Ibn Ḥazm's theory of prophecy of women: Literalism, logic, and perfection

M. Zakyi Ibrahim*

Abstract: Stopping short of declaring a specific number, the Qur'ān states that God has sent many prophets/messengers to various nations. Among the names listed in the Qur'ān, none is clearly identified as a woman. Nevertheless, on numerous occasions the Qur'ān states that certain female figures have received inspiration from God. Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064) argues that, by virtue of their reception of authentic inspiration, these female figures were prophets. They were the mothers of the prophets Isḥāq, Mūsā, and ʿĪsā, as well as the wife of Firʿawn. The study identifies philological, God's inspiration, logical, and perfection concept as four approaches Ibn Ḥazm used for his arguments. Upon critical analysis, we conclude that, although logically presented in accordance to his *ẓāhirī* (literalist) dispensation, Ibn Ḥazm's theory of the prophecy of women lacks sufficient Qur'ānic support. Beginning with Ibn Ḥazm's brief background and his *ẓāhirī* tendency, the study critically engages Ibn Ḥazm's own theory, and comprehensively analyses the four approaches employed for his conclusions.

Keywords: Ibn Ḥazm; Islamic theology; prophecy of women; prophethood; Qur'ān exegesis.

Kata Kunci: Merenung sejenak terhadap mengishtihar satu kenyataan tertentu, Al-Qur'ān telah mengkhususkan bahawa Allah mengirim beberapa orang nabi/pesuruh kepada pelbagai negara. Antara nama-nama yang tersenarai di dalam Al Qur'ān, tiada satu pun yang dikenalpasti dengan jelasnya terdiri daripada kalangan wanita. Namun begitu, Al Qur'ān juga dalam beberapa situasi, menyatakan bahawa figura-figura wanita yang tertentu telah menerima inspirasi daripada Allah. Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064) membincangkan bahawa pada hakikatnya penerimaan kaum wanita sebagai inspirasi ketulenannya yang

* M. Zakyi Ibrahim is an Associate Professor in the Department of Comparative Religion, California State University, Fullerton. Email: zibrahim@fullerton.edu.

unggul, yang mana figura-figura wanita-wanita tersebut merupakan nabi-nabi katanya. Mereka ini adalah ibu kepada Nabi Ishaq, Nabi Musa, dan Nabi Isa, termasuk juga isteri kepada Firaun Ramses II. Kajian ini mengenalpasti empat pendekatan yang digunakan beliau untuk berhujah: iaitu philologikal, inspirasi daripada Allah, logikal dan konsep kesempurnaan, serta membuatkan mereka sebagai asas analisis kritisnya. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahawa walaupun perbincangan dipersembahkan secara logik mengikut cara penyebaran ẓāhirī (secara literalinya), Teori Ibn Ḥazm dalam kenabian wanita didapati kurang mencukupi dari segi sokongan Al Qur'ān. Berdasarkan pengenalan kepada ringkasan latar belakang Ibn Ḥazm dan kecenderungannya terhadap ẓāhirī, kajian ini secara kritikalnya melibatkan teori peribadi Ibn Ḥazm. Kajian ini juga menganalisis secara komprehensif keempat-empat pendekatan yang digunakan untuk membuat kesimpulannya.

Kata Kunci: Ibn Ḥazm; teologi Islam; kenabian wanita; kenabian; takwil Al-Qur'ān.

According to the Qur'ān, God has sent a number of prophets/messengers to various nations (Qur'ān, 16:36; 2:213), though the exact number is not mentioned. Moreover, among the names offered by the Qur'ān, none is clearly identified as a woman.[1] Nevertheless, it explicitly stated that female personalities have received inspiration from God (Qur'ān, 19:17-21; 28:7), even if this has not been accompanied – as in the case of many male personalities – by a command to preach to a specific people. Should these inspirations, despite the apparent honour this entails, be interpreted as prophethood? We address this basic question by focusing on Ibn Ḥazm's (d. 456/1064) theory and approaches.

Prophecy by women is a subject that has received scanty attention in Muslim literary sources. It is touched upon by classical and modern Muslim scholars, particularly by the classical exegetes. However, they often approached it not as an independent topic, but in the context of their discussion of the verse on Maryam (Mary), the mother of ʿĪsā (Jesus) in Qur'ān 3:42, or the verses on God's revelation to "men" (12:109; 16:43; 21:7).

The most extensive and, indeed, sophisticated treatment of the question comes from the pen of the famous Andalusian literalist (ẓāhirī) Ibn Ḥazm (Ajiri, 1994). Considering himself the most knowledgeable of his time about women (Abdul Ali, 1995), (he was the author of *Ṭawq*

al-Ḥamāmah fī al-Ulfah wa-al-Ullāf (*The Necklace of the Dove on Love and Lovers*), hailed as one of the best treatments of love until modern times) (Gomez, 1976), this Spanish-born theologian, in several of his works, discussed prophecy including the prophecy of women. Such works include *al-Fiṣal fī al-Milal wa-al-Ahwā' wa-al-Niḥal* (*Chapters on Sects and Schisms*), *al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al- Aḥkām* (*Precision on the Principles of Islamic Rules*)*, al-Muḥallā bi-al-Āthār* (*The Ornamented with Traditions*)*,* and *al-Uṣūl wa-al-Furū'* (*The Fundamentals and the Branches*). He held the conviction that through God's inspiration, women, such as Maryam, the mother of 'Īsā, as well as Jochebed, the mother of Mūsā (Moses), were themselves prophets (Ibn Ḥazm, 1985). For his argument to hold, it was necessary for Ibn Ḥazm to establish a stark difference between a *nabī* (prophet) and a *rasūl* (messenger).

There are many works on Ibn Ḥazm, but only a few discussed his discussion on the prophecy of women. The first non-Arabic work of which we know is an article written in French by Abdel-Majid Turki. Turki analysed Ibn Ḥazm's position towards women in his *al-Fiṣal,* and conceded that no one had ever advocated so favourably and passionately for women as did Ibn Ḥazm (Turki, 1978). Another is *Women as Prophets in Islam* by Maribel Fierro who discussed prophecy of women in al-Andalus from the polemical perspective, which included a brief reference to Ibn Ḥazm's position (Fierro, 2002).

However, several Muslim exegetes have fleetingly addressed the question of prophecy of women. It was not until the 11th century C.E. that they seemed to have acknowledged the topic in their commentaries, examples being the Mu'tazilite al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 1025) and the Shī'ite Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 1067).

