thus terminated the exposition of the proofs for the prophet's impeccability. We can now turn to the proofs for the impeccability of the angel. Our arguments will be four in number.

"The first is God's word concerning the nature of the angel: "They fear their Lord above them, and they do what they are commanded".⁸⁷ This implies that all angels are bound to do all that they are ordered to do and to abandon all that is forbidden. For, if one is prohibited to do a thing, he is really commanded to abandon it.

"The second⁸⁸ is God's word describing the angels: "Nay, but they are honored servants that outstrip Him not in speech, and perform as He commands."⁸⁹

"The third is God's word, "glorifying Him by night and in the daytime and never failing".⁹⁰ Someone who is described as he is here could not possibly commit sin.

"The fourth is that the angels are Messengers of God, as, to praise them God says: "God knows very well where to place His Message".⁹¹

"We have thus mentioned the proofs for the impeccability of the prophets and the angels - God's blessing and peace be upon them all."

CHAPTER IV

RĀZĪ'S QUR'ĀNIC EXEGESIS FOR THE UPHOLDING OF 'ISMA

Preliminary remarks

In upholding the idea of the prophet's impeccability Rāzī has set up a body of arguments that combine the given of revelation and the postulates of reason. We have seen this in the foregoing chapters, in particular in Chapter Three, in which this set of arguments has been translated. What seems clear, moreover, is that beyond these arguments there is an idea of prophethood that underlies Rāzī's postulates. Central to it is the notion of "being sent" (risāla) which, for Rāzī, commands the necessity of particular characteristics in the person that is sent. A word which is used by Rāzī himself to summarize these traits is "perfection". We have seen this in connection with Rāzī's familiarity with the falāsifa. Further, Rāzī establishes a formal link between this characteristic of prophethood, which can be called a characteristic of the prophet in himself, with the risāla, namely with the characteristic of the prophet in relationship to other believers. This link seems

essential in Rāzī's idea of prophethood.

However, the idea of the prophet's perfection which we have so far seen in connection with Rāzī's closeness to the falāsifa still has to be confronted with the Qur'ān. In fact, it does not appear clearly at first sight that this idea is everywhere asserted in the Qur'ān. That the matter is so is also shown by Rāzī's awareness of the existence of a great many objections towards the upholding of this idea which he himself states along his exegetical treatise. This point should become clearer when we go further in this chapter. Among those objections there is one that is diametrically opposed to Rāzī's idea, which he has called the Ḥashwī view. As we have also mentioned in the foregoing Rāzī's 'Isnat al-Anbiyā' is written to refute the latter view. As may be expected, the affirmation of the Prophet's sinlessness is problematical when certain Qur'ānic passages are closely examined. In his 'Isnat al-Anbiyā' Rāzī will have to deal with this problem.

It would be too long to deal here with the whole exegetical treatise about the prophets that is contained in Rāzī's 'Isnat'. We shall thus have to select passages that are of major interest in presenting Rāzī's reasoning while following closely his own treatise.

On the 'isma of Ādam

There are several interesting points in Rāzī's exegesis of the passages concerning Ādam. We shall deal here with a passage in which Rāzī develops one of his basic concepts of 'isma, namely the idea that before the prophetic mission it is allowable that the prophet commits sin. As has been mentioned earlier,¹ the possibility of using this argument in connection with Ādam is explored in the Arba'īn, while in 'Ismat Rāzī only says that it has been sufficiently dealt with elsewhere.

In 'Ismat the problem is stated as follows.²

1. Ādam is an 'aṣī, which means a great sinner.

This can be said on account of the verse: "Ādam disobeyed his Lord, and so he erred" (20,121); the Qur'ān says that an 'aṣī is liable to punishment in sūra 4,14 ("But whoso disobeys God, and His Messenger, and transgresses His bound, him He will admit to a Fire, therein dwelling forever"). Moreover, the word 'isyan, which is used in sūra 20,121 is a derogatory noun and (ism dhamm) is only used to designate a "great sinner".

2. Ādam is described as a "penitent" in sūra 20,122 ("Thereafter his Lord chose him, and turned again unto him, and He guided him"), and in sūra 2,37 ("Thereafter Ādam received certain words from his Lord, and He turned towards him"); someone who repents

is undoubtedly a sinner (mudhnib).

3. Ādam commits what is forbidden, as it is said in sūra 7,22("Did I not prohibit you from this tree?") and in sūra 7,19("Come not nigh this tree!"). To do what is forbidden is the heart of sin.

4. God calls Ādam an 'evildoer' (ẓālim) in sūra 7,19("Lest you be of the evildoers") and Ādam calls himself a ẓālim in sūra 7,23("Lord, we have wronged ourselves"). And on a ẓālim is incumbent God's curse, because the Qur'ān says: "Surely the curse of God shall rest upon the evildoers"(11,18).

5. Ādam acknowledges that unless God pardons him he would certainly be among the lost: "If Thou dost not forgive us, and have mercy upon us, we shall surely be among the lost"(7,23). This proves that he is among great sinners.

6. Ādam is expelled from Paradise on account of Satan's prompting and seduction and because he obeys him, which proves that he is a great sinner.

It has been said in the foregoing that in 'Ismat Hāzī responds simply by pointing out that the sin of Ādam takes place before he is called to prophethood. In the Arba'in,³ the answer is provided by investigating whether the sin cannot be said to take place before the mission. The following are the arguments to prove the latter assumption.

1. Sūra 20, 121-122 ("Adam disobeyed his Lord and so he erred. Thereafter his Lord chose him, and turned again unto him, and He guided him") shows that God chose Adam as a prophet after he had committed the sin, because the word thumma ("thereafter") in this sūra is used to mark the sequence of the different events that are described in it (li l-tarāhī).⁴

2. Rāṣī states that, when it is proved that a sin has actually taken place, as in this case, and when it has also been proven on the other hand that during their prophetic life the prophets do not commit sin,⁵ there is no other way-out except to consider that the sin that is committed takes place before the mission.⁶

3. On the supposition that Adam is already a messenger when he sins, the following consequences should be considered:

a. it is impossible to assume that he is chosen as a messenger to the angels, because angels themselves are God's messengers,⁷ and because a messenger does not need another messenger.

b. it is also impossible to assume that he is chosen as a messenger to mankind, because there is yet no other human being with him in Paradise except Hawā', and because God Himself also speaks to her without Adam's intermediary.⁸

c. it is also pointless to assume that Ādam is chosen as a messenger to no one. Thus, Rāzī states that there is no other possible conclusion except to say that Ādam is not yet a messenger and a prophet when he commits the sin that is mentioned in the Qur'ān.⁹

On the 'signs of Nūḥ

Rāzī's discussion about Nūḥ is based upon the following passage of the Qur'ān:

"And Nūḥ called unto his Lord, and said, 'O my Lord, my son is of my family, and Thy promise is surely the truth. Thou art the justest of those that judge. Said He, 'Nūḥ, he is not of thy family; it is a deed not righteous. Do not ask of Me that whereof thou hast no knowledge. I admonish thee, lest thou shouldst be among the ignorant.'" (11,45-46)

The problem that we shall deal with here is based on the assumption that Nūḥ's prayer for his son is a sin (ma'siya), because he is admonished by God against doing it. This assumption also seems to be confirmed by the following passage that reads "'My Lord, I take refuge with Thee, lest I shouldst ask of Thee that whereof I have no knowledge; for if Thou forgive me not, and hast not mercy on me, I shall be among the losers.'" (11,47) which is Nūḥ's repentance. The third reason for the assumption is based on the fact that there are two readings of the passage that is being dealt with here. This is concerning verse 11,46

("Inna-hu 'amal^{un} ghayr salih"). Al-Kisā'ī reads it:

"Inna-hu 'amala ghayr salih", which means "He (thy son) did an unrighteous deed", whereas the other Qur'ān readers take it as it is given previously. This is the reading usually adopted, on the grounds that the pronoun hu in Inna-hu should refer to the closest preceding noun, that is, either to Nūḥ's prayer or to Nūḥ's son. It cannot refer to Nūḥ's son, because he is not a thing ('amal^{un} ghayr salih) and, if need be, one could only say that he is dhū 'amal ghayr salih. So, the pronoun hu in Inna-hu should only refer to Nūḥ's prayer.¹⁰

Rāzī responds by saying that one can correctly assume that Nūḥ's prayer for his son is not unconditional, that is, he prays for his son only if he is truly a believer. As regards God's admonition that is said in verse 11,46 Rāzī responds that the fact that he is admonished does not necessarily mean that he has committed the thing that he is admonished against. Rāzī further emphasizes that similar cases can be found in the Qur'ān, as for instance God's admonition to Muḥammad against being a mushrik,¹¹ which does not necessarily mean that he has ever become a mushrik. The admonition should thus be no more than a simple prohibition, because Nūḥ's avowal(11,47) does not prove that he has in fact done what is forbidden. On the

other hand Rāṣī concedes that Nūḥ's prayer could in fact take place, but then it must be accounted as pure natural compassion,

"for, reason does not forbid prayer for an unbeliever. The prohibition is only known through Shar'. Nūḥ prays only out of natural compassion. Only then Shar' is given that forbids it."¹²

Rāṣī, however, does not accept to refer verse 11,46 (Inna-hu 'amal^{un} ghayr ṣāliḥ) to Nūḥ, on the grounds that, even if it should seem like an ellipsis (igār) if the phrase is held to refer to Nūḥ's son,¹³ he thinks that such ellipsis is justified because the proofs of the prophet's sinlessness are stronger than the grammatical tenet that an ellipsis is a deviation of the original.¹⁴

On the 'isma of Ibrāhīm

The treatise about Ibrāhīm is one of the longest and it responds to a great many objections. Some of the best known ones will be related here.

Ignas Goldziher has suggested that there is only one hadīth that presents real difficulty to Rāṣī.¹⁵ Regardless of the validity of this assertion it is, however, interesting to discuss here since it is precisely about Ibrāhīm. It reads:

"Abū Huraira reported Allāh's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) never told a lie but only thrice: two times for the sake of Allāh (for example, his words): 'I am sick (37,89) and his words: 'But it was the big

one amongst them which has done that' (21,63) and because of Sāra (his wife). She was very good-looking amongst the people, so he said to her: 'If these were to know that you are my wife they would snatch you away from me, so if they ask you tell that you are my sister and in fact you are my sister in Islām, and I do not know of any other Muslim in this land.'¹⁶

In the 'Ismat Rāzī answers by referring to the alleged lies one by one. The first is pertaining to sūra 21,62-63:

"They said, 'So, art thou the man who did this unto our gods, Ibrāhīm?' He said, 'No; it was this great one of them that did it. Question them, if they are able to speak.'"

Rāzī states that it is possible to say that Ibrāhīm's answer is a reference to what is in fact unsaid (kināyat 'an ghayr madhkūr), that is, as if he were saying: "He did it who did it." His answer thus leaves the question unanswered. But, it is also possible, according to Rāzī, to consider "kabīru-hum hādha" (here translated "this great one of them") to mean Ibrāhīm himself, "because", so says Rāzī, "man is greater than any idol".¹⁷ The third possibility is to consider that the order of the words could be changed, namely that what comes before could be put at the back and vice versa. Thus, the verse would mean as if Ibrāhīm were saying: "If they could speak, question them, maybe they would tell you whether it was the greatest one of them that did it". On this assumption

the fact whether Ibrāhīm told a lie or not would be known only when there had been an answer from those idols. What Rāzī here implies is that Ibrāhīm's lie is still to be proven.

The second problem has to do with sūra 37, 88-89.

"And he (Ibrāhīm) cast a glance at the stars, and he said, 'Surely I am sick.'"

Rāzī concedes that what is said by Ibrāhīm may be a lie, but he also points out that there is no evidence that Ibrahim was not really sick at the moment when he said so. Rāzī compares this with what a man might say when he feels that he is about to fall ill and at that very moment he receives an invitation: he would certainly say that he is already sick.

Rāzī still sees another possible solution, namely that in saying so, what Ibrāhīm really means is that his heart is sick. The reason that Rāzī sees is to assume that Ibrāhīm is so sad and depressed because of his people's unbelief and opposition.

Rāzī concludes his discussion about Ibrāhīm's lies by commenting the ḥadīth itself. He says,

"This tradition is an āḥād-tradition;¹⁸ thus, it does not invalidate the apodictic proof (dalīl qaṭ'ī) that we have given above.¹⁹ Besides, it is also possible to assume that all this has to do with something which may exteriorly seem a lie. Whereas, when Ibrāhīm said that Sāra was his sister, he certainly meant that she was his sister in the religion, or his sister in relationship to Adam or other ancestors."²⁰

Another passage of the Qur'ān which is discussed by Rāzī is sūra 6,76:

"When night outspread over him he saw a star and said, 'This is my Lord.' But when it set he said, 'I love not the setters.'"

