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"From Light To Shadows: The Corruption Of Revelation And The Deviation Of Humanity From The Right Path"

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Abstract

Revelation, as a divine communication from the Creator to humanity, serves as the compass of moral order and spiritual truth. However, throughout history, the original clarity and purity of divine revelation have often been subject to corruption, reinterpretation, and manipulation. This corruption contributes to humanity's deviation from the righteous path, leading to moral decay, religious conflict, and existential confusion. This paper investigates the theological and philosophical dynamics that contribute to the corruption of revealed truths and the consequent spiritual deviation of humankind. Drawing from Abrahamic scriptural traditions, historical developments, and the insights of thinkers such as Augustine, Al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Taymiyyah, this study argues that the distortion of revelation is often fueled by ego, political motives, ignorance, and forgetfulness of divine guidance.

KEYWORDS: Theology, Ignorance, Humanity's deviation.

Introduction

Revelation is central to theological traditions as the divine instruction offered for the proper orientation of human life. According to the Abrahamic religions, God sent a series of revelations to guide human beings toward righteousness, justice, and eternal salvation. Yet, time and again, these revelations have been obscured, misinterpreted, or deliberately altered. This paper seeks to address two fundamental theological questions: **Why do revealed truths become corrupted?** and **What causes human beings to deviate from the divinely intended path?**

1. The Nature and Purpose of Revelation

In theological understanding, revelation serves both **epistemic** and **moral functions**. It is not merely propositional truth, but transformative communication that awakens the soul to the divine reality.

- The Bible affirms: "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path" (Psalm 119:105).
- The Qur'an describes itself as "a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of guidance and criterion" (Qur'an 2:185).

These texts underscore that revelation is meant to **illuminate the way** and cultivate a rightly ordered life. However, this purpose can be frustrated when the reception, transmission, or application of revelation becomes distorted.

2. Corruption through Human Ego and Ambition

One of the most prevalent causes of corruption is **human ego** and the desire for **power and control**. Revelation often threatens entrenched interests and challenges societal hierarchies, making it vulnerable to manipulation.

- Jesus rebuked religious leaders who distorted the Law for self-serving ends: “You nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition” (Matthew 15:6).
- In Islam, the Qur’an warns, “So woe to those who write the Book with their own hands, then say, ‘This is from Allah,’ to exchange it for a small price” (Qur’an 2:79).

Saint Augustine remarks that even within the Church, **pride and the lust for domination** have historically led to the perversion of spiritual truths (Augustine, *City of God*, XIX.12). In this context, corruption occurs not through the content of the revelation itself but through its **exploitation by fallible interpreters**.

3. The Role of Political and Sectarian Interests

Political forces have often played a decisive role in altering or selectively interpreting revelations to justify war, colonization, or ideological conformity.

- The Christianization of the Roman Empire introduced political incentives for theological uniformity, sometimes suppressing alternate interpretations.
- In Islamic history, certain rulers commissioned scholars to develop theological positions that legitimized political authority, such as the doctrine of **divine right of kings** or sectarian biases.

Ibn Taymiyyah warns that such misuse of revelation “leads people to follow scholars and rulers in contradiction to the truth” (*Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 11). The alignment of divine revelation with worldly power becomes a **perversion of its intent**, causing masses to deviate under the illusion of obedience.

4. Linguistic Misinterpretation and Philosophical Overreach

Corruption may also arise from well-meaning but **philosophically overextended or linguistically erroneous interpretations**. Revelation, expressed in human language, is susceptible to distortion when stripped of its original context.

- Al-Ghazālī criticized theologians who subordinated revelation to **Greek rationalism**, warning that excessive allegory can dissolve divine meaning (Al-Ghazālī, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*).
- Similarly, Tertullian asked, “What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?” criticizing speculative reasoning divorced from spiritual obedience.

Philosophical arrogance, in this sense, attempts to fit the infinite within finite categories, which can misrepresent the divine intention and redirect believers away from authentic praxis.

5. Spiritual Forgetfulness and Loss of Inner Receptivity

Even when revelation is preserved textually, it can become **corrupted in practice** through **forgetfulness** and **spiritual apathy**.

- The Qur'an identifies **ghaflah** (heedlessness) as a major cause of deviation: "The Day He will call you and you will respond with praise to Him, and you will think that you had not remained [in the world] except for a little while" (Qur'an 17:52).
- The Bible also laments this forgetting: "They quickly forgot His works; they did not wait for His counsel" (Psalm 106:13).

This spiritual forgetfulness disconnects the soul from the vitality of revelation, leaving only hollow ritual or superficial belief. In Kierkegaard's words, "We read God's Word and leave it unopened in our hearts" (*Purity of Heart* 87).

6. Cultural Relativism and Modern Secularism

In the modern era, **cultural relativism** and **secular ideologies** have contributed to the marginalization and reinterpretation of revelation as myth or private sentiment.

- Charles Taylor identifies this shift as part of the "disenchantment" of the world in *A Secular Age*, where religious truths are no longer considered binding or universal (Taylor 299).
- Revelation, once the foundation of civilization, is now often reduced to **subjective opinion**, rendering it powerless to direct collective moral vision.

This results in spiritual disorientation, as societies drift from unified moral frameworks toward fragmentation and moral ambiguity.

7. Consequences of Deviating from Revelation

The deviation from true revelation leads not only to individual sin but also to **societal decay** and **spiritual desolation**.

- The Qur'an warns, "And whoever turns away from My remembrance – indeed, he will have a depressed life" (Qur'an 20:124).
- Jesus laments over Jerusalem: "How often I wanted to gather your children... but you were not willing" (Matthew 23:37).

Deviating from revelation results in the **collapse of moral clarity**, **confusion about the purpose of life**, and **estrangement from the divine source**. This estrangement leads to despair, nihilism, and in extreme cases, civilizational decline.

Conclusion: The Need for Restoration and Vigilance

The corruption of revelation and the deviation of human beings from the right path is not merely a historical accident but a theological tragedy. It is a distortion caused by pride, greed, forgetfulness, intellectual arrogance, and cultural decay. To preserve the integrity of revelation, communities must embrace **spiritual humility**, **rigorous scholarship**, and **ethical vigilance**. Revelation must not only be protected from external distortion but **internalized and lived authentically**.

As the Qur'an states, "Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most upright" (17:9), and the Bible affirms, "All Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). The challenge is not the absence of revelation, but the **lack of fidelity** in receiving and embodying it.

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