The most extensive treatment of the subject in Qur'ānic commentary up to the 13th century, and perhaps the most blatant verdict on Maryam's prophecy, comes from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) who vehemently rejected her prophecy (al-Rāzī, 1980, vol. 8, p. 43). On the other hand, two to three centuries later, Ibn Ḥazm's countrymen, Muhammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273) and Abū Ḥayyān (d. 744/1344) also discussed the Prophecy of women approvingly in their works (al-Qurṭubī, 1967; Abū Ḥayyān, n.d.).

Focusing on Ibn Ḥazm's theory of prophecy of women, this study begins with his brief background, including his *ẓāhirī* (literalist)

approach. It then moves to his theory and concept of prophecy of women under which a comprehensive analysis of Ibn Ḥazm's four approaches is presented.

Ibn Ḥazm's genealogy

One of the most complete available genealogies of Ibn Ḥazm is that he is Abū Muhammad ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd ibn Ḥazm ibn Ghālib ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn Khalaf ibn Sufyān ibn Yazīd (Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, 1999). Ibn Ḥazm was born at Cordoba in 994 C.E. to an influential family (Ormsby, 2000), and died in 1064 in *Manta Līsham* – a place that came to be known as *Casa Montija* (Abbas, 1960) near modern Seville. However, most modern scholars speak of the obscurity of his origin (Ormsby, 1985; Arnaldez, 1937). This is because there is evidence to support another claim that he was not of Spanish, but of Persian descent.

According to Muhammad ibn Fattūḥ al-Ḥumaydī (d. 488/1095), Ibn Ḥazm's ancestor, Yazīd, was a Persian convert to Islam and a freedman (*mawlā*) of Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān (al-Ḥumaydī, 1983). Ibn Ḥazm himself has reportedly made mention of his Persian origin as a matter of pride (Abu Laila, 1985).

Ibn Ḥazm's Spanish origin was first suggested by Ibn Ḥayyān who claimed that Ibn Ḥazm fabricated the Persian lineage for the sake of prestige (Scales, 1985; Abu Laila, 1985). However, Eric Ormsby concluded that, "although he [Ibn Ḥazm] claimed descent from an early Persian convert to Islam, there is evidence that his family was of indigenous Iberian stock and that one of his ancestors had converted from Christianity to Islam" (Ormsby, 1985).

It is ironic though to think that Ibn Ḥazm, who wrote the genealogical classic *Jamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab* (*Multitude of Arab Genealogies*), never attempted, "to defend himself against the claims by some of his contemporaries that he himself was of *ʿajamī* blood" (Scales, 1985). Whatever the case, while Ibn Ḥazm acknowledges his Western roots (al-Ḥumaydī, 1983),[2] neither ancestry claims descent from Arab or Muslim origin. The only difference is that the Persian lineage gives Ibn Ḥazm slightly earlier Muslim forefathers than the Spanish one; though whichever scenario is the correct one, its significance as far as Ibn Ḥazm is concerned is negligible.

Ibn Ḥazm and literalism (*ẓāhiriyyah*)

Founded several decades before Ibn Ḥazm by Abū Sulaymān Dāwūd Ibn ʿAlī al-Iṣbahānī (d. 270/884), the *ẓāhiriyyah* school, according to R. Strothmann is:

> A school of law, which would drive the law only from the literal text (*ẓāhir*) of the Kur'ān and Sunna. In the "branches of law" (*furūʿ al-fiḳh*) it still further increased the number of contradictory detailed regulations by many divergences, peculiar to it alone. More important is its significance for the principles of legislation (*uṣūl al-fiḳh*), the development and elucidation of which it considerably furthered by its uncompromising fight against *ra'y, ḳiyās, istiṣḥāb, istiḥsān and taḳlīd* (Strothmann, 1936, p. 1192).

However, Ibn Ḥazm understood the phenomenon as a methodology which he applied not only to law, but to theology and any discipline in which he engaged himself. For him, it signified, "bypassing obscure and esoteric meaning and going to that which is obvious and apparent by itself, which can be discovered instinctively by the intellect through spoken language and the understanding of its meaning, by the use of what is customary, and under the auspices of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah" ('Uways, 1988, p. 90).

Following his adoption of the school, Ibn Ḥazm exerted considerable efforts to elucidate the *ẓāhiriyyah* doctrine in all his works, the culmination of which came through his two works, namely, *al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām* (*Precision on the Principles of Islamic Rules*) and *al-Fiṣal fī al-Milal wa-al-Ahwā' wa-al-Niḥal* (*Chapters on Sects and Schisms*). Below are verses of what Ibn Ḥazm called "justification" for literalism, which may also be considered as his methodology.

- Nothing the Beneficent (God) neglected and forgot …
  - Nor in vain did he leave His creation.
- Indeed, all that is forbidden and allowed, he delineated…
  - And the rules for His slaves with precision, he clarified.
- Therefore, take the literal (*ẓāhir*) meaning of the words and go not beyond…
  - To the extreme interpretation (*ta'wīl*); you will remain supported.
- [Regarding] any general [term], the truth is to take it…
  - For all that it indicates without any hesitation.
- In case of people's disagreement, the rule is to turn…
  - To it [text], and with the consensus [of companions], one is guided.

- And if a man judges by himself in matters of religion based on analogy…
    - Or preference, he has pleased himself and [thereby] transgressed.
- These are the boundaries of God; do not go beyond them…
    - And whoever preaches causation (*ta'līl*) has transgressed.
- If you do not find a text regarding a ruling, then…
    - seek it by gathering texts, such that you will be guided.

(Maḥjūbī, 2000, p. 111)

As a former member and expert of Malikite and Shafi'ite schools of law, Ibn Ḥazm claimed that the principle of analogy (*qiyās*), with its application of discretion in legal decisions, had been abused by scholars of jurisprudence (Arnaldez, 1937). He was convinced that *ẓāhirism* was, therefore, the only option for Muslims, and the only foundation on which to base their religious faith. His theory of prophecy of women, delineated in the works written after his adoption of *ẓāhirism*, was partly treated in the prism of that outlook.

Ibn Ḥazm's theory of the prophecy of women

It is fair to state that up until his time Ibn Ḥazm's discussion of the prophecy of women remained unmatched. This is in spite of the fact that some classical Muslim commentators on the Qur'ān had also touched, cursorily, upon the same subject. For what is obvious from their treatments of the topic is that it held less interest for them than it did for Ibn Ḥazm. To understand Ibn Ḥazm's theory of the prophecy of women, however, it is instructive to first establish his concept of prophecy.