The problem is around Ibrāhīm's words "This is my Lord". In the Arba'īn it is solved by assuming that Ibrāhīm says so to report what his opponents say; the verse thus means: "They say, 'This is my Lord'". Ibrāhīm afterwards refutes it by saying: "I love not the setters."²¹

In the ‘Ismat the problem is more specified, as follows: what Ibrāhīm says can either be what he says during his reflection or as a result of it; when it is taken as what he says during reflection the fact that he says it as something absolute shows that he can say lies; if he says it after reflection he is definitely telling untruth, or he is even an unbeliever.²²

In answering this problem Rāzī first of all relates the solutions that have usually been adopted. Firstly, Rāzī states that there are people who think that Ibrāhīm says it before his adulthood; his adulthood takes place precisely at the moment when he exclaims: "O my people, surely I am quit of that you associate."^(6,78)²³ Secondly, there are also people who hold that this saying of Ibrāhīm can be taken as some-

thing which he says when he is already an adult person. On this assumption it can also be suggested that he says so during his reflection but only as something which he is assuming but which he afterwards refutes.²⁴ However, it is also possible to assume that Ibrāhīm says even after reflection and while being totally convinced of the existence of the Creator, and the phrase that he says would only mean Ibrāhīm's report of his opponents' opinion, or as something he is investigating, or again as if he is making a résumé (i.e. as if he were saying "They say, 'This is my Lord' or the like").²⁵

According to Rāzī the most valid way to prove that Ibrāhīm is truthful is to assume that what he says is said by way of reflection (i'tibār), or as an argumentation (istidlāl) but not as an affirmation (ikhbār). This argument is, according to Rāzī, supported by the fact that God does not blame Ibrāhīm on this account, but, quite on the contrary, He speaks in praise of him and exalts him,²⁶ and also by the passage itself in which it is said that God shows all this to Ibrāhīm so that he may have a sure faith.²⁷

That Ibrāhīm is really immune from error and sin is emphasized by Rāzī in connection with still another passage from the Qur'ān. This instance is when it is said that

"You have had a good example in Ibrāhīm, and those with him, when they said to their people, 'We are quit of you and that you serve, apart from God. We disbelieve in you, and between us and you enmity has shown itself, and hatred for ever, until you believe in God Alone.' Except that Ibrāhīm said unto his father, 'Certainly I shall ask pardon for thee; but I have no power to do aught for thee against God.'" (60,4)

The last part of this verse, however, still creates a problem. This is because Ibrāhīm's asking pardon for his father is against the Qur'ānic prohibition of asking pardon for the idolaters.²⁸ Rāzī answers by stating that the certainty that God punishes the idolaters is known only through revelation; thus it is possible that Ibrāhīm does not find this prohibition in his Shar'; this makes it understandable that he asks pardon for his father.²⁹ Rāzī also emphasizes that the above Qur'ānic verse should be read together with sūra 9,114 in which it is said that Ibrāhīm prays for his father only when he still hopes that his father will become a believer. And as a concluding remark, Rāzī asserts that the clause of the prohibition of asking pardon for the idolaters only applies to the Prophet Muḥammad and not to Ibrāhīm.³⁰

On the 'iqma of Yūsuf

In Rāzī's treatise about Yūsuf we have a good example of how he uses intra-Qur'ānic evidence to solve a problem that at first sight seems to contradict his upholding of the prophet's sinlessness. The largest part of the treatise revolves around the story of Yūsuf in Egypt, and in particular sūra 12,23-24:

"Now the woman in whose house he was solicited him, and closed the doors on them. 'Come,' she said, 'take me!' 'God be my refuge,' he said. 'Surely my lord has given me a goodly lodging. Surely the evildoers do not prosper.' For she desired him; and he would have taken her, but that he saw the proof of his Lord. So was it, that We might turn away from him evil and abomination; he was one of Qur devoted servants."

Rāzī states that this is one of the Qur'ānic episodes that the Ḥashwiyya consider as a proof against the prophet's sinlessness.³¹ Rāzī's answer is particularly based on the episode itself from which evidence is sought for Yūsuf's guiltlessness. The evidence that shows Yūsuf's guiltlessness, according to Rāzī, is to be found in the witnesses of the persons that are involved in this affair, who, together point to Yūsuf's innocence. This evidence is found in the witness of the husband of Zulaykhā (12,28-29), of the judge (12,26), of an Egyptian woman (12,31), of the king (12,54), Yūsuf's own (12,26,33,52), of the procurator (12,32,51) and God's own testimony. The latter is to

be found in the verse in which it is said that Yūsuf has been saved from evil and abomination and that he is one of God's "purified servants" (al-mukhlāsūn), namely in sūra 12,24. Rāzī assumes that the latter verse also contains Iblīs's implicit witness, namely that he is unable to pervert Yūsuf because he is one of the mukhlāsūn, as the Qur'ān also says:

"Said he, 'Now, by Thy glory, I shall pervert them all together, excepting those Thy servants among them that are the purified ones (al-mukhlāsīn).'" (38,82-83)³²

However, this Qur'ānic passage about Yūsuf still presents some difficulty in that it says:

"wa laqad hammat bi-hi wa hamma bi-hā lawlā an ra'ā burhān rabbi-hi". (12,24)

The problem is about the meaning of the word hamma which has persons as objects here (bi-hi and bi-hā). Four possible meanings are given by Rāzī; they are, "determination" or "resolution" (al-'azm), "the occurrence of a thought in one's mind" (khufūr al-shay bi l-bāl), "the closeness of something to being done" (bi ma'nā l-muqāraba), and "passion" or "natural propensity" (al-shahwa wa mayl al-tibā'). Rāzī himself opts for the first meaning;³³ this has the following consequences.

If the word hamma is taken to mean "determination" or "resolution" the verse above should not be understood literally, because the word hamma here

governs persons as objects (dhāt), namely "him" (in hammat bi-hi) and "her" (in hamma bi-hā), which cannot become the objects of "resolution" ('azm), because it cannot have persons as object. But if one assumes that the object of hamma should be a thing and not a person, there is no particular indication for it, except that it may provide a proof for Yūsuf's innocence. On this assumption Rāzī says that, as it is attested by the Qur'ān and Ijmā', the object of her "resolution" in hammat bi-hi cannot but be an evil thing; the Qur'ānic evidence is what is said in sūra 12, 23, 30, 32, 51, while the evidence from the Ijmā' is that the commentators are agreed on saying that what the woman is determined to do is evil. With regards to Yūsuf, Rāzī points out that the witness of the persons who are involved in this affair has shown that Yūsuf's "resolution" (in hamma bi-hā) cannot be an evil action. Rāzī thus concludes that, because the verse does not explicitly say what Yūsuf's resolution is, there is no inconvenience to assume that it be "the resolution to drive her away" (daf'u-hu iyyā-hā 'an nafsi-hi).³⁴

The last problem which we shall deal with here is whether Yūsuf deserves praise. The reasoning is as follows: because Yūsuf sees a proof from God, he is confronted with an "irresistible protection" (al-iljā'), so much so that it is to be argued whether he has any

merit for praise.

Rāzī bases his answer on the idea held by the Mu'tazila that man has free will and that God's signs never constitute a constraint. As evidence for this assumption Rāzī says that it is based on sūra 6,111 which says,

"Though We had sent down the angels to them, and the dead had spoken with them, had We mustered against them every thing, face to face, yet they would not have been the ones to believe, unless God willed."

Rāzī applies this argument to solve the problem here by saying that the fact that Yūsuf saw a proof from God does not in itself constitute a "constraint" on him.³⁵ What is implied in this is that Yūsuf is not less exempted from taklīf, even when he has seen a proof from God, and whether he deserves praise would depend entirely on his attitude towards it.

On the 'isma of Mūsā

The passage which will be dealt with here is the one which speaks about the murder of the Egyptian:

"And he entered the city, at a time when its people were unheeding, and found there two men fighting; the one was of his own party, and the other was of his enemies. Then the one that was of his party cried to him to aid him against the other that was of his enemies; so Mūsā struck him, and despatched him, and said, 'This is of Satan's doing; he is surely an enemy misleading, manifest.' He said, 'My Lord, I have wronged myself. Forgive me!'" (28,15-16)

The problem that these verses give rise to is stated as follows: the Egyptian whom Mūsā kills either deserves to be killed or does not; if he does, why does Mūsā say, "This is of Satan's doing"? and, "I have wronged myself"?; if he does not deserve to be killed, Mūsā's deed is obviously a major sin.

Rāzī begins by considering three possibilities: that the Egyptian deserves to be killed because of his unbelief, or that Mūsā kills him by error, or that he only intends to save the life of the man of his own party and that the killing of the Egyptian itself has not been intended. He further says that these interpretations are held acceptable to those who admit that the prophet may commit minor sins; to them the asking of pardon and repentance are obligatory for major as well as for minor sins.³⁶

Rāzī subsequently gives two interpretations which he says are held by those who do not admit that the prophet may commit minor sins. He himself apparently subscribes to the latter opinion. The first possibility is to assume that God recommends to Mūsā to postpone the killing of those unbelievers and to leave the decision of their life and death to God's omnipotence; so that when he actually kills the Egyptian, this deed is no more than the abandoning of a thing that is recommended (tark al-mandūb). On this assess-

ment his words "This is of Satan's doing" should mean "My undertaking of abandoning what is recommended is of Satan's doing".³⁷ The second possibility is to assume that the sentence "This is of Satan's doing" can also mean the deed of the man that is killed is of Satan's doing. Rāzī explains this by saying that because the Egyptian is an enemy of God on account of his unbelief, he deserves to be killed. This interpretation is based on the assumption that the pronoun hādha ("This", in "This is of Satan's doing") refers not to a thing but to a person.³⁸

To understand verse 28,16 ("My Lord, I have wronged myself. Forgive me!") Rāzī suggests that it can be compared with Adam's words "Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if Thou dost not forgive us, and have mercy upon us, we shall surely be among the lost" (7,23). He then says that one of the two following interpretations can be adopted. The first is to understand this verse as an expression of Mūsā's self-application to God (ingitā' ilā Allāh) and a recognition of his failure to accomplish God's right (i'tirāf bi l-ta'asīr 'an al-qiyā bi huqūqi-hi), although it does not imply any sin on his part. Secondly, the verse can be taken as it is but only in the sense that with that deed Mūsā has missed the reward that is inherent in the performance of a recommended

deed (min haythu harraha nafsahu al-thawāb 'alā fi'l al-mandūb).³⁹

On the 'isma of Dāwūd

In Rāzī's discussion about Dāwūd, there are two problems that he deals with; one of them occupies the largest part of the treatise. This problem has to do with the story of the two brothers in dispute who ask Dāwūd to arbitrate between them. This is narrated in sūra 38,21 ff. Strangely enough, Rāzī does not even state the problem that is connected with this story; but, from the response that is immediately given in the beginning of the discussion it becomes clear that the problem is the interpretation of this story which some commentators offer, namely around the events that surround Dāwūd's marriage with Ūriah's wife.⁴⁰ Rāzī himself, relying only on what is said in this passage (38,21 ff.) asserts that the passage itself disproves that Dāwūd has committed a major sin in order that he can marry Ūriah's wife.⁴¹

First of all, Rāzī assesses the story which is told by some commentators to explain this passage as "unworthy of a prophet". This is the story which says that Dāwūd, being in love with Ūriah's wife, kills him in order that he can marry his wife.⁴²

The second reason which Rāzī adduces to refute the allegation of murder to Dāwūd is that it is a sin greater than his marrying Ūriah's wife. He states that it is inconceivable that God omit this sin, which is greater, and be contented with mentioning a less grave sin in his account of Dāwūd.⁴³

The third reason of his refusal to accept the alleged murder of Ūriah is that from the beginning to its end the sūra is an attack against those who deny prophecy. That is the reason why, according to Rāzī, to defame one of the greatest prophets with an abominable sin is incompatible with the purpose of the sūra itself.⁴⁴

To complete his arguments Rāzī adduces a series of Qur'ānic verses, which sums up around the idea of the laudatory discourse with which God describes Dāwūd.⁴⁵ The first characteristic that is said about Dāwūd is that he is a "man of might" (dhū l-yad). This is said in verse 38,17. He suggests that yad, which commonly means "power" or "might", in this verse should mean the "power in religious affairs" (al-quwwa fī l-dīn), because he considers that power in worldly affairs can be possessed by unbeliever kings, who, however do not thereby deserve praise.⁴⁶ Rāzī further specifies that "power in religious affairs" means precisely that the man who possesses it has the

resolute mind to perform what is prescribed and to abandon what is forbidden. Dāwūd is further described as one of "the masters of resolution" (ulū l-ʿazm). This is said in sūra 46,35. In this verse it is also said that Muḥammad is ordered to imitate them. From this Rāzī concludes that "to have firm resolution" is one of the highest virtues.⁴⁷ As a consequence, Rāzī affirms that there is no sense in attributing such a characteristic to an individual if he does not have enough mastery over himself so as not to succumb into disgraceful deeds (fujūr) and murder.⁴⁸

Another characteristic which is attributed to Dāwūd is awwāb (38,17). Rāzī emphasizes that this form of adjective has a "reiterative" meaning. In this sense, it is impossible that Dāwūd, who is "recurrently turning his mind to God" (awwāb), be at the same time assiduous in performing grave sins.⁴⁹

From the verses that precede the story of the two litigant brothers Rāzī also provides some further Scriptural arguments. These are, "the strengthening of Dāwūd's kingdom" (38,20) and "the gift of wisdom and decisive speech" (38,20). He suggests that "the strengthening of Dāwūd's kingdom" should comprise the domain of the "worldly" as well as the "religious" affairs. This assumption is based on the idea that the welfare that is based only on "worldly" prosperity is but a

characteristic of unbeliever kings, whereas "the gift of wisdom", for Rāzī, underlines also the religious aspect of the welfare that is given to Dāwūd, namely the one that is based on a perfect knowledge of what is to be known and to be done according to God's will. Thus, Rāzī concludes that this gift is absolutely incompatible with "what even the most evil-spirited devil would detest, namely the lust for marriage."⁵⁰

Rāzī also elaborates more proofs for Dāwūd's sinlessness from the verses that follow the episode of the two litigant brothers. The first argument is taken from sūra 38,26 in which it is said that Dāwūd is appointed God's vicegerent (khaliifa) on earth. To take this verse to prove that Dāwūd is however not immune to major sins as, for instance the alleged murder of Uriah, is according to Rāzī untenable. He explains it by comparing it to someone who is appointed God's vicegerent at the moment when, quite against his use, he commits a major sin.⁵¹

The two remaining Scriptural proofs are taken from sūras 38,46-47 and 38,25. The first bespeaks the gift of pure quality to God's messengers which makes them "the chosen, the excellent". The existence of this quality in the messengers, Rāzī asserts, precludes them from committing disgraceful deeds. The second verse relates that Dāwūd has a "place near to God". Rāzī

argues that this characteristic cannot exist together with disordinate passion ('ishq) and the guilt of murder, and concludes that the assumption that Dāwūd kills Ūriah in order to marry the latter's wife is unfounded.⁵²

To close this section it is worthwhile to mention Rāzī's remark on the report itself. He emphasizes that the story that is usually mentioned by the commentators is an ahād-tradition, and insists that this kind of report only conveys an "opinion" (gann), which can be used only as an argument to establish the authenticity of a "practice" (al-'amal). He concludes that such a report should not be taken into account here, because the whole passage about Dāwūd is not concerning a matter of "practice".⁵³

All the arguments mentioned above are sufficient for Rāzī to reject the allegation of Dāwūd's sin of murdering Ūriah, and the remaining problem to clarify is Dāwūd's asking for pardon (38,24). This problem is treated under two possibilities. Firstly, by considering that the asking of pardon may be for the benefit of others as well as for oneself, Rāzī interprets it in terms of Dāwūd's asking pardon for the two brothers who have come to him.⁵⁴ This, he says, is in consistency with the words of the Qur'ān itself, of which the meaning can be readily found, there being no

need to resort to metaphorical interpretation.⁵⁵ On the other hand, if the asking pardon is to be understood as Dāwud's asking pardon for himself, Rāzī only admits that it is probably because Dāwud has suspected that the two comers would kill him, which turns out to be wrong. Rāzī concludes that at any rate the Qur'ān itself at this point does not state any transgressions (zallāt) on Dāwud's part.⁵⁶

On the 'issue of Muhammad

This section of Rāzī's exegetical treatise is visibly the one that deals with the most numerous problematics, which in the 'Isnat are classified under 17 headings and into 16 headings in the corresponding treatise in the Arba'īn. We shall here present some of them that are particularly significant of Rāzī's basic ideas for his upholding of the prophet's sinlessness.

The first Qur'ānic verse that Rāzī mentions as being a ground for the objection against the idea of the prophet's sinlessness is 93,7 ("Did He not find thee erring, and guide thee?"). The problem has to do more specifically with the use of the word dallān, because it implies the possibility of meaning "to err from the right path" in the religious sense.

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In the Arba'in,⁵⁷ Rāṣī answers this problem very briefly by confronting sūra 93,7 with sūra 53,2 ("Your comrade is not astray, neither errs"), in which the word dalla is also used. He points out that in the first sūra dall^{an} means "to be unsuccessful in worldly affairs", whereas in the second sūra it can only mean "to go astray" in the religious sense.

In the 'Isnat,⁵⁸ Rāṣī apparently assumes that the word dall^{an} used in sūra 93,7 may not mean "to embrace an erroneous belief", and explains that "to go away from", which is the meaning of dalla, should have a prepositional object which, however, is not mentioned explicitly in the verse. This allows Rāṣī to suggest some possible meanings, even though they do not have explicit connection with the verse itself. First of all, relying on sūra 42,52 ("Thou knewest not what the Book was, nor belief"), Rāṣī suggests that the word dall^{an} in sūra 93,7 may be understood to mean "to deviate from the path of prophethood" (dall^{an} 'an al-nubuwwa). The three other possible interpretations are "growing ever more unsuccessful in earning livelihood" (dall^{an} 'an al-ma'isha wa tarīq al-kasb), "to be lost in the desert in childhood" (dall^{an} fī samān al-sabiyy fī ba'd al-mafawiz) and "to be infringed upon his rights by the people" (maḍlūl^{an} 'an-hu fī qawm lā ya'rīfūn haqqu-ka).⁵⁹ Rāṣī seems thus to

suggest that ^{Since} "error of belief" is precluded, the objection based on this sūra against the upholding of the prophet's sinlessness has been sufficiently done away with.

We now turn to the second problematic. This is the discussion about verse 22,52:

"Wa mā arsal-nā min gabli-ka min rasūl
wa lā nabi illā idhā tamannā alqā al-
Shayṭān fī ummiyyati-hi fa-yansakhu
Allāh mā yulqī al-Shayṭān thumma yubkiḥu
Allāh ḥayṭi-hi wa Allāh 'alīm ḥakīm".⁶⁰

The first problem that this verse gives rise to is that it suggests that Satan could induce into the Prophet's mind something that leads into confusion; more specifically the problem that is to be solved is that, if that were true, nothing of what the Prophet conveys could ever be trusted. The second problem pertains more specifically to the report that is described as "the Gharānīq-affair".⁶¹ The report has it that the Prophet was anguished by the opposition of the Mekkans people against his preaching, so much so that he desired that God send a revelation which could ultimately convince them to embrace Islām. When one day he was attending a sitting with a great many Qurayshites of Makkah Sūrat al-Najm was revealed. He set out to recite it, and when he arrived at verse 20 ("Have you considered Al-Lāt and Al-'Uzzā and Manāt the third, the other?") Satan instilled into his

mouth the words "tilka l-gharānīq al-'ulā wa inna shafā'ata-hunna la-turtajā" ("these are the swans exalted; whose intercession is to be hoped for").⁶²

On hearing this the Qurayshites were highly elated, because they thought that the Prophet was praising their divinities. In the evening Jibril came to him and admonished him for having recited what he had not transmitted, and the Prophet became very depressed, but then God sent down the above verse (22,52).⁶³

Rāṣī answers the first problem by saying that it is inconceivable that the Prophet change anything of the message that is revealed to him. To prove it Rāṣī relies on some Qur'ānic verses; they are:

"Had he invented against Us any sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand, then We would surely have cut his life-vein and not one of you could have defended him" (69,44-46),

"Say: 'It is not for me to alter it of my own accord. I follow nothing, except what is revealed to me.'" (10,15),

"Indeed they were near to seducing thee from that We revealed to thee, that thou mightest forge against Us another, and then they would surely have taken thee as a friend; and had We not confirmed thee, surely thou wert near to inclining unto them a very little" (17,73-74),

"Even so, that We may strengthen thy heart thereby" (25,32) and,

"We shall make thee recite, to forget not save what God wills". (87,6)

The heart of the second problem is, according to Rāzī,⁶⁴ the meaning that is to be adopted for the word umniyya in verse 22,52. He suggests that it has two meanings, namely "desire" (tamannī l-qalb) and "recitation" (al-qirā'a).⁶⁵ Rāzī is aware that many commentators adopt the first meaning but he believes it to be weak, because it does not take sufficient account of the fact that the umniyya should become a temptation for the unbelievers, as it is said in verse 22,53; Rāzī believes that the Prophet himself should be aware that it was so meant.⁶⁶ What Rāzī seems to suggest here is that this "temptation" cannot take place unless what Satan wants to insert in the Prophet's recitation is heard by the people around him, and is not only perceptible to the Prophet alone. Therefore, for Rāzī, the appropriate meaning of umniyya here is the Prophet's recitation.

Based on the assumption that umniyya can only mean "recitation" here, Rāzī mentions some interpretations of the verse that are at variance with his idea of the prophet's sinlessness. First of all, it is believed that neither the Prophet nor Satan said the phrase mentioning the "sharīq", but some unbelievers present there who believed to hear it and pronounced it themselves as they had usually heard. Rāzī asserts that this interpretation is wrong, be-

cause it is based on the assumption that the Prophet had usually pronounced the phrase, which is wrong. This interpretation is also wrong, according to Rāzī, because, were it true, the origin of the ambiguity and confusion would not have been attributed to Satan's interference.⁶⁷

The second interpretation that Rāzī mentions as being unacceptable is when it is assumed that the Prophet pronounces the phrase, intentionally or simply by inadvertence. The reason why it is inconceivable, according to Rāzī, that the Prophet pronounces it intentionally is that it would demolish his credibility. The same reason also applies to the incongruence of the assumption that the Prophet says it simply through inadvertence. Moreover, concludes Rāzī, it is not likely that someone who is inadvertent can say something which has a continuity of expressions, form and meaning with what he has said before.⁶⁸

Rāzī also rejects the interpretation which says that it is the Prophet who pronounces the phrase about the Gharānīq, but only under Satan's compulsion. He mentions two "rational" arguments for it. Firstly, if this assumption were true, Satan would be able to induce everybody into error, so much so that what anyone says at any time may be due to Satan's compulsion. Secondly, if this assumption were true, not even the

Prophet would be exempted from Satan's compulsion. Rāzī, however, points out that in two instances the Qur'ān clearly says that Satan cannot overpower the Prophet as well as the believers. This is said in sūra 14,22 ("[Satan says] 'for I had no authority over you'"), in 16,99 ("He[i.e. Satan] has no authority over those who believe and trust in their Lord") and in 38,82-83 ("[Satan said] 'Now, by Thy glory, I shall pervert them all together, excepting those Thy servants among them that are sincere'").⁶⁹

The only interpretation that Rāzī accepts is the one that attributes the origin of the phrase mentioning the Gharāḥ to Satan. The assumption is that, Satan being of the angelic nature his natural way of speaking is similar to the angel's which is usually heard by the Prophet when a revelation is conveyed to him. Moreover, it can be understood that those who hear this voice identify it with the Prophet's voice, since Satan can speak without being seen. This interpretation is acceptable, according to Rāzī, because it does not defame the Prophet's dignity and because it does not ascribe the origin of the phrase that brings about confusion as coming from the Prophet.⁷⁰ It can, however, be objected that, if such a thing can happen during the Prophet's recitation, what in his saying can be trusted? To it Rāzī responds that

this assumption is valid; but if it does happen, God must clarify the whole problem, such as it actually happened with this affair, that is, God puts an end to the ambiguity of this affair.⁷¹

We now turn to the last topic of this section. It has been said in the first chapter that the word dhanb, which is one of the common words for "sin", is used in several instances in the Qur'ān.⁷² In three instances the form li-dhanbi-ka is used, all of them being God's words addressed to the Prophet. We shall here deal with one of them. Sūra 48,1-2 reads:

"Surely We have given thee a manifest victory, that God may forgive thee Thy former and thy latter sins, and complete His blessing upon thee, and guide thee on a straight path, and that God may help thee with mighty help."