His concept of prophecy

Ibn Ḥazm believes implicitly in the necessity of prophethood. In his *al-Muḥallā bi-al-Āthār,* he cites the tenets that every Muslim must hold, without which one cannot be a Muslim. One of them is "that prophethood is true." To substantiate this statement, he relies on the existence of real people who claimed prophethood over many generations, and who were backed by miracles (*mu'jizāt*). Ibn Ḥazm returns to the basic fact that to learn about previous generations, one must rely on some form of account. If the accounts are successive (*mutawātir*), they must be regarded as authentic. Therefore, the existence of prophets, known through an unbroken chain of successive narrations by many trustworthy narrators, must be a proven fact (Ibn Ḥazm, 1988, vol. 1, p. 26). Unlike other scholars who justify prophethood by looking at peoples' need and their inability to know the truth on their own, Ibn Ḥazm, without indulging

in all that, relies on the fact that people have claimed prophethood, and that prophets really existed (Ibn Ḥazm, 1988, vol. 1, p. 26). He defines prophecy as:

> God's choosing of a man or a woman and teaching them what they have not learnt through an angel, or through some kind of power put in their souls, which is beyond the power of creatures, and supported by miracles (Ibn Ḥazm, 1926, vol. 1, p. 40).

This is a succinct definition inspired by a literalist tendency, and although it may not be unprecedented, its uniqueness lies in how he acknowledges that both women and men could be God's prophets. According to this definition, Ibn Ḥazm's concept of prophecy is based solely on the occurrence and reception of God's revelation. Although the revelation must include information about something unknown to the person, Ibn Ḥazm seems to ignore the content of that revelation in determining whether or not one is a prophet. What is more important according to this posture, is the authenticity of the revelation.

Not only would the majority of scholars disagree with Ibn Ḥazm restricting prophecy to reception of revelation alone (Ibrahim, 2009), his own explanation of prophecy involves self-contradiction. Admittedly, Ibn Ḥazm differentiates between prophecy (*nubuwwah*) and messengership (*risālah*). As a result, he defines messengership as, "God's charging of a "prophet" to warn certain people to accept his call." He adds, therefore that, "any messenger is a prophet, but not all prophets are messengers" (Ibn Ḥazm, 1926, vol. 1, p. 40).

Both definitions respectively indicate that although prophets, too, are inspired with certain information, they are not charged with the responsibility of delivering it to other people and that it is only messengers who are supposed to deliver certain messages to their people. This is why Ibn Ḥazm's explanation regarding the necessity of prophecy (*nubuwwah*, not *risālah*), in *Al-Muḥallā*, as encompassing delivery of messages, appears to be self-contradictory. He writes:

> And through the aforementioned excessive narrations, it became true that there were some people who came to their contemporaries saying that God is the creator of creations, who revealed to them and commanded them to warn their

people regarding some orders made obligatory on them (Ibn
Ḥazm, 1988, vol. 1, p. 26).

It is fair to consider this as a testimony on Ibn Ḥazm's part that
prophethood is synonymous with messengership (in terms of message
delivery) even though that may not have been his intention. Yet, Ibn
Ḥazm strongly believes that prophecy occurs as soon as authentic
inspiration from God is involved (Ibn Ḥazm, 1985, vol. 5, p. 119.), and
that it is different from messengership which has to include delivery
of messages. On this basis, he constructs his theory of prophecy of
women.

His approaches and conclusions

Ibn Ḥazm discussed the subject of "prophecy of women" in both his *al-
Fiṣal* and *al-Uṣūl*, where he mentioned four women who were prophets.
They were the mothers of the prophets Isḥāq (Isaac), Mūsā, and 'Īsā, as
well as the wife of Fir'awn (Pharaoh Ramses II). Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī
claims that Ibn Ḥazm believes in the prophecy of six women, including,
Hājar, the mother of Prophet Ismā'īl (Ishmael), and Ḥawwā' (Eve), the
wife of Ādam (Ibn Ḥajar, 1980, vol. 6, p. 473).

    In *al-Fiṣal*, Ibn Ḥazm states that he was aware of no serious debate
over this subject, till his day in Cordoba. However, Maribel Fierro
(2002) suggests that not only were there scholars arguing on both sides
of the debate in Andalusia, but that it may have become a serious discord
in the Cordovan society in the late tenth to early eleventh centuries
when Ibn Ḥazm was still young. Fierro's example of a scholar in favour
of prophecy of women in Andalusia was Abū Bakr Muhammad ibn
Mawhab al-Tujībī al-Qabrī (d. 405/1015), and an opposing scholar was
Abū Muhammad 'Abd Allāh ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd
Allāh ibn Ja'far al-Aṣīlī (d. 391/1001) (Fierro, 2002, p. 184).

    Ibn Ḥazm begins his explanation by reviewing the arguments of
unnamed scholars who reject the prophecy of women, and pointing to
their reliance on the verse which says, "and We sent not before you any
but men (*rijālan*) unto whom We revealed" (Ibn Ḥazm, 1985, vol. 5, p.
119). This verse occurred almost verbatim in three places in the Qur'ān
(12:109; 16:43; 21:7). The verse is important for the case of Ibn Ḥazm
because since he is a *ẓāhirī,* he should be loyal to his stand and accept
this verse verbatim without any interpretation.

Citing these verses in support of their arguments and using them to debar women from messengership, the opponents of the prophecy of women among the classical exegetes include Muhammad Ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 459/1067), (al-Ṭūsī, 1957), and Muhammad Ibn 'Umar Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) (al-Rāzī, 1980). But before them, the Mu'tazilite exegete al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār (d.1025) had argued against prophecy of women relying on a different verse, 3:42 that, nonetheless, speaks of the elevated status of Maryam (*Tanzīh, n.d.,* p. 64). For his part, the Shī'ite exegete al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabarsī (d. 547-8/1153-4) only quotes al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's (d. 109-10/728-9) claim that there was no woman prophet (al-Ṭabarsī, 1957). Other classical exegetes who rejected the prophecy of women are 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar al-Bayḍāwī (d. 684/1286) (al-Bayḍāwī, 1968) and Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) (Ibn Kathīr, 1987).

Ibn Ḥazm insists, however, that the use of these verses to exclude the possibility that women were prophets is out of place, because the verses, to him, refer to messengership, while the subject under discussion is prophecy. On this score, he is perfectly right, for the opponents of the prophecy of women either misconstrued these verses or applied them erroneously.