Rāzī states that, in spite of the use of the word dhanb here, it is possible to interpret this verse in conformity with the idea of the prophet's sinlessness. The first way is to understand dhanb as sin proper, but only in the meaning of the sins that were committed before the prophetic mission, or only minor sins, if the period of the mission is concerned. Even though he seems to admit this, he apparently subscribes to the ta'wīlāt of dhanb, which he mentions subsequently. One of them is to take dhanbi-ka to mean dhanbi ummati-ka, in which case the sentence is assumed as being said to the Prophet but in fact is addressed to the Commu-

nity. Moreover, according to Rāzī, it is also customary that the word dhanb is used to designate the act of the abandoning of a better course of action.⁷³

The third way is to consider dhanb as a masdar, which can designate an action done by the person that it governs (idāfa ilā al-fā'il), or an action suffered by the person that it governs (idāfa ilā al-maf'ūl). In this sense, dhanbi-ka may mean respectively "the sin that you have committed" and "the sin that they have committed against you". But Rāzī even goes on to say that the purpose of this verse is deeper. As he sees it, the verse is meant as an exaltation of the dignity of the prophet.⁷⁴ He explains this by taking the verse to mean "if you ever committed any sin, I would certainly pardon it". He believes that this assumption is applicable to the verse, as he thinks that a positive statement can be interpreted as a conditional, if the context permits it.⁷⁵ Finally, Rāzī thinks that one has the right to interpret dhanbi-ka otherwise than to mean "sin", because, had the Prophet committed a sin, he would certainly have repented of it; but, since it is also unanimously held by the Community (bi l-ijmā') that the Prophet did not boldly venture into committing sin, even when he speaks of his own repentance it should be understood that in reality he has not committed any sin.⁷⁶

CONCLUSION

In his 'Ismat al-Anbiyā' Rāzī is chiefly concerned with the question whether the idea of the prophet's impeccability can be affirmed in light of what the Qur'ān says about the prophets. This work is not the only one in which he deals with this problem, as there is also a chapter in his Arba'īn fī Uṣūl al-Dīn in which he deals with the same problem, and also his commentary on the verses concerning the prophets in his Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb. The 'Ismat', however, informs us more specifically about Rāzī's interest in this aspect of prophethood, as it is especially intended to refute the Ḥashwiyya, those people whom Rāzī identifies as his extreme opponents in this respect. This is the reason why the 'Ismat appears defensive. Further, the 'Ismat, which usually contains more elaboration and covers vaster grounds than the Arba'īn, also has the merit of providing a "life-situation" (Sitz im Leben) to the idea of the prophet's sinlessness, which otherwise might seem to be no more than an academic issue.

The problem of the prophet's impeccability had become a topic of kalam discussion before Rāzī's time. It is comprehensible, therefore, that this fact

bears some influence on the latter's stand. Among those who appear to have had an influence on Rāzī's concept of 'isma are the Mu'tazila and the falāsifa. From the former Rāzī has retained the idea of the importance of the prophetic mission (risāla), which underlies the Mu'tazilite postulate of the prophet's immunity from major sin and minor sin that causes aversion. Rāzī's basic insight into prophethood seems, however, to have its origin in the falāsifa's idea of the perfect nature of the prophet. This is particularly shown in his idea that the prophet is in himself perfect and at the same time able to lead others to perfection.

This basic insight appears as the recurrent theme underlying Rāzī's exegesis of the Qur'ānic descriptions of the prophets. As an Ash'arite theologian, however, he has to found his concept of 'isma mainly on the Qur'ān and the Tradition. The Qur'ān, indeed, does not only speak in praise about the prophets. The challenge that Rāzī has to face is precisely to confront his idea of the prophet's perfection and ability to lead others to perfection with the Qur'ānic description of the prophets. The methodology that he has adopted for his exegesis can be described as the shaping of basic concepts taken from the Qur'ānic descriptions of the prophets around the idea of the

prophet's perfection. Among them can be mentioned his concept of the prophetic mission as the greatest favor that God bestows on mankind (ni'ma), God's order to imitate the prophets (iqtidā'), the prophet's being purified (istifā') and the prophet's being a good example for the believer (uswa hasana). Moreover, Rāzī is careful enough not to omit the fundamental assertions that have become acceptable to the Muslim doctors (Ijmā'). All this together becomes a viable framework for Rāzī to conduct his exegesis. Interestingly enough, he arrives more or less at the same conclusion where the Mu'tazila have arrived before him, namely that the prophet is preserved from committing major sin in the period of his mission and, if he commits a minor "sin", it is but a sin of the kind of the abandoning of a better course of action.

The 'isma in Rāzī's conception thus means God's preservation of the prophet from error in transmitting revelation and of the prophet's deeds from moral defects, so that the prophet's behavior not only does not impair revelation but becomes an example for the believer.

NOTES

Notes to Chapter One

¹John Peatrice, A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran (New York: Praeger, 1971), p. 98.

²Qur'ān 5,67; 11,43; 33,17; the active participle of this form occurs in Ibid. 10,27; 11,43; 40,33.

³Ibid. 3,101,103; 4,146,175.

⁴Ibid. 12,32.

⁵Useful notes on the Qur'ānic descriptions of revelation and prophethood can be found in e.g. William Montgomery Watt, Bell's Introduction to the Qur'ān (Edinburgh: The University Press, 1970), pp. 18-39; Fazlur Rahman, Major Themes of the Qur'ān (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980), pp. 80-105.

⁶Qur'ān 42,51; the translation used in this study is taken from Arthur J. Arberry, The Koran Interpreted (Oxford: The University Press, 1964).

⁷Ibid. 21,107.

⁸cf. Ibid. 4,163-165; as it has been hinted in the Introduction, the prophet is but one of those who are called "messengers", because this term comprises also the angel. Since we are dealing with Prophethood in this study, it is to be borne in mind that, whenever "messenger" is used therewith the prophet is meant, unless it is otherwise stated. On the other hand, "messenger", not "prophet" is used in this passage, because it has immediate kinship with the idea of "mission" which is being discussed.

⁹cf. Ibid. 7,188.

¹⁰cf. Ibid. 2,119; 7,188.

¹¹cf. Ibid. e.g. 2,2,97; 3,4; 5,44,46.

¹²Ibid. 18,110; 41,6.

¹³Ibid. 23,33; 25,7,20.

¹⁴Ibid. 6,8,50; 11,12,31; 25,7.

¹⁵cf. Rahman, Themes, 27.

¹⁶Ibid. 7,23; 8,68; 17,74-75; 21,87; 28,16; 66,1; 80,1-8.

¹⁷The clause li-dhanbi-ka designating a person occurs in Ibid. 40,55; 47,19; 48,2.

¹⁸Ibid. 38,82-83; mukhlag literally means "who is purified". Arberry translates it "the sincere", which seems less convenient, because it is closer to mukhlis than to mukhlag. Mukhlis is the active participle of akhlasa ("to be sincere"; "to purify"), cf. Penrice, Dictionary, pp. 43-44. In mukhlag the emphasis is more on the result of God's act of "purifying someone"; mukhlag is thus "the purified one". It suggests the idea of "election", although not in the sense of prophetic election, for the several occurrences of the plural (al-mukhlagin) in 15,40; 37,40.74.128.160.169; 38,83 concerns the community of worshippers; cf. John Wansborough, Qur'anic Studies (Oxford: The University Press, 1977), p. 55.

¹⁹Ibid. 38,46.

²⁰Ibid. 2,130; 3,33; 7,144; 22,75; 38,46. Together with ikhtara and istafa, istafa is verb regularly used to mean "to elect to prophethood", see Wansborough, Qur'anic Studies, p. 55.

²¹Ibid. 21,73; Otto Pautz has suggested that the imān here means a person whose good deeds are set as example, in Otto Pautz, Muhammads Lehre von der Offenbarung (Leipzig: J.C.Hinrichs, 1898), p. 228; see also below, p. 66.

²²Qur'an 60,4,6.

²³Louis Gardet, Dieu et la destinée de l'homme (Paris: J. Vrin, 1967), pp. 149,167.

²⁴Watt, Introduction, p. 28.

²⁵ see, e.g. Al-Bayḍawī, Anwār al-Tanālī wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl (Beirut: Dar al-Jil, 1329 H), p. 579.

²⁶ Arent Jan Wensinck, The Muslim Creed (Cambridge: The University Press, 1932), p. 217.

²⁷ Tor Andrae, Die Person Muhammads in Lehre und Glauben seiner Gemeinde (Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt, 1918), p. 127.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 127-128.

²⁹ Gardet, Dieu, p. 182.

³⁰ Wensinck, Creed, p. 218.

³¹ Andrae, Person, p. 128; Anton von Kremer, Geschichte der herrschenden Ideen des Islams (Hildesheim: F.A. Brockhaus, 1868), pp. 145-146. Josef van Ess has suggested that Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (642-728) already shows concern to safeguard the office of prophethood from its bearer's being previously a polytheist; see, Josef van Ess, Zwischen Hadit und Theologie (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), p. 162 n.6.

³² Ignaz Goldziher, "Aus der Theologie des Fachr al-Dīn al-Rāzī", Der Islam 3(1912):239 n.3.

³³ For instance, "miracle" is considered essential for authenticating the claimant's prophethood; the occurrence of "miracle" is thus assumed, too for the prophets, of whom the Qur'ān does not mention any miracle. Another instance of this is that sometimes it is said that there is a genealogical continuity among the prophets; for this, see, Watt, Introduction, p. 156.

³⁴ The Encyclopedia of Islam, 2nd ed., s.v. 'Ismā, by Wilferd Madelung, p. 182.

³⁵ William Montgomery Watt, The Formative Period of Islamic Thought (Edinburgh: The University Press, 1973), pp. 274-278.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 158, 186.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 187.

³⁸Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, Kitāb Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa Khtilāf al-Mu'allīn, ed. Halilur Rīḥānī (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1953), p. 48; 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, Kitāb al-Milāl wa l-Mihāl (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Muḥayyar, n.d.), v. 1, p. 163.

³⁹Watt, Formative, p. 219.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Shahrastānī, Milāl, p. 56.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Watt, Formative, p. 186.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 219.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶EL2, s.v. 'Ismā, p. 183.

⁴⁷Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, 'Ismat al-Anbiyā', edited with a foreword and presentation of the author's life and work by 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Uyūn al-Sūd (Rims: Al-Maktabat al-Islāmiyya, 1388/1968), p. 2.

⁴⁸Ash'arī, Maqālāt, p. 453.

⁴⁹EL2, s.v. 'Ismā, p. 183.

⁵⁰Shahrastānī, Milāl, p. 75; Ash'arī, Maqālāt, p. 263.

⁵¹Ash'arī, Maqālāt, pp. 248, 575; Watt, Formative, p. 298.

⁵²Ash'arī, Maqālāt, p. 448.

⁵³Shahrastānī, Milāl, p. 78.

⁵⁴Ash'arī, Maqālāt, p. 270.

⁵⁵Shahrastānī, Milāl, p. 78.

⁵⁶KL2, s.v. 'Ismā, p. 183.

⁵⁷Al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsa, ed. 'Abd al-Karīm 'Uthmān (Cairo, 1965), p. 573.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 575.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*; on the problem whether the prophet can intentionally commit minor sin, there is no consensus among the Mu'tasilites; see, Ash'arī, Maqālāt, pp. 226-227.

⁶⁰'Abd al-Jabbār, Sharḥ, p. 575.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 780.

⁶²*Ibid.*, p. 576.

⁶³Ash'arī, Maqālāt, p. 264; the Mu'tasila also use the word 'isīm in connection with "the unbeliever" (al-kāfir) and "the believer" (al-mu'min), but with meanings that are different from the meaning of the word when it is used with reference to the prophet; see, *Ibid.*

⁶⁴Wensinck, Creed, p. 124.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁶⁸Watt, Formative, p. 133.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁷⁰Wensinck, Creed, p. 185.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 246.

72 Watt, Formative, p. 133.

73 Wensinck, Creed, p. 192.

74 Al-Juwaynī Inām al-Baramayn, Al-Irshād, tr. and ed. J.-D. Luciani (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1938), p. 205 (Arabic), p. 304 (French).

75 Wensinck, Creed, p. 218.

76 Ghazālī, for instance, asserts the contrary of the dogma when he says that the prophets also commit sins and are therefore required to do repentance; see, Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, Ihya' 'Ulūm al-Dīn (Cairo: Al-Maṭba'a al-'Uthmaniyya, 1352/1933), Part II (Al-'Ādāt), Book IX (Al-Amr bi l-ma'ruf wa l-nahy 'an al-munkar), Chapter 2, Rukn 1, p. 275 and Part IV (Al-Munjiyyat), Book I (Al-Tawba), Rukn 1, Bayan 4, p. 9.

77 Henri Lacoust, "Les premières professions de foi hanbalites", Mélanges Louis Massignon (Damascus, 1957), p. 9.

78 Ibid., p. 35.

79 EI2, s.v. 'Ismā, p. 183.

80 Wensinck, Creed, p. 130 (Art. 25).

81 Watt, Formative, p. 138.

82 Reference may be made to other points that are treated in the document, such as the analysis of human act (art. 15), the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān (art. 9) and the position against the Kharijites regarding the sinful member of the Community (art. 4), in Wensinck, Creed, pp. 125-128; cf. Watt, Formative, p. 133.

83 Examples of this will be found in Chapter III when we shall be dealing with Ḥanī's arguments in favor of the 'isma; see, below, pp. 62-67.

84 This argument is found in the allegedly Maturīdite document called Sharḥ al-Fiḥ al-Akḥar; see, Abū Mansūr al-Maturīdī, Spurious and doubtful works, s.o., Sharḥ al-Fiḥ al-Akḥar (Leyden: Brill, 1964).

Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-Nisāniyya, 1903), p. 26 (the first section of the book). It is also argued *Ibid.* that the prophets can commit minor sin, because minor sin is only like "stumbling" or "error".

⁸⁵*Ibid.*

⁸⁶*Ibid.*

⁸⁷Abū l-'Udhba, Al-Rawdat al-Bahiya (Haydar-ābād, 1322 H.), p. 61; this work is also reproduced in the work cited in the previous note; on the plagiaristic nature of this document, see, Watt, Formative, pp. 313-314.

⁸⁸Al-Qādī Abū Ya'la b. al-Farrā', Kitāb al-Mu'tamad fī Usul al-Dīn, ed. Wadī' Z. Haddād (Beyrouth: Dar El-Machreq, 1974), p. 247.

⁸⁹ EI2, s.v. 'Ismā, p. 183.

⁹⁰in his Mubassal Afkār al-Mutagaddin wa l-Muta'akhhirin (Cairo: Al-Matba'at al-Busayniyya, 1323 H.), pp. 158-159 Rāzī states explicitly that Ash'arī holds the idea of 'isma; the latter's concept of 'isma is "the capacity of obedience" which, however, is viewed in the general context of the prophet's incapacity to commit sin.

⁹¹see, EI2, s.v. 'Ismā, p. 183.

⁹²*Ibid.*

⁹³*Ibid.*

Notes to Chapter Two

¹Pathalla Kholcif, A Study on Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and His Controversies in Transoxiana (Beyrouth: Dar El-Machreq, 1956), p. 16. The same author in *ibid.*, pp. 190-203 enlists 119 titles of Rāzī's work.

²*Ibid.*, p. 17.

³*Ibid.*; EI2, s.v. "Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī", p. 752, by C.G. Anawati.

⁴Paul Kraus, "The 'Controversies' of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī", Islamic Culture 12(1938):132.

⁵Goldziher, "Theologie", p. 225.

⁶Kraus, "Controversies", p. 132.

⁷EI2, s.v. "Fakhr al-Dīn", p. 752.

⁸Kholeif, Study, pp. 9-15.

⁹EI2, s.v. "Fakhr al-Dīn", p. 752.

¹⁰Goldziher, "Theologie", p. 230.

¹¹Ibid., p. 236.

¹²Ibid., p. 229.

¹³Kholeif, Study, p. 10.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁵Henri Laoust, Les schismes dans l'Islam (Paris: Payot, 1965), p. 244.

¹⁶Louis Gardet and M.-M. Anawati, Introduction à la théologie musulmane (Paris: J. Vrin, 1970[1948]), pp. 162-165.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 412.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 416.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 414.

²⁰see, Ignaz Goldziher, Le dogme et la loi de l'Islam, tr. F. Arin (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1966), p. 105 and p. 268 n. 71.

²¹Gardet and Anawati, Introduction, p. 391.

²²Josef van Ess, Die Erkenntnislehre des 'Adud-addīn Al-Īcī (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1966), p. 410.

²³Gardet and Anawati, Introduction, p. 414 citing Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Ma'ālīm Uṣūl al-Dīn, p. 8.

²⁴van Ess, Erkenntnislehre, p. 415 citing Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Asās al-Taḡdīs, pp. 172, 174 ff.

²⁵Nasīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, Talkhīs al-Muhassal, ed. A. Nūrānī (Tehran: McGill & Tehran Universities, 1359/1980); cf. Gardet and Anawati, Introduction, p. 162, n. 1.

²⁶Henri Laoust, Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Fakī-d-dīn Ahmad b. Taimiyya (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1939), p. 184.

²⁷Kholeif, Study, p. 5; EI2, s.v. "Fakhr al-Dīn", p. 754.

²⁸Rāzī's "testament" is translated in Kholeif, Study, pp. 21-22, and reads as follows: "Thus says the slave Muḥammad Ibn 'Umar al-Rāzī, who returns to God's mercy, trusting in the benevolence of his Lord, and is about to end this life and to enter on the next, in the moment when the hard heart is softened and every sinner turns to his Lord... .. know that I was a lover of knowledge, and I wrote about every question that I might know its quantity and quality, irrespective of whether it was true or false... .. I have examined the methods of theology and philosophy, and I did not find in them the profit I found in the Qur'ān, for the Qur'ān ascribes glory and majesty to God, and forbids preoccupations with obscurities and contradictions. These serve only to teach us that the human intellect disintegrates in these deep narrows and hidden ways..."; Ibn Taimiyya makes an echo of this "testament" of Rāzī while criticizing him; see, Taqiyy al-Dīn Ibn Taimiyya, Kitāb al-Nubuwwa (Cairo: Al-Taba'at al-Muniriyya, 1346 H.), pp. 108-109.

²⁹Ibn Taimiyya, Nubuwwa, pp. 108-109; in ibid., p. 148 Ibn Taimiyya criticizes Rāzī in the following terms: "...in his works one cannot find the proof of prophecy, for the foundation of prophecy is

the idea that God is powerful and that He creates miracles in order to authenticate the mission of the prophets. As a matter of fact, in his work, there is no real proving that God is powerful, or that He wills a thing, because his work is more oriented towards relating proofs against those who argue against God's powerfulness and will, without completing it with the other side of the approach."

³⁰van Ess, Erkenntnislehre, p. 31.

³¹Ibid. and EI2, s.v. "Fakhr al-Din", pp. 753-754.

³²Kholeif, Study, p. 9; Kraus, "Controversies", p. 150.

³³As has been suggested by van Ess, Rāzī's epistemology also undergoes evolution; van Ess, Erkenntnislehre, pp. 60, 147.

³⁴Muhammad Al-Salīb Al-Zarkān, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī wa Ara'ū-hu l-Kalāmiyya wa l-Falsafiyya (Teheran: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), p. 550.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 550-551.

³⁶Ibid., p. 551.

³⁷Fazlur Rahman, Prophecy in Islam (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1958), p. 31.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 31-32.

³⁹Ibid., p. 34.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 52-53.

⁴¹Zarkān, Fakhr al-Dīn, p. 550.

⁴²Rāzī, Muhassal, p. 156.

⁴³Ibid., p. 157.

⁴⁴Ibid.; Rāzī is referring to Qur'ān 21,80 ("And We taught him [Dāwūd] the fashioning of garments").

⁴⁵Ibid.; Rāzī is referring to Qur'ān 11,37 and 23,27 ("Make thou [Nūh] the Ark under Our eyes").

⁴⁶Zarkān points out that in this matter Rāzī follows other Ash'arite scholars like Al-Juwaynī and Al-Ghazālī, but also Al-Maturīdī and Al-Nasafī; see, Zarkān, Fakhr al-Dīn, p. 548 n. 2. Rāzī himself enlists 12 fawā'id al-ba'tha in Muhassal, pp. 156-157.

⁴⁷Rahman, Prophecy, pp. 96-97.

⁴⁸Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī, Al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl, tr. Farid Jabre (Beyrouth: Commission Libanaise Pour la Traduction des Chefs-d'Oeuvre, 1969), p. 42 (Arabic), p. 105 (French).

⁴⁹see, e.g. Juwaynī, Irshād, p. 269 (French).

⁵⁰The whole passage has been outlined from Rāzī, Ma'ālim Usūl al-Dīn, on the margin of Rāzī, Muhassal, p. 94.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 126-127.

⁵²Ibid., p. 96.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Rahman, Prophecy, p. 36.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 39.

⁵⁶Zarkān, Fakhr al-Dīn, pp. 554-558.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 554.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 554-555.

⁵⁹Rāzī, Ma'ālim, pp. 127-128.

- ⁶⁰e.g. Qur'ān 18,110.
- ⁶¹Gardet, Dieu, p. 159.
- ⁶²Abd al-Jabbār, Sharḥ, p. 573.
- ⁶³Ash'arī, Maqālāt, p. 226.
- ⁶⁴see above, p. 19.
- ⁶⁵Abd al-Jabbār, Sharḥ, p. 573.
- ⁶⁶Ibid., p. 575.
- ⁶⁷Ibid.
- ⁶⁸Ibid., p. 576.
- ⁶⁹Shahrastānī, Milal, p. 93.
- ⁷⁰Gardet, Dieu, p. 163; Juwaynī, Irshād, p. 269 (French).
- ⁷¹Ghazālī, Munqidh, pp. 42-43 (Arabic), p. 105 (French).
- ⁷²Rahman, Prophecy, p. 96.
- ⁷³Ibid.
- ⁷⁴Ash'arī, Maqālāt, p. 448.
- ⁷⁵Rahman, Prophecy, p. 96.
- ⁷⁶Ibid., p. 99.
- ⁷⁷Shahrastānī, Milal, p. 93.
- ⁷⁸Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, Nihāyat al-Iqdām fī 'Ilm al-Kalām, tr. and ed. Alfred Guillaume (London: Humphrey Milford, 1934), p. 146 (English), p. 463 (Arabic).

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid.; cf. Rahman, Prophecy, p. 100.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 142 (English), p. 445 (Arabic).

Notes to Chapter Three

¹Gardet and Anawati, Introduction, pp. 414-415; van Ess, Erkenntnislehre, p. 410.

²Rāṣī, Ma'ālīm, p. 109.

³see, Carl Brockelmann, Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1937-1943), I, pp. 666-669, esp. p. 668, § I, pp. 920-924, esp. p. 922. The edition of this work that is used here is Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāṣī, 'Ismat al-Anbiya', edited with a foreword and presentation of the author's life and work by 'Abd al-'Azīs 'Uyūn al-Sūd (Himp: Al-Maktabat al-Islamiyya, 1388/1968).

⁴The edition which is used for this study is Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāṣī, Kitāb al-Arba'in fī Uṣūl al-Dīn (Haydarabad: Da'irat al-Ma'ārif, 1353 H.).

⁵cf. 'Ismat', p. 8, where the problem which is about to be discussed is not stated, with ibid., p. 12, where the second problem is announced.

⁶Idem, Arba'in, p. 338, where al-shubhat al-'ulā is stated, with ibid., p. 339, where al-shubhat al-thaniya is also stated.

⁷e.g. Idem, 'Ismat', p. 63 l. 14, where again the problem is not stated but the jawab is given, and cf. Idem, Arba'in, p. 361, where the problem is stated, and ibid., 362, where the jawab is given.

⁸e.g. Idem, 'Ismat', p. 17, where it reads ta'wil and which does not make sense; but cf. Idem, Arba'in, p. 341, where it reads ta'wil, which is the right word in this context.

- ⁹Idem, 'Isnat', p. 1.
- ¹⁰van Ess, Erkenntnislehre, p. 121.
- ¹¹Watt, Formative, pp. 121, 225; Laoust, Schismes, pp. 305, 403.
- ¹²Watt, Formative, p. 270; Laoust, Schismes, p. 459; EI2, s.v. Hashwiyya.
- ¹³Laoust, Schismes, p. 103.
- ¹⁴Gardet, Dieu, p. 185.
- ¹⁵Gardet and Anawati, Introduction, pp. 54, 57.
- ¹⁶Rāṣī, 'Isnat', p. 2; cf. n. 2 above.
- ¹⁷Idem, Muhassal, p. 160.
- ¹⁸Idem, 'Isnat', pp. bā' and jīm.
- ¹⁹Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, Tabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya al-Kubrā (Cairo: Al-Maṭba'at al-Ḥusayniyya al-Misriyya, 1324/1906), vol. 5, p. 36.
- ²⁰Al-Safadī has "the Hanbalites" instead of "the Hashwiyya", see, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Safadī, Al-Wafī bi l-Wafayāt, ed. Hellmut Ritter (Istanbul: Maṭba'at al-Dawla, 1931), vol. 4, p. 250.
- ²¹Kholeif, Study, p. 20.
- ²²Ibid.
- ²³Ibid., pp. 19-22.
- ²⁴The passage that are translated below are taken from Rāṣī, Muhassal, pp. 157-159; cf. Appendix A.
- ²⁵These are the Mu'tasila. The idea of iljā' which is discussed in this passage has an echo in Rāṣī, 'Isnat', p. 39; an example of the application of the idea that is discussed in this passage can be found below, pp. 83-84.

²⁶Qur'ān 18,110; 41,6.

²⁷Ibid. 17,22.39.

²⁸Ibid. 17,74.

²⁹Ibid. 12,53.

³⁰cf. above, pp. 34-43.

³¹above, p. 39.

³²above, p. 40.

³³above, pp. 39-40.