One indication of this error is the verses' occasion of revelation, known as "*sabab al-nuzūl.*" In his *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*, al-Wāḥidī (d. 467/1075-6) writes that this verse was revealed at a point when those who doubted the messengership of Muhammad claimed that, had God wanted to send a messenger, He would have sent an angel. Consequently, God sent down the verse saying, "and We sent not before you any but "men" unto whom We revealed" (al-Wāḥidī, 1984, p. 160).

It is therefore reasonable to argue that by "men" (*rijālan*), the Qur'ān intended "human beings" as opposed to "angels," proposed by the sceptics and rejecters. Although possible, the likelihood that the Qur'ān actually intended "men" as opposed to "women" is remote and not supported by the occasion of the revelation. This is simply because the doubters did not propose "women" – in the first place – to warrant the affirmation of "men," having been sent. Instead, they proposed "angels" which would warrant the Qur'ān countering that with "human being" but only using "*rijālan.*" Therefore, construing *rijālan* as human beings removes a key premise behind the rejection of the prophecy of

women; after all, women are also human beings. So Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's use of these verses to conclude that God has never sent a woman as a prophet is methodologically out of sync (al-Rāzī, 1980, vol. 8, p. 43), even though his conclusion may ultimately be right, according to the majority of scholars.

Another indication of the error is that *rijālan* does not necessarily have to retain its literal meaning of "men" in this passage. The Qur'ān has used the term to signify different things such as angels (7:46), husbands (2:228; 4:34), and of course, men (4:1; 33:40). Ibn al-Jawzī mentions that *rijāl* is employed in the Qur'ān in eleven senses and cites Qur'ān, 21:7 as an example where it means "messengers" and not "men" (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1984, pp. 326-328). Based on this possibility, it is rather incorrect to use these verses to reject the prophecy of women.

However, while Ibn Ḥazm is correct in rejecting his opponents' use of the verses, his own literal conclusion is not based on a strong argument. His literal approach led him to neglect other significant determining factors like the "content of the revelation." Also, the distinction between the terms "prophet" and "messenger," though popular among Muslims, is a tenuous one. Indeed, both terms, according to the Qur'ān, refer essentially to the same category of people, rendering incorrect the popular concept of distinguishing between them (Ibrahim, 2009).

Playing an important role in the debate, the concept of distinction between "prophet" and "messenger" is very popular among Muslim scholars. Almost all medieval scholars (al-Māwardī, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, Ibn Taymiyyah, etc.) who discussed prophethood have, in various ways and degrees, touched upon it. Al-Māwardī (d. 449/1058) presents sharply diverse opinions from scholars as to whether or not there are differences between messengers and prophets. The opinions may be consolidated into the following categories of definitions of prophets and messengers: 1. "A messenger is someone to whom an Angel came with a revelation [about messengership]; and a prophet is someone who received inspiration through his sleep." 2. "A messenger is someone who is sent to a people; and a prophet is a transmitter who is not sent to the people." 3. "A messenger is someone who comes [with a book] as a beginner in laying down laws and rules; and a prophet is

someone who maintains the laws of other [messengers] (al-Māwardī, 1971, p. 38).

However, recent scholarship has questioned the veracity of the distinction between these terms and revealed how they have no Qur'ānic support. After reviewing the available Muslim and non-Muslim studies, Zakyi Ibrahim (2009) has freshly investigated the issue from the Qur'ānic perspective. He identified the purpose of revelation to prophets and messengers, the question of both being sent, and the provision of Book/Scripture as specific components on which the concept or definitions may be credibly based. He demonstrated (with Qur'ānic verses on each component for both prophets and messengers) that prophets and messengers are one and the same group of people, and that the Qur'ān uses both terms interchangeably intending the same people.

Looking for the "purpose of revelation" as an illustration without reference to all the commentaries (Ibrahim, 2009, pp. 29-34), one may take the following verse about prophets, "Mankind were one community and Allāh sent *prophets (nabiyyīn)* with glad tidings and warnings, and with them He sent down the Scripture/Book in truth to judge between people in matters wherein they differed" (Qur'ān, 2:213), and compare it to this verse on messengers, "And We send not the *messengers (mursalīn)* but as givers of glad tidings and as warners…" (Qur'ān, 6:48; 18:56). Together, the Qur'ān, 4:163-165 arguably make the strongest case that it does not acknowledge the distinction between prophets and messengers, but uses them interchangeably for the same group of people, where "*nabiyyīn*" and "*rusul*" are both employed.[3] Because of these recent studies, the current study concludes that there is no strong proof for construing messengers as a distinct group of people from prophets in the Qur'ānic usage, and that all theories on that accord must be disregarded. However, taking Qur'ān 21:7 at face value (mistakenly, according to the aforementioned new understanding), i.e., that women were excluded from the office of messengers, Ibn Ḥazm concedes that, "nobody disputes that, in fact, no one claims that God has sent a woman [as a messenger]." He therefore proceeds to explain his theory of the prophecy of women, using at least four approaches as identified in the following Figure:
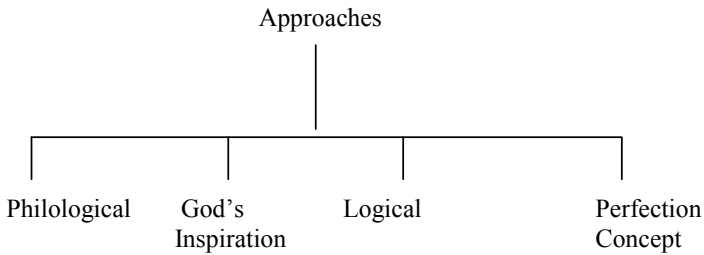
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                          Approaches
                              |
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      ┌───────────────┬───────────────┬───────────────────┐
      │               │               │                   │
 Philological      God's          Logical            Perfection
                 Inspiration                           Concept
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Figure I: Ibn Ḥazm's approaches to the theory of women's prophecy

Philological

Ibn Ḥazm's construction of the theory of the prophecy of women is based largely on the word "prophecy" (*nubuwwah*). In *al-Fiṣal*, he writes:

> The issue is prophethood and not messengership. It is therefore necessary to seek the truth by looking at the meaning of the term "*nubuwwah*" in the language with which God has addressed us.[4] And we have found that it is derived from *inbā'* and *i'lām* (informing). Therefore, any person whom God informs about what is to happen before it does, or to whom He reveals information regarding anything, is, without a doubt, a prophet (Ibn Ḥazm, 1985, vol. 5, p 119).

According to a namesake and a contemporary of Ibn Ḥazm in the Muslim East, 'Alī al-Māwardī (d. 449-1058), "*nubuwwah*" in the Arabic language has two possible roots; having been derived either from news and information (*inbā'*), or from elevation and raising (*nabwah*) (al-Māwardī, 1971, p 38). However, Muhammad 'Alī al-Tahānawī (fl. 1157/1745) suggests a third root, that of "road" (*naby*) (al-Tahānawī 1996, p. 1681). Ibn Ḥazm, while ignoring the latter two, conveniently focuses on the former.

It is characteristic of Ibn Ḥazm to approach the matter based on his literalist (*ẓāhirī*) tendency by searching for the literal meaning of *nubuwwah*. He also offers a logical argument if the philological approach is to be considered exclusively in the quest for the theory of the prophecy of women. However, he ignores the important element of *ẓāhirism* that literal understanding must be in keeping with the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Since "seeking the truth is imperative" as Ibn Ḥazm declares, looking into the Qur'ān would have provided him with the

"right basis" on which to construct his theory of the prophecy of women. In one of his poems describing his methodology of *ẓāhirism*, Ibn Ḥazm writes:

> - If you do not find a text regarding a ruling, then…
>   - seek it by gathering texts, such that you will be guided.
>   (Maḥjūbī, 2000, p. 111)

Hence, the appropriate approach would be to identify the Qur'ānic concept of prophecy, not simply its philological implication. If there is no text precisely identifying what it is, then it becomes imperative to search and "gather texts" that would lead to what the Qur'ān intends by prophecy.

In Ibn Ḥazm's philological argument, God's informing human is crucial. This is technically rendered as "*waḥy*" (revelation and inspiration). As a result, Ibn Ḥazm tactfully, and correctly, tries to explain what this kind of inspiration is. He does that by first pointing out in five points what it is not. Firstly, he explains the kind of inspiration a person receives from God and which transforms him into a prophet is not of the instinctive and natural kind. Clearly, Ibn Ḥazm is right in arguing that even though God did inspire the bees (in Qur'ān, 16:68), that did not make them prophets.

Secondly, that the inspiration is neither of the type of doubt and uncertainty (*ẓann*), nor of imagination (*tawahhum*), that only occur to the insane. Thirdly, that it is not the type of prediction, divination and soothsaying (*kahānah*) in which devils may be engaged, as in Qur'ān 6:112. The fourth is that it is not the type gained through astrology, since that can be learnt and studied. And lastly, it is not of the sort that derives from a dream in which one cannot be sure if it is true or false (Ibn Ḥazm, 1985, 5, pp. 119-120). It is true that the term "*waḥy*" has been used in the Qur'ān and in senses not intended to convey inspiration, let alone prophecy. According to Ibn al-Jawzī, commentators on the Qur'ān have identified seven different ways in which the Qur'ān used "*waḥy*": (i) sending of a messenger (*irsāl*, 4:163; 6:19); (ii) signal (*ishārah*, 19:11); (iii) inspiration (*ilhām,* 16:68); (iv) command (*amr*, 99:5); (v) speech (*qawl*, 53:10); (vi) notification through dream (42:51); and (vii) notification through whispering (*waswasah*, 6:121) (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1984, pp. 621-622). Therefore, Ibn Ḥazm is correct in excluding certain instances where the term *waḥy* occurs, and where it may not yet

be understood as prophecy. Although the types Ibn Ḥazm highlighted would rightly be agreed upon as not true revelations, some of them border on sheer arbitrariness. What seems to be urgently lacking is a strong conceptual basis on which he isolated these types. The significance of such conceptualisation is to garner universal confidence in rejecting them and reduce the potential of disagreements, especially ones that would equally be based on arbitrary scholarly opinions.

In essence, Ibn Ḥazm believes that the type of inspiration that one receives when one becomes a prophet is unlike those he mentioned above. Rather, it is the kind in which:

> God intends to inform the inspired person about what the latter is being taught, such that it [information] would become a fact and realistic to the inspired person, and would be outside the aforementioned forms (Ibn Ḥazm, 1985, vol. 5, pp. 119-120).

The inspired person would eventually become conscious of the information with as much certainty as if he/she had acquired it through his/her senses (ḥawās) and his/her perceptive intellect.

The media through which this authentic form of inspiration is conveyed are two. God will either send an angel to the inspired person with the information, or communicate it directly to his soul without an intermediary. Moreover, the Qur'ān speaks of three modes of God's interaction with human beings. These, as Ibrahim pointed out in his *Models of Communication in the Qur'ān: Divine-Human Interaction* (Ibrahim, 2005), are contained in the following Qur'ānic verse:

> It is not proper that Allah should speak to a human being unless by revelation, or from behind a veil, or He sends a messenger to reveal what He wills by His leave. Verily, He is Most High, Most Wise (Qur'ān, 42:51).

This verse identifies, in addition to the above-mentioned two modes of God's communication, a "behind a veil" mode. This happens when God speaks to someone who hears Him without actually seeing Him. The only example of such an occurrence in the Qur'ān (20:11- 47; 7:143-144) and cited by exegetes is that which took place between God and Mūsā (Ibn 'Āshūr, 1984, vol. 25, pp. 143). Ibn Ḥazm is correct to cite only the two modes; particularly when a prophetic tradition on the authority of 'Ā'ishah (Muhammad's wife), too, describes them as such (al-Zabīdī, 1986).

If the philological approach is considered exclusively, and there is a strong proof that God did inspire certain women, then they must have been prophets. This is Ibn Ḥazm's argument. However, this approach, in and of itself, is incomplete, and must therefore be considered in light of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah to have any validity in Islamic discourse.

Proof of God's inspiration

Another approach Ibn Ḥazm adopted to prove the prophecy of women was to try to show that God did inspire women. Hence, he expends much effort in trying to demonstrate this fact. He writes, "indeed, the Qurʾān has come [with the information] that God has sent angels to certain women, who informed them about true revelation from God" (Ibn Ḥazm, 1985, vol. 5, p. 120). Ibn Ḥazm sought to establish the occurrence of God's inspiration to a woman by citing God's revelation to Sārah (Sarah), the mother of Isḥāq, wife of Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (Qurʾān, 11:71-73). This was a communication from God to the mother of Isḥāq, through the angels. Based on Ibn Ḥazm's concept of prophecy, she was, without a doubt, a prophet.