³⁴above, p. 42; cf. pp. 35-36.

³⁵The passage that is translated in this section is taken from Rāzī, 'Iṣmat, pp. 1-3; cf. Appendix B.

³⁶In Idem, 'Iṣmat, pp. 1-2 and Idem, Arba'īn, p. 329 the clause that relates the view of the Rawāfiḍ reads: "iḡhār kalimat al-kufr 'alā sabīl al-taqiyya"; the wording of Muhassal, p. 160 is "iḡhār al-kufr 'alā sabīl al-taqiyya", and is followed by the following explanation:

"They (the Rawāfiḍ) are unanimous in maintaining this opinion (i.e. that it is lawful for the believer to declare to be a kāfir in order to conceal his true belief) on the grounds that, if one's declaration of belonging to Islam is unavoidably conducive to being killed, this declaration is not permissible, because it is tantamount to exposing one's own life to danger."

³⁷Habba is a measure of weight. 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Uyūn al-Sūd explains that 100 habba amount to the weight of a mustard seed, which is 1/60 of a mithkal (4.68 g); in Rāzī, 'Iṣmat, p. 2 n. 2.

³⁸A slight error is found in Rāzī, 'Iṣmat, p. 2, which reads: "wa lā bi l-ta'wīl wa l-khaṭa". The wording of the Arba'īn, p. 330 ("wa lā bi l-ta'wīl al-khaṭa") seems to be the correct wording.

³⁹In Arba'in, p. 330 to "...to do this utmost to remain alert" is added "to be truthful in his words and to be observant" (al-sida wa l-tahaffuz).

⁴⁰Instead of "Al-Shi'a" which is the name used in 'Isnat, p. 3, Arba'in, p. 330 has "Al-Bawafiq".

⁴¹The whole section has been translated from Rasī, 'Isnat, pp. 3-8; cf. Appendix C.

⁴²see, above, p.53 and n.9.

⁴³"Inna a'sam ni'am Allāh 'alā l-'ibād hiya ni'mat al-risāla wa l-nubuwwa", in ibid., 3; "Inna a'sam ni'am Allāh 'alā l-'ibād i'ta'u-hum ni'mat al-risāla wa l-nubuwwa", Arba'in, p. 330.

⁴⁴Qur'an 33,32.

⁴⁵Ibid. 33,30

⁴⁶Muhsan designates a free man who has reached puberty, of sound reason and has consummated marriage with a woman who is also free and has reached puberty; see e.g. Henri Laoust, Le précis de droit d'Ibn Qudama (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1950), pp. 264, 265. A person who is not muhsan, to which category belongs also the slave, which is immediately mentioned by Rasī in his subsequent argument, is only liable to half of the chastisement of a free person, namely 50 lashes instead of one hundred (Qur'an 4,25; cf. 24,2). More about this is to be found in e.g. El2, s.v. 'Abd, pp. 25-29 by R. Brunschwig.

⁴⁷This is A.J.Arberry's translation. Dawood translates it "Believers, if an evil-doer brings you a piece of news inquire first into its truth."

⁴⁸"Amara bi l-tathabbut wa l-tawaqquf fī qubūl shahādat al-fasiq", in Rasī, 'Isnat, p.3.

⁴⁹This is the term used in the 'Isnat, p. 3; the Arba'in, p. 331 has instead of "in matters of this world" (fī hal al-dunyā): "in such a little thing" (fī l-habba).

⁵⁰Qur'ān 2,143.

⁵¹Here the right word seems to be the one used in the Arba'in, p. 331, which reads "fi l-habba".

⁵²This is the wording in 'Isnat, p. 4; the Arba'in, p. 331 reads: "because the proofs that point to the necessity of the ordering of the good and the prohibition of the evil apply universally" (li-anna al-dala'il al-dalla 'ala wujub al-amr bi l-ma'ruf wa l-nahy 'an al-munkar 'inna).

⁵³Qur'ān 33,57.

⁵⁴Ibid. 3,31.

⁵⁵Qur'ān 7,158. This citation of a Qur'ānic verse is given in 'Isnat, while in the Arba'in only the former citation is given. The verse cited in the 'Isnat reads fa-ttabi'u-hu which in the Qur'ān occurs only twice (i.e. in 6,153 and 6,155) and both are referring not to a person but to a thing:

"And that this is My path, straight; so do you follow it, and follow not divers paths, lest they scatter you from His path" (6,153),
 "This is the Book we have sent down, blessed; so follow it, and be godfearing" (6,155).

The verse which refers to a person reads wa-ttabi'u-hu and is found in 7,158 ("Believe then in God, and in His Messenger, the Prophet of the common folk, who believes in God and His words, and follow him").

⁵⁶Qur'ān 4,14.

⁵⁷Ibid. 11,18.

⁵⁸Ibid. 61,3.

⁵⁹Ibid. 2,44.

⁶⁰Ibid. 11,88.

⁶¹This verse is cited in 'Isnat, p. 5 and Arba'in, p. 332 and it reads: "Inna-hum kanu yusa-ri'una fi l-khayrat". This verse occurs only in 21,90,

which, however, is not about Ibrāhīm, Ishāq and Ya'qūb, but about Zakariyā', his wife and Yahyā.

⁶²Qur'ān 38,47.

⁶³"yatanāwalān jumlat al-ar'āl wa l-turūk", in 'Ismat, p. 5.

⁶⁴Qur'ān 22,75.

⁶⁵Ibid. 3,33.

⁶⁶Ibid. 2,130.

⁶⁷Ibid. 7,144.

⁶⁸Ibid. 38,45-46.

⁶⁹Ibid. 35,32.

⁷⁰Ibid. 38,82-83: "Qala fa-bi-'issati-ka la-ughwiyanna-hum ajma'in illa 'ibada-ka min-hum al-mukhlashūn". Arberry has "the sincere" for al-mukhlashūn, which seems less correct; see, above, p. 105 n. 17.

⁷¹Qur'ān 38,46.

⁷²Ibid. 12,24.

⁷³Ibid. 34,20.

⁷⁴Ibid. 49,13.

⁷⁵"wa tafḍil ghayr al-nabī 'alā l-nabī bāṭil bi l-Ijmā'", in 'Ismat, p. 6.

⁷⁶Qur'ān 58,19.

⁷⁷Ibid. 58,22.

⁷⁸This is to translate "wa thābit bi l-dalāla anna l-malā'ika na aqdamu 'alā shay' min al-dhunnub",

in 'Ismat, p. 6. It is interesting to note that the corresponding passage in the Arba'in reads: "We shall presently provide proof that the angels did not boldly undertake anything sinful" (wa sa-nuqimu al-dalāla 'alā anna al-malā'ika mā aqdamu 'alā shay min al-dhumub), in Arba'in, p. 334. As a matter of fact, immediately following the fifteenth argument for the upholding of the prophet's 'isma Rāzī sets out to prove the idea of the angel's sinlessness. On the other hand, although the 'Ismat already has "it has likewise been shown", immediately following the fifteenth argument for the upholding of the prophet's 'isma a series of arguments is also given for the upholding of the angel's sinlessness; this is almost word for word identical with the corresponding passage in the Arba'in. This is even true of the sentence which in the Arba'in opens up the exegesis of the verses about the angels, which reads: "Know that the problems raised by the opponents against the idea of the angel's sinlessness are numerous, and we shall mention them - God willing - by way of résümé", which, however, is not followed by the exegesis promised, but about Adam. The latter discussion in the Arba'in, p. 338 follows the discussion about the angels; for this, see also above p. 45.

⁷⁹Qur'an 38,38.

⁸⁰Ibid. 2,124.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²i.e. in Ibid. 35,32.

⁸³This verse is also referred to by Al-Hillī for his upholding of the Imam's immunity to error and sin; see Al-Hillī, Al-Bab al-Hādī 'Ashar, p. 65 and the commentary by Miqdād-I-Muḥī Al-Hillī in Ibid., p. 68.

⁸⁴This is Khuzayma b. Thābit al-Anṣārī, the father of 'Umāra. He is one of the first Followers (min al-Sābiqīn al-Awvalīn) and was killed during the battle of Siffin when he fought with 'Alī; see Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, Musnad (Beyrouth: Al-Maktab Al-Islāmī, n.d.), V, p. 189.

⁸⁵This is a hadith reported by Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, Ibid., V, pp. 215-216, Abū Dāwūd, Sunan (Cairo: Muṣṭafā

al-Babī al-Halabī, 1371/1952), II, pp. 276-277 and Al-Nasa'i, Sunan (Cairo: Al-Maktabat al-Fijariyya al-Kubra, n.d.), Kitab al-Buyū', pp. 301-302. The content of this hadith is as follows: the Prophet one day bought a horse from a Beduin but the Beduin would not recognise that the Prophet had bought it, so he asked him to bring a witness. Khuzayma, who was not there when all this happened, passed by and said that the Prophet was right. On hearing this the Prophet named Khuzayma "the possessor" of the witness of two men (dhu l-shahadatayn).

⁸⁶As in the preceding note, dhu l-shahadatayn, in spite of the use of the definite article in al-shahadatayn, it means not the two shahada of the Muslim faith, but simply the two witnesses that are required in order to establish the truth of a statement. The locations given in the preceding note mention this, and see also Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Ibid.*, V, p. 189.

⁸⁷Qur'an 16,50.

⁸⁸This is the second argument in the 'Ismat, p. 7 but the third in the Arba'in, p. 335. The order is also inverted for the following argument.

⁸⁹Qur'an 21,26-27.

⁹⁰*Ibid.* 26,20.

⁹¹This is the only verse given for the fourth argument in 'Ismat, p. 7. In Arba'in, p. 335, the arguments are otherwise arranged, as follows

"The fourth argument is that the angels are Messengers of God, as God says: 'who appointed the angels to be messengers' (Qur'an 35,1); and the messenger enjoys God's protection against committing sin (ma'sum), for to praise him God says: 'God knows very well where to place His Message' (Qur'an 6,124)."

Notes to Chapter Four

¹ see, above, p. 53.

² Rāzī, 'Imnat, pp. 8-9.

³ Idem, Arba'in, pp. 339-340.

⁴ Ibid., p. 339.

⁵ Rāzī is here referring to his fifteen arguments that have been translated above, pp. 62-67.

⁶ Idem, Arba'in, p. 339. It can be added here that, even for the pre-prophetic period the possibility that the prophet commit sin is also affirmed only with qualification. This is when Rāzī says that Ahl-al-Sunna admit that it is possible that the prophets commit major sins before their sending, although this happens only rarely ('alā sabīl al-nadra) and only occasionally; they also repent on them and do not persist in them. Rāzī concludes that, on this assumption the prophets are seen by the believers always in a condition of righteousness and never in the condition of someone who is notorious of dissolute life. For this, see, Idem, Muhassal, p. 160.

⁷ Qur'an 35,1.

⁸ Ibid. 7,19.

⁹ Rāzī, Arba'in, p. 339.

¹⁰ The whole passage has been paraphrased from Idem, 'Imnat, pp. 14-15.

¹¹ Qur'an 39,65.

¹² Rāzī, 'Imnat, p. 16.

¹³the reading would then follow Al-Kisā'ī's (Inna-hu 'amala khayr salih), which is usually unaccepted for the grammatical inconveniencies above.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 17; cf. Arba'in, p. 341: "Inna l-idmār khilāf al-asl fa-wajaba al-masir ilā ithbāt hādha l-idmār tawfiq^{an} bayna hādhihi l-āya wa bayna al-āyāt al-dālla 'alā thubūt 'ismat al-anbiyā' 'alayhim al-salām".

¹⁵Goldziher, "Theologie", pp. 241-242.

¹⁶The translation that is given here has been taken from Muslim, Jāmi' al-Sahih, tr. by 'Abdul Hamid Siddiqi (Lahore: Muhammad Ashraf, 1975), vol. 4, pp. 1262-1263; this is a translation from Muslim's Sahih, vol. 5, 128, Bab al-Anbiyā', n. 9. This hadith is reported by Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad b. Hanbal, Abu Dawud and Al-Tirmidhi. The Qur'an, however, has no mention of Ibrahim's saying "This is my sister"; cf. Razi, 'Ismat, p. 25.

¹⁷Razi, 'Ismat, p. 23.

¹⁸As has been noted above, p. 30, Razi stands against accepting an ahad-report if it is in apparent contradiction with his idea. This is not so much because he is against the validity of such a report in itself, but because, as it is also said in this citation, the "rational" proof for the contrary view (i.e. to what is said in a given ahad-report) is stronger. See also above, pp. 32-33 about his stand when there is a conflict between "rational" and "Scriptural" arguments.

¹⁹This seems to be another reference to his fifteen arguments that have been translated above, pp. 63-68.