The message and the content of the inspiration are very important in any debate regarding prophecy. It can be said that to determine prophecy, neither the source of the information (in this case, God), nor the medium (usually, an angel), are as important as the message. After all, if there is proof that God inspired someone (and he does it with some people), this alone does not make him a prophet. One could argue that God may inspire people for any number of reasons, without necessarily entrusting them with prophecy. This can occur to anyone at any time, and can take the form of a dream or inspiration confided in the heart of a believer (Ibrahim, 2005).

Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. 501/1108) in his *al-Mufradāt*, cites a *ḥadīth* that insists on the fact that, "revelation has stopped, and what is left of prophecies are a believer's dream, inspiration and subservience" (al-Iṣfahānī, 1961, p. 516). Similarly, according to Abū Hurayrah, the prophet said, "there is nothing left in prophethood except prophecies or glad tidings (*mubashshirāt*)." They asked, "what are the prophecies?" He said, "good dreams" (Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, 1980, vol. 12, p. 352). This is an indication that a "good dream" especially when it comes to pass, may be construed as an inspiration from God to an ordinary person. Yet, it could not make the recipient a prophet.

According to the Qur'ān, the message that the angels delivered to Sārah was glad tidings regarding her unborn baby boy, Isḥāq, and grandson, Yaʿqūb (Jacob) (Qur'ān, 11:71). Briefly, the incident leading to Sārah's reception of the message from the angels is that the latter (in the form of humans) were sent to Ibrāhīm to give him glad tidings (Qur'ān, 11:69) on their way to destroy the people of Lūṭ. Upon hearing what the angels said to Ibrāhīm, Sārah laughed. At that point, the angels gave her the glad tidings consisting of information about her unborn son, Isḥāq, and grandson, Yaʿqūb.

This episode has all the elements needed to substantiate the bestowal by God of inspiration on human beings (here personified by Sārah), which is Ibn Ḥazm's prime object. Hence, he concludes, "and it is absolutely (*al-battah*) impossible that this kind of communication from an angel could be directed to anyone but a prophet" (Ibn Ḥazm, 1985, vol. 5, p. 120). However, the message was insufficient to establish Sārah's prophecy, for in order to qualify as such, the message imparted would have had to include information in a form of an admonishment and/or warning, to be delivered to certain people. This is what is referred to as, "the purpose of the prophetic mission."

There is another side to the debate. Historically, any prophet would have to claim to be one, or at least claim to bring certain people an important message from God (Qur'ān: 7:59-63; 7:65-68; 7:73-79; 7:85-94; 7:103-105). ʿAlī al-Māwardī (d. 449/1058) has raised this point as one of the three conditions (*shurūṭ*) of prophecy (al-Māwardī, 1971). Thus even if a miracle – such as communicating with angels – is sufficiently associated with a particular human being, this cannot simply make that person a prophet without him actually claiming to be one. And there is no evidence for such a claim on the part of Sārah.

The argument is only critical of Ibn Ḥazm's approach, and therefore of his conclusion. Needless to say the communication that took place between Sārah and the angels undoubtedly indicates her honoured and elevated status before God; a status that would culminate in her giving birth to Isḥāq, a recognised prophet whose offspring came to include several prophets in turn.

Next, Ibn Ḥazm moves on to prove God's inspiration of Maryam, the mother of ʿĪsā, and that Maryam was also a prophet because God sent the angel Jibrīl (Gabriel) to her with an inspiration. The Qur'ān states:

> She placed a screen from them; then We sent to her our Spirit
> (Gabriel), and he appeared before her in the form of a man
> in all respects. She said: 'Verily! I seek refuge with the Most
> Gracious from you, if you fear Allah.' He said: 'I am only a
> messenger from your Lord, (to announce) to you the gift of a
> righteous son (Qur'ān, 19:17-19).

Based on these verses, Ibn Ḥazm concludes that, "this is a true prophecy
via a true inspiration and a message from God to her" (Ibn Ḥazm, 1985,
vol. 5, p. 120).

Contrary to the approaches of some Qur'ānic commentators, Ibn
Ḥazm did not argue for the prophecy of Maryam on the basis of the
verse that points to her elevated status (3:42), even though it is clear
that he believes in it. Rather, he sought to establish the fact that God did
really inspire her. However, in his *al-Uṣūl*, Ibn Ḥazm takes a different
line of argument. There he states that because God has named Maryam
and discussed her amidst other prophets in Sūrat Maryam (Qur'ān,
19), she must have been a prophet. This is more so when the Qur'ān
concludes stories of all the prophets by stating that:

> Those were they unto whom Allah bestowed His Grace from
> among the prophets, of the offspring of Ādam, and of those
> We carried with Nūḥ, and of the offspring of Ibrāhīm and
> Israel, and from among those whom We guided and chose
> (Qur'ān, 19:58).

From this Qur'ānic conclusion, Ibn Ḥazm sees an obvious declaration
of the prophecy of Maryam.

There should be no objection to Ibn Ḥazm's first argument concerning
God's inspiration to Maryam. But the problem is whether or not it is
sufficient to pronounce her a prophet. Based on the elements expected
in prophecy as construed above, as honourable as the inspiration made
her, Maryam was not a prophet. At the same time, the fact that her story
is told amidst those of other prophets is not a compelling argument
either. As suggested by al-Rāzī (1980, vol. 8, p. 48), her case is tied to
the story of her unborn baby prophet, 'Īsā, and consequently, may be
considered as a preamble to the story of 'Īsā (where he categorically
claimed prophecy). Still, without necessarily agreeing, al-Rāzī relates
another opinion that denies the physical appearance of the Angel to
Maryam; that the communication between her and the Angel must have

taken place in the form of a, "breath in her heart and inspiration to her mind, as in the case of the mother of Mūsā" (al-Rāzī, 1980, vol. 8, p. 48). This opinion seems to ignore the obvious implication of Qur'ān 19:17 which indicates that the Angel appeared to her in the shape of a well-made human being. In addition, apart from the prophet Zakariyyāʾ (Zachariah), all the other prophets whose names are mentioned in this sūrah are categorically described as prophets or messengers (Qur'ān, 19:30; 19:41; 19:51; 19:53; 19:54; 19:56). More importantly, they all had either glad tidings or warnings to convey to their respective peoples. In other words, the purposes of their prophetic missions were to be displayed very clearly. Maryam, on the hand, despite receiving vital information, it was about her unborn son, and was prohibited, through the same inspiration, from delivering it (Qur'ān, 19:26-29). The argument here is intended to show the weakness of the suggestion that Maryam, on the basis of this passage alone, was a prophet.

One classical exegete who, two centuries later, agreed with Ibn Ḥazm on prophethood of Maryam is his countryman, Muhammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273). Relying on Qur'ān 3:42 for his analysis, his main proof for Maryam's prophecy lies in the fact that God truly inspired her through the intermediary of an angel, the same way He did to other prophets. This being the case, al-Qurṭubī contends there is indeed a Qur'ānic proof for Maryam's prophecy (al-Qurṭubī, 1967). Furthermore, al-Qurṭubī was the first scholar in this survey to claim that Maryam had a "purpose of prophetic mission;" a crucial element to prove someone's prophethood.

> Indeed, the angels related to her God's inspiration [that consists] of charging of responsibility, informing and giving glad tidings in the same manner they did to the rest of the prophets. She is therefore a prophet (al-Qurṭubī, 1967, vol. 4, p. 83).

Also from the Muslim West to agree with Ibn Ḥazm is Abū Ḥayyān Muhammad ibn Yūsuf (d. 744/1344). When interpreting 3:42, he offers several reasons explaining why the Qur'ān intimates that Maryam was chosen over all women. One of these is "her prophecy" (Abū Ḥayyān, n.d., p. 456). So far, here is where one encounters the speculation that the angels' appearance to Maryam was successive; and secondly, that she was being informed about her becoming God's messenger (*tukhāṭibuhā bi-risālat Allāh lahā*, (Abū Ḥayyān, n.d., p. 456). The implication of this

claim is that not only was Maryam a prophet by the simple fact of God's inspiration, but also, a prophet/messenger by just as clear a declaration.

The third woman whose prophecy Ibn Ḥazm strives to prove is the mother of Mūsā (Jochebed). He maintains that because God inspired her to cast her son into the river, that He will return him to her, and that He will make him a prophet, she was herself a prophet. The Qur'ān says, "When We inspired your mother with that which We inspired; saying: 'put him into the chest, and put it into the river; then the river shall cast it upon the bank" (Qur'ān, 20:38-39). A similar verse appears in Qur'ān, 28:7. These verses testify to the communication between God and the mother of Mūsā, and Ibn Ḥazm sees the confirmation of her prophecy in them, remarking, "and this is a true prophecy, no doubt about it" (Ibn Ḥazm, 1985, vol. 5, p. 120).

This inspiration is intimately linked to a certain historical event. The Fir'awn of Egypt at the time of Mūsā's birth had ordered the slaying of all male babies born to the "children of Israel" having been warned by a prophecy that one of these would eventually cause his demise and the collapse of his dynasty. So he employed women to register all pregnant women, such that no delivery of a new baby boy would pass undetected (al-Ṭabarī, 1977, vol. 1, p. 387). When Mūsā was born, the news of his birth did not reach Fir'awn thanks to divine intervention with Mūsā's mother in the form of inspiration to her.

But unlike in the case of Maryam, where the Qur'ān is clear about how the inspiration took place (through an angel), the Qur'ān simply indicates that Mūsā's mother was inspired. This is enough for Ibn Ḥazm to argue for prophecy of Mūsā's mother. Once again, although this confers on her the utmost honour, it does not meet the objective standards of what constitutes in Islam an actual prophet of God.

Logical proofs

Ibn Ḥazm also drew on logic as an approach to his theory of prophecy of women. On the surface, it may seem that his use of logic would contradict his literalist posture. But Ibn Ḥazm believes that logic was vital to any other kind of knowledge. About logic, he writes, "it is useful to the Book of God (the Qur'ān) and the sayings of His Prophet as well as formal opinions (*fityā*) regarding what is lawful and forbidden, and what is obligatory and permissible" (Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-Taqrīb,* n.d., p. 9). He

maintains that if the mother of Mūsā were not a prophet, it would have been absurd or insane on her part to cast her son into the river based on a mere dream. This raises a legitimate question about how she knew that the message was from God and therefore, that it had to be obeyed. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (1980, vol. 22, pp. 51-52) thinks she might have known this through investigation and examination (*istiqrāʼ*), and realised that adhering to the command in her dream by casting her son into the river was no more risky than delivering him into the hands of Firʻawn. Still another possibility is that she was simply empowered and driven to do so by God, who inspired her in the first place.

Simply speculating as usual, al-Rāzī lists six possibilities of how she might have received the inspiration: a) it may have been through a dream; b) as a firm and sudden determination (ʻ*azīmah jāzimah*) in her heart; c) as an inspiration (*ilhām*) in the sense of the second; d) as an information acquired from prophets of the time; e) as an information gained from previous prophets; and f) via an angel who came to her, as Jibrīl did to Maryam (al-Rāzī , 1980, vol. 22, pp. 51-52). Whatever shape the inspiration actually took, the mere fact that it occurred is sufficient proof that the mother of Mūsā was a prophet according to Ibn Ḥazm's notion of prophecy.

This logical conclusion is only correct insofar as it reinforces the true nature and authenticity of the inspiration, as well as the trust and confidence the mother of Mūsā had in its source. But to establish her prophecy, it lacks certain compelling elements, not the least of which is the purpose of prophetic mission or self-declaration to be a prophet.

Ibn Ḥazm also reasons that what the mother of Mūsā did in casting her son into the river would have been a sign of psychiatric illness had she not been a prophet. Thus he concludes, "it is evidently true that the revelation she received regarding the casting of her son into the river was equal to that of Ibrāhīm regarding sacrificing his son" (Ibn Ḥazm, 1985, vol. 5, p. 120). In other words, she was as much a prophet as Ibrāhīm.

To be sure, this comparison is not quite correct, because there is no evidence that Ibrāhīm's dream was his first inspiration, nor that it was a determining incident in establishing whether or not he was a prophet. Consequently, even though both revelations may or may not have been equal (i.e., they were somehow marked by a dream), conclusions on

their basis cannot be the same (i.e., that they both constituted prophecy). Based on the Qur'ānic concept of prophecy, Ibrāhīm's dream to sacrifice his son would not have made him a prophet, had he not been a prophet already. Therefore, the mother of Mūsā, like Ibrāhīm and the rest of the prophets, needed more than "only" inspiration from God.

Concept of perfection (al-kamāl)

Another basis of Ibn Ḥazm's theory of the prophecy of women is the concept of "perfectness" (*al-kamāl*) reserved for some women. This brings to his list of female prophets Āsiyah, the wife of Fir'awn Ramses II. Because a *ḥadīth* portrayed her as a perfect woman, Ibn Ḥazm concludes that she must have been a prophet. He cites the *ḥadīth* that states, "there are many perfect men, but none among women except Maryam, the daughter of 'Imrān, and Āsiyah, the daughter of Muzāhim, wife of Fir'awn" (Ibn Ḥazm, 1985, vol. 5, p. 121).