²⁰Razi, 'Ismat, p. 25; it is interesting to note that Razi uses the same arguments in his Mafatih al-Ghayb. As Goldziher has suggested, "Theologie", p. 242, Razi argues that if one has to choose between the transmitter of this hadith and Khalil Allah (Ibrahim) as being the one who tells a lie, he himself would certainly choose the former.

²¹Rāzī, Arba'in, p. 341.

²²Idem, 'Ismat, p. 17.

²³It is thereby assumed that Ibrāhīm is not to be held responsible before the Law for what he says. The words that are used to describe 'adulthood' here are bulūgh and taklīf; see Ibid.

²⁴This is the solution that is given in the Arba'in; cf. above and n. 21.

²⁵Idem, 'Ismat, pp. 17-18.

²⁶Rāzī is referring to sūra 6,83.

²⁷This is a reference to sūra 6,75.

²⁸Qur'ān 9,113.

²⁹Rāzī, 'Ismat, p. 31.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., p. 35.

³²Ibid., p. 36.

³³In fact Rāzī puts it in conditional ("If we take it to mean 'resolution' the following are the consequences"), Ibid., p. 37, but then he does not develop the idea that it is impossible to use other meanings for the word hamma which he has just mentioned; cf. Ibid., pp. 37-39.

³⁴The whole paragraph has been paraphrased from Ibid., p. 37.

³⁵Ibid., p. 39.

³⁶The whole passage has been paraphrased from Ibid., p. 44. In the Arba'in, p. 350, this problem is solved very briefly by saying: "This event took place

before (Mūsā's) prophetic mission; moreover, one could also say (wa aidān) that Mūsā killed him by error, and the asking of pardon for an error is a good action (ḥasan) and recommendable (mandūb)."

³⁷Idem, 'Ismat, p. 44.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰The Qur'ān itself (38,21 ff.) does not make allusion to this event, which in the Bible (II Samuel 12) is presented in a different story. Tabarī, who usually mentions the opinions of various commentators, is also reticent on this regard. He mentions only that the numbers "99" and "1" represent respectively the number of Dāwūd's wives and the wife of one of the people against whom he made a raid, whom he married after he won the raid; see Abū Ja'far al-Tabarī, Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Āy al-Qur'ān (Cairo: Mustafā al-Babī al-Ḥalabī, 1954), I, t. 23, p. 143. In Ibid., p. 146, Tabarī also does not make reference to Ūriah's wife to explain the identity of the woman whom Dāwūd married, but about the latter's asking of pardon he relates that some people say that this is because Dāwūd remembers the good fame that God has granted to Ibrāhīm, Ishāq and Ya'qūb; with this prayer Dāwūd is in fact asking God to grant him the same gift. In his Mafātih al-Ghayb Rāzī shows that he is aware of the existence of the tale about Dāwūd's marriage with the wife of Ūriah, whom he has killed, but he argues that "this story has been forged by the Ḥash-wī"; what one can gather from such an affirmation is unfortunately only his own repugnance against the Ḥash-wiyya; see Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Mafātih al-Ghayb (Cairo: Maṭba'a Miṣriyya, 1933), t. 26, p. 189.

⁴¹Rāzī, 'Ismat, p. 48.

⁴²Ibid.; "unworthy of a prophet" is indeed one of Rāzī's basic assumptions which, however, is not fully clearly defined, and what is materially "worthy" and "unworthy" is sometimes a matter of conjecture. Nevertheless, this can be reminiscent of the Mu'tazilite idea of al-munaffirāt, namely those things or characters which arouse aversion if they exist in the person of the prophet; or, more positively, this may be an assumption that is not clearly defined but that is

inherent in Rāzī's idea of the prophet's perfection. Moreover Rāzī defines "the good" and "the bad" in terms of their relationship with "perfection" and "defectiveness" to "nature": "ḥuṣṣ and qubḥ designate respectively the 'harmony of nature' (muḥāmmat al-ṭab') and its 'disharmony' (munāfarati-hi), and the being of a thing as an attribute of perfection or defectiveness (wa kawn al-shay' sifat kamāl wa nuḡṣan)", in Rāzī, Muhassal, p. 147. He insists, however, in Ibid. that the application of these 'rational' notions to various 'actus' so that the latter things can be called liable to reward, or punishment, or praise or reprimand, is shar'ī, in contrast with the Mu'tazila, who see "the good" and "the bad" in the things or acts themselves. For the relativity of these notions, see below n. 73.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 49.

⁴⁵Ibid.; what is here meant is the verses that immediately precede the passage about the two litigants (38,21).

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 50.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 50-51.

⁵³Ibid., p. 52.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 52; there is also another interpretation, namely that not only two people but a band of them who come to Dāwūd's palace with the intention to kill him and to rob his wealth. They, however, do not come at the right time and find him still awake. At this sight, and being aware that their plan has

failed, two of them pretend that they come to ask him to arbitrate between them on their dispute. But Dawud, who sees beyond the outward appearance, perceives their real intention and asks forgiveness for them.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 53.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Idem, Arba'in, p. 362; in the 'Iqmat, the problem is not specifically stated.

⁵⁸Idem, 'Iqmat, pp. 63-64.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 64.

⁶⁰It is preferable to reproduce here the verse in Arabic, because the discussion revolves around the word tamanni which is used in this verse. A.J. Arberry translates it "We sent not ever any Messenger or Prophet before thee, but that Satan cast into his fancy, when he was fancying; but God annuls what Satan casts, then God confirms His signs - surely God is All-knowing, All-wise."

⁶¹This hadith is assessed unreliable by some authors; see Razi, 'Iqmat, p. 65 n. 1.

⁶²This is Bell's translation to be found in Richard Bell, The Qur'an. Translated with a critical re-arrangement of the Surahs (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1939), v. 2, p. 540 n. 8. In Ibid., p. 541 n. 8 Bell believes that it is very improbable that such a story would have been invented.

⁶³Razi, 'Iqmat, pp. 64-65: Tabari gives a copious report on the cause of the revelation of this verse (22,52) and states briefly the main line as follows: "Satan had thrown into the mouth of the Prophet while he was reciting the verse some words which Allah in fact had not revealed. Being thereby admonished by Jibril the Prophet became very sad, and therefore Allah comforted him by revealing this verse", see Tabari, Jami', VIII, t. 17, pp. 186-190.

⁶⁴Surprisingly enough Rāzī does not directly respond to the allegation of the ḥadīth, but switches the problem to another issue, namely by focussing the response on the meaning of ummiyya in verse 22,52; cf. Rāzī, ‘Ismat, pp. 66-68.

⁶⁵For the latter meaning, namely "recitation", Rāzī refers to Qur'an 2,78 (wa min-hum la ya‘lamun al-kitab illa amani), where the plural of ummiyya (i.e. amānīn) is used and which he explains as meaning that the common folk does not know the Book by reading it but only through memorizing it by recitation.

⁶⁶This argument is not found in his Arba‘īn, where he mentions both possible interpretations without, however, assessing which of them is appropriate here; see Arba‘īn, pp. 362-363. In his Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb Rāzī still holds that both interpretations are possible and believes that Satan can cast false thoughts into the Prophet's mind. He admits that when the Prophet was thinking seriously it might happen that he slipped into inattentiveness and became less aware of Satan's promptings. Rāzī concludes that in this respect the prophets are like other human beings, and that they are to be followed only in so far as their deeds are the result of their full awareness; cf. Rāzī, Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, t. 23, pp. 48-55.

⁶⁷Rāzī, ‘Ismat, pp. 66-67.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 67; he compares it to someone who is reciting a poem: when he becomes inattentive he cannot possibly utter words that are in sequence with what he has said precedingly in terms of metre, expression and meaning.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 67.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 78.

⁷²p. 10 and n. 16 on that page.

⁷³At this point an allusion is made to the saying: "hasanāt al-abrār sayyi'āt al-muqarrabīn" (the good deeds of the pious are the bad deeds of those who are brought near), cf. Annemarie Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions of Islām (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 204. Al-Shahrastānī also cites this saying to explain that the intensity or meaning of sin is not the same for the prophet and for the simple believer; see 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, Kitāb Mi-hāyat al-Iqdām fī 'Ilm al-Kalām, tr. and ed. by Alfred Guillaume (London: Humphrey Milford, 1934), p. 143 (English translation), p. 445 (Arabic text).

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 75.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

APPENDIX A

في حصة الانبياء عليهم الصلاة والسلام القائلون بالمعصية منهم من رجم أن المعصوم هو الذي لا يمكنه الاتيان بالمعاصي ومنهم من رجم أنه يكون متحكماً منه والاولون منهم من رجم أن المعصوم هو المختص في بدنه أو في نفسه بخاصية تقتضي احتناع اقدامه على المعاصي ومنهم من ساد على كونه ما قاله غيره في الخلو البدني لكن فسر المعصية بالقدرة على الطاعة وهو قول أبي الحسن الأشعري والذين لم يسلحوا الخيار فسروها بأنه الامر الذي يجعله الله تعالى بالعبد وطم أنه لا يقدم مع ذلك الامر على المعصية بشرط أن لا ينهي فعل ذلك الامر الى حد الاجزاء وهؤلاء احتجوا على فساد قول الاولين من العقل بان الامر لو كان كما قالوه لما استحق المعصوم على عصيته دحاً ولبطل الامر والنهي والنواب والعقاب ومن الكل قوله تعالى انا انا بشر مثكم ولا تجعل مع الله الها آخر ولولا أن نجتاك لقد كدت تتركن اليهم وقوله وما أبرئ نفسي ثم ان هؤلاء ذهبوا أن أسباب المعصية أمور أربعة أحدها أن يكون له ولد له خلصة تقتضي له كفة مانعة من الفجر والفرق بين الفعل والملكية معلوم وثانيها أن يحصل له العلم بخالف المعاصي ومقاب الطاعات وثالثها تأكيد تلك العلوم بتتابع الوحي والبيان من الله تعالى ورابعها أنه حتى صدر عنه امر من الامور من باب ترك الاولى أو النسيان لم يترك مهلاً بل يعايب ويمنه عليه ويضيق الامر فيه عليه فاذا اجتمعت هذه الامور الاربعة كان الشخص معصوماً عن المعاصي لا مطلة لان تلك الحفة اذا حلت في جوهر النفس ثم اضاف اليها العلم التام بط في الطاعة من السعادة وفي المعصية من الشقاوة صار ذلك العلم معيلاً له على هتسى تلك الحسنانية ثم الوحي يصير ضماً لذلك ثم خوف النواخذة على القدر القليل يكون توكيداً لذلك الاحتراز فيحصل من اجتماع هذه الامور تأكيد حقيقة المعصية.

(من كتاب محل اشكر المتقدمين والمتأخرين من العلماء والحكام والتكفين تأليف الامام الحجة ناصر الحق فخر الدين محمد بن عمر الرازي طبع بمعرفة السادات احد نجلي الجبلي و محمد أمين الخاتمي وأخيه بالطبعة الحسينية المصرية من ١٥٧ - ١٥٩)

APPENDIX B

فصل في شرح الاحوال والذاهب في هذه المساجت والمطاليم

(الم) ان الاختلاف في هذه المسالك واقع في اربعة موانع (الاول) ما يتعلق بالاعتقادية. واجتمعت الامة على ان الانبياء مسمونون من الكفر والبده الا القليلة من الخوارج فانهم يحتفلون الكفر على الانبياء طيبهم الصلاة والسلام. وذلك لان عددهم يجوز مدو الذنب منهم و لكل ذنب فهو كفر عددهم فبهذا الطريق جوزيا صدور الكفر منهم و الروايت فانهم يجوزون طيبهم اظهار كلمة الكفر على سبيل التقية. (الثاني) ما يتعلق بجمع الفرائع والاحكام من الله تعالى و واجمعا على انه لا يجوز طيبهم التحريف والحياة في هذا الباب لا بالمد ولا بالسبه و الا لم يبق الاحتاد على شيء من الفرائع. (الثالث) ما يتعلق بالفقه. واجمعا على انه لا يجوز تعدد الخطا فاما على سبيل السهو فقد اختلفوا فيه. (الرابع) ما يتعلق بالمعالم و احوالهم. فقد اختلفوا فيه على خمسة مذاهب - الاول - المشقة و هو انه يجوز طيبهم الادام على الكبار و المنابر - الثاني - انه لا يجوز منهم تعدد الكثرة البتة واما تعدد المشقة فهو جائز بشرط ان لا تكون مغترا فذلك لا يجوز طيبهم ، مثل التلخيص بما دون الجبنة و هو قول اكثر المتأخرة - الثالث - انه لا يجوز طيبهم تعدد الكثرة و المشقة و لكن يجوز صدور الذنب منهم على سبيل الخطا في التأويل و هو قول ابي حنيفة الجبائي - الرابع - انه لا يجوز طيبهم الكثرة و لا المشقة ، لا بالمد ولا بالتأويل والخطا. اما السهو والنيان فجائز ثم انهم يقاتون على ذلك السهو والنيان و ليسا ان طوبهم اكمل ، فكان الواجب طيبهم السبالة في التيقظ و هو قول ابي اسحاق ابراهيم بن سيار النظام. (الخامس) انه لا يجوز طيبهم الكثرة و لا المشقة لا بالمد ولا بالتأويل ولا بالسهو والنيان. وهذا مذاهب الشيعة. واختلفوا ايضا في وقت وجوب هذه المصحة ، فقال بعضهم انها من اول الولادة الى آخر العمر و قال الاكثرون هذه المصحة انما تجب في زمان النبوة. فاما قبلها فهي غير واجبة . و هو قول اكثر اصحابنا رسمهم الله تعالى .