Al-Qurṭubī, too, would later use the same *ḥadīth* and line of reasoning to argue Maryam's prophecy (al-Qurṭubī, 1967). That the perfect quality accorded these two women, coupled with the fact that every other woman falls short of them, indicates a prophetic status. Additionally, it is Ibn Ḥazm's contention that perfectness does not only make the two women prophets; it makes them the best of the female prophets as a whole. Yet the perfection that the *ḥadīth* reserves for some men is restricted to some messengers. The Qur'ān says, "those messengers! We preferred some of them to others" (Qur'ān, 2:253). Ibn Ḥazm interprets this preference as denoting perfection, and reserves it for a selected few of the messengers, including Muhammad and Ibrāhīm.

Al-Qurṭubī relates a tradition that puts Maryam among the four best women of all times. Another describes her as one of the four best women of paradise. A third categorically declares her the leader of women in paradise, followed only by Fāṭimah and Khadījah, daughter and wife of Prophet Muhammad, respectively (al-Qurṭubī, 1967). That Maryam is chosen above all women of all times is explicit in the Qur'ān (3:42) and the *ḥadīth*.

This approach of Ibn Ḥazm is problematic and, quite frankly, uncharacteristically arbitrary. Although the *ḥadīth* confirms the perfect quality of Maryam and Āsiyah, the conclusion of their prophecy is based solely on logic and speculation. And Ibn Ḥazm's general approach (i.e.,

relying on a direct textual and literal meaning) would have to reject that. This is what makes his approach here uncharacteristic. To be sure, his methodology demands that if there is a text such as the one on the perfect nature of Maryam and Āsiyah, one can only consider them "perfect" women, but cannot deduce anything else such as their "prophecy" from it, except on the basis of additional texts.

Furthermore, perfection has not been identified by other scholars as an indication of prophecy; although prophecy, when established by proper considerations, may indicate perfection, as far as human beings are concerned, but the reverse is not necessarily true. Finally, Ibn Ḥazm's previously cited approaches and their conclusions may be consistent with his definition of prophecy. However, this particular one is not. This raises a legitimate curiosity. In conclusion, Maryam and Āsiyah were regarded in the sight of God to so high an extent that they were set forth as best examples by the Qur'ān for all believers (66:11-12, a privilege that is unmatched by any other woman's). Yet, they did not claim to be prophets and were not, in fact, prophets.

Conclusion

Even though Ibn Ḥazm's theory of the prophecy of women seems appealing, the concept of prophecy according to the Qur'ān does not support his conclusions. And despite the fact that the women cited above (with the exception of Āsiyah) received inspiration from God, which undoubtedly confirms their elevated status in the eyes of God, the Qur'ānic concept of prophecy does not allow for their recognition as prophets. The distinct approaches that Ibn Ḥazm took in advancing his theory of the prophecy of women include philological proof, the proof of God's inspiration, logical proofs, and the concept of perfection. In these approaches, it seems Ibn Ḥazm tried to apply his own *Ẓāhirī* method, even though he was hardly successful in adhering strictly to it.

The research into the concept of the prophecy of women reveals a pattern in the responses of medieval Qur'ānic commentators, although it remains one that is difficult to explain. The evidence before us suggests that, among the classical and medieval exegetes surveyed, geographical location seems to have an impact on their willingness to acknowledge the possibility that women could have been prophets, a point that, perhaps, has something to say about attitudes towards women in general in different regions of the medieval Islamic Empire.

So far, those exegetes who shared an inclination towards rejecting the prophecy of women came from the Muslim East, beginning with al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025) and extending to al-Ṭūsī (d. 459/1067), al-Ṭabarsī (d. 547-8/1153-4), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), al-Bayḍāwī (d. 684/1286) and Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373). On the other hand, the minority who conceded the prophecy of women among the commentators surveyed came from the Muslim West, such as al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273) and Abū Ḥayyān (d. 744/1344). One would contend that Ibn Ḥazm who, though not usually considered an exegete, may have influenced the western trend towards support for the prophecy of women, albeit, he himself might have been impacted by the predominant social trends in the West. Of course, one should not ignore some of the theologians in Andalusia who rejected prophecy of women prior to Ibn Ḥazm. This is perhaps why the geographical split is hard to account for, and more sociological research would be required to substantiate that pattern. But it is worth exploring as an indication of the progress of attitudes towards women in the different regions of medieval Islam.

In conclusion, Ibn Ḥazm's theory of the prophecy of women, even though logically argued according to his literalist propensity, lacks sufficient proof. It is evidently clear that certain women in history have had the privilege and honour of receiving inspiration from God, but according to the Qurʾān, none of them was commanded to go and preach to her people, and unlike the other male prophets, none of the women claimed to be a prophet.

Endnotes

1. The following are 25 names that appeared in the Qurʾān: Ādam, Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Ismāʿīl, Isḥāq, Yaʿqūb, Dāwūd, Sulaymān, Ayyūb, Yūsuf, Mūsā, Hārūn, Zakariyyā, Yaḥyā, Idrīs, Yūnus, Hūd, Shuʿayb, Ṣaliḥ, Lūṭ, Ilyās, Alyasaʿ, Dhū al-Kifl, ʿĪsā, and Muhammad.

2. *Al-Ḥumaydī*, *Jadhwat*, vol. 2, p. 491. In verses of poetry addressed to the judge of Cordoba, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Aḥmad, Ibn Ḥazm boasts with his knowledge and acknowledges his roots that:

-I am like the sun, bright in the sky of knowledge…
-But my fault (*ʿaybī*) is having risen from the West.

-And if I were to rise from the East

-Even the robber (*nahab*) would have persevered for my lost remembrance.

3. Regarding other components: Question of sending: On prophets (Qur'ān, 43:6-7; 2:213); on messengers (Qur'ān, 30:47; 16:36). Provision of Book/ Scripture: On prophets (Qur'ān, 2:213); on messengers (Qur'ān, 57:25; 35:25). Being killed: On prophets (Qur'ān, 3:21; 2:91; 3:112); on messengers (Qur'ān, 5:70; 2:87; 3:183); Being mocked: On prophets (Qur'ān, 43:6-7); on messengers (Qur'ān, 15:10-11; 36:30).

4. In his *al-Uṣūl,* Ibn Ḥazm specified the language stating, "I mean prophecy in Arabic language." Ibn Ḥazm, *al-uṣūl*, vol. 2, p. 275.

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