(من كتاب مصحة الانبياء للامام فخر الدين الرازي ، ص ١ - ٢)

APPENDIX C

والذي هو ان الانبياء طيبهم الصلاة والسلام مسمون في زسان النبوة من الكبار والصغار بالمسد . أما طي سيل السهو فهو جازز . و يدل طي وجوب المصمة وجوه خمسة عشرة (الحجة الاولى) لو صدر الذنب عنهم لكان حاطم في استطاق الذم عاجلا و العقاب آجلا ائد من حل صاة الأمة . و هذا باطل فصدور الذنب أيضا باطل . بيان الملازمة ان اعلم نعم الله طي الجباد هي نعممة الرسالة و النبوة . و كل من كانت نعم الله تعالى طيه اكثر كان صدور الذنب منه اكثر . و صريح العقل يدل طيه . ثم يؤكد . من النقل ثلاثة وجوه (الاول) قوله تعالى (يا نساء النبي لستن كأحد من النساء) و قال تعالى (يا نساء النبي من يات مكن بفاحشة مبينة يخطئ لها العقاب فضفين) - (الثاني) ان المحسن يرحم و غيره يهلك (الثالث) ان المبد يحط صف حد الموه فثبت بما ذكرنا انه لو صدر الذنب عنهم لكان حاطم في استطاق الذم عاجلا و العقاب الآجل فوق حال جميع صاة الأمة ، الا ان هذا باطل بالاجماع فان احدا لا يجوز ان يقبل ان الرسول احسن حالا عند الله و اقل منزلة من كل احد . و هذا يدل طي عدم صدور الذنب عنهم .

(الحجة الثانية) لو صدر الذنب عنهم لما كانوا يقبلوا الشهادة لقولهم تعالى (يا ايها الذين آمنوا ان جاءكم فاسق بنبأ فتبينوا) أمر بالتثبت و التيق في قبول شهادة الفاسق ، الا ان هذا باطل فان من لم يقبل شهادته في حال الدنيا فكيف يقبل شهادته في الاديان الباقية الى يوم القيامة . و أيضا فانه تعالى شهد بأن محمدا طيه الصلاة و السلام شهيد طي الكل يوم القيامة ، قال (و كذلك جعلناكم أمة وسطا لتكونوا شهداء على الناس و يكون الرسول طيكم شيدا) و من كان شيدا لجميع الرسل يوم القيامة كيف يكون بحال لا يقبل شهادته في الجنة .

(الحجة الثالثة) لو صدر الذنب عنهم لوجب زجرهم ، لان الدلائل دالة طي وجوب الأمر بالمعروف و النهي من المستكر لكن زجر الانبياء طيبهم الصلاة و السلام غير جازز ، لقولهم تعالى (ان الذين يؤذون الله و رسوله لعنهم الله في الدنيا و الآخرة) فكان صدور الذنب عنهم مستثما

(الحجة الرابعة) لو صدر القس من محمد طيه الصلاة والسلام لكان اما ان تكون سامعون بالاعتداء به وهذا لا يجوز، او لا تكون سامعون بالاعتداء به . وهذا ايضا باطل لقوله تعالى (قل ان كنتم تحبون الله فاتبعوني يحبكم الله) و لقوله تعالى (فاتبعوه) ولما كان صدور القس يفتي الى هذين القسمين الباطلين كان صدور القس منه محلا .

(الحجة الخامسة) لو صدر المصيبة من الانبياء طيبهم الصلاة والسلام لوجب ان يكونوا موجودين بمذاب الله بمذاب جهنم ، لقوله تعالى (و من يحس الله ورسوله و يمد حده ، يدخله عذابا عظيما) و لم حذاب جهنم (و لكانوا لمؤمنين ، لقوله تعالى (الا لئلا الله طي الظالمين) و باجتماع الامة هذا باطل فكان صدور المصيبة منهم باطلا .

(الحجة السادسة) انهم كانوا يأمرون بالطاعات و ترك المصلي و لو تركوا الطاعة و فعلوا المصيبة لدخلوا تحت قوله تعالى (يا ايها الذين آمنوا لم تقولون ما لا تعملون كبر مقتا عند الله ان تقولوا ما لا تعملون) و تحت قوله تعالى (يا طغوت الناس بالبر و تنصون المسك) و مسلم ان هذا في غاية القبح ، و ايضا اشعر الله تعالى عن رسوله شيب طيه الصلاة والسلام انه يرا نفسه من ذلك ، فقال (و ما اريد ان اخللكم الى ما انبهاكم عنه) .

(الحجة السابعة) فقال الله تعالى في صفة ابراهيم واسحاق و يعقوب (انهم كانوا يمارسون في الخيرات) و الالف و اللام في صيغة الجمع عبيد المصم قد دخل تحت لفظ (الخيرات) فكل كل ما ينبغي و ترك كل ما لا ينبغي ، و ذلك يدل على انهم كانوا فاعلين لكل الطاعات و تاركين لكل المصلي .

(الحجة الثامنة) قوله تعالى (و انهم عندنا لمن المصطفين الاختيار) و هو ان اللطيف اعني قوله تعالى (المصطفين) و قوله (الاختيار) يتناولان جملة الاعمال و التروك ، بدليل جواز الاستثناء . يقال فلان من المصطفين الاختيار الا في كذا ، و الاستثناء يخرج من الكلام ما لولا ، لنقل . فدللت هذه الآية على انهم كانوا من المصطفين الاختيار في كل الامور ، و هذا ينبغي صدور الذنب عنهم ، و نظيره قوله تعالى (والله يضلني من السلاكة ريلا و من النش) و قوله تعالى (ان الله

اصطفى آدم و نوح و آل ابراهيم و آل عمران على العالمين) و قال في حق ابراهيم
(و لقد اصطفيناه في الدنيا و انه في الآخرة لمن الصالحين) و قال في حق موسى
عليه الصلاة و السلام (اني اصطفيك على الكس برسالاتي و بكلامي) و قال تعالى
(و اذكر جادنا ابراهيم و اسحق و يعقوب اولي الادي و الارحام . انا اخصناهم
بمخلصه ذكرى الدار) - لا يقال الاصطفاء لا يمنع من فعل الذنب ، بدليل قوله
تعالى (ثم اورثنا الكتاب الذين اصطفينا من عبادنا فمنهم ظالم لنفسه و منهم مقتد
و منهم سابق بالخيرات بإذن الله) قسم المصطفين الى الظالم و المقتد و السابق ،
لأنه تعالى الضير في قوله (فمنهم) طائد الى قوله (من عبادنا) لا الى قوله
(الذين اصطفينا) لان صود الضير الى أقرب المذكورين واجب .

(الحجة التاسعة) قوله تعالى حكاية من ابليس (فبمررتك لاخوتهم اجمعين الا عبادك
منهم المخلصين) استغنى المخلصين من اخوانه و اخلائه ، ثم انه تعالى شهد على
ابراهيم و اسحق و يعقوب عليهم الصلاة و السلام أنهم من المخلصين ، حيث قال (انا
اخصناهم بمخلصه) و قال في حق يوسف عليه الصلاة و السلام (انه من عبادنا
المخلصين) فلما أقر ابليس أنه لا ينفي المخلصين ، و شهد الله بأن هؤلاء من
المخلصين ثبت أن اخوانه ابليس و وسوته ما وصلت اليهم ، و ذلك يوجب القطع بعدم
صدور المعصية عنهم .

(الحجة العاشرة) قال الله تعالى (و لقد صدق عليهم ابليس ظنه فانبهوه الا
فرقا من المؤمنين) فهؤلاء الذين لم يتبعوا ابليس اما أن يقال انهم الأنبياء أو غيرهم ،
فان كانوا غيرهم لزم أن يكونوا أفضل منهم ، لقوله تعالى (ان اكرمكم عند الله
أهباكم) و غفيل غير النبي على النبي باطل بالاجماع . فوجب القطع بأن أولئك الذين
لم يتبعوا ابليس هم الأنبياء عليهم الصلاة و السلام ، و كل من أدنب فقد أتبع ابليس
فدل هذا على أن الأنبياء صلوات الله عليهم ما أدنبوا .

(الحجة الحادية عشرة) أنه تعالى قسم المكلفين الى قسمين حزب الشيطان كما قال
تعالى (أولئك حزب الشيطان الا ان حزب الشيطان هم المفسدون) و حزب الله كما
قال تعالى (أولئك حزب الله الا ان حزب الله هم المفلحون) و لا شك أن حزب
الشيطان هو الذي يهمل ما يهين الشيطان و يأمره به . فلو صدرت الذنوب عن

الأنبياء لصدق طيهم أنهم من حزب الشيطان . و لصدق طيهم لقوله تعالى (١ لا ان حزب الشيطان هم المفسدون) و لصدق طي الزهاد من آحاد الامّة لقوله تعالى (١ لا ان حزب الله هم المفلحون) و حيثك يلزم أن يكون واحد من آحاد الامّة أهمل بكثير من الأنبياء ، و لا شك في بطلانه .

(الحجة الثانية عشرة) ان أصحاب رحمة الله تعالى بينوا ان الأنبياء أهمل من الطائفة و ثابت بالدلالة أن الطائفة ما أقدموا على شيء من الذنوب ، فلو صدرت الذنوب عن الأنبياء لاستنتج أن يكونوا زناديق في الفضل على الطائفة لقوله تعالى (أم نجعل الذين آمنوا و عملوا الصالحات كالمفسدين في الأرض أم نجعل المتقين كالفجار) .

(الحجة الثالثة عشرة) قال الله تعالى في حق ابراهيم طيه الصلاة والسلام (اني جاعلك للناس إماما) و الإمام هو الذي يقتدى به فلو صدر الذنب عن ابراهيم لكان اقتداء الخلق به في ذلك الذنب واجبا و انه باطل .

(الحجة الرابعة عشرة) قوله تعالى (لا يثقل عهدي الظالمين) فكل من أقدم على الذنب كان ظالما . نعم لقوله تعالى (فمنهم ظالم لنفسه) . اذا عرفت هذا فتقبل ذلك العهد الذي حكم الله تعالى بأنه لا يصل الى الظالمين اما أن يكون هو عهد النبوة أو عهد الإمامة ، فان كان الاول فهو المقصود و ان كان الثاني فالمقصود أظهر ، لان عهد الإمامة أقل درجة من عهد النبوة ، فاذا لم يصل عهد الإمامة الى المذهب الحاشي ، فبأن لا يصل عهد النبوة اليه أولى .

(الحجة الخامسة عشرة) روي أن خزيمة بن ثابت الانصاري رضي الله عنه شهد على رضى دعوى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم مع أنه ما كان عالما بتلك الواقعة فقال خزيمة إني أصدقك فيما تغيب عنه من أحوال السماء ، أ فلا أصدقك في هذا القدر؟ فلما ذكر ذلك صدقه النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فيه و لقبه بنبي الشهادتين . و لو كان الذنب جائزا على الأنبياء لكانت شهادة خزيمة غير جائزة .

(و اطم) أنا لما فرغنا من ذكر الدلائل الدالة على عصمة الأنبياء فلنذكر الآن ما يدل على عصمة الطائفة . و يدل طيه وجوه أربعة (الاول) قوله تعالى في صفة الطائفة (يخلقون رسوم من فروعهم و يفعلون ما يؤمرون) يتناول جميع الطائفة

في فعل جميع السماوات و ترك جميع النبيات لان كل من نهي عن فعل عند امر
بتركه (الثاني) قوله تعالى في وصفهم (بل عباد مكرهين لا يعقلون) و هم
بأمره يعطون (الثالث) قوله تعالى (يسبحون الليل و النهار لا يفترون) و ما
كانت صفته كذلك لا يحد من الذنب (الرابع) أن الطائفة رسل الله لقوله في
تعظيمهم (الله أعلم حيث يجعل رسالته) .

فهذا مجموع الدلائل على عصمة الأنبياء و عصمة الطائفة صلوات الله عليهم أجمعين .
(من كتاب عصمة الأنبياء للإمام فخر الدين الرازي نشر و توزيع المكتبة

الإسلامية بحمص ص ٣ - ٨)

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