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Fazlur Rahman's Approach to Quranic Revelation: An Analysis of the Psychological Dimension

Fazlur Rahman's theory of revelation represents a significant departure from the conventional "Dictation Theory," which posits the Quran as the literal, verbatim word of God, with the Prophet Muhammad serving as a passive recipient. Rahman's framework comprises three interrelated dimensions: metaphysical, psychological, and religious. The metaphysical dimension examines the nature of divine engagement with the Prophet, drawing upon philosophical insights from Farābī and Ibn Sīnā concerning revelation. The psychological dimension explores the internal process through which divine communication is experienced by the Prophet and subsequently articulated into language—a perspective influenced by Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi and Muhammad Iqbal. Finally, the religious dimension addresses the challenge of preserving the Quran's uniqueness as prophetic revelation while situating it within the context of divine communication.

This paper focuses specifically on the psychological dimension of Rahman's theory, particularly his account of the mechanism of revelation as received by "the pure heart" of the Prophet. Central to his explanation is the dynamic relationship between three key elements: "feeling," "idea," and "word." However, Rahman does not provide a detailed elaboration on how these elements interact; he merely cites Iqbal's assertion that "the idea and word both simultaneously emerge out of the womb of feeling" without further analytical clarification. Given the foundational role this relationship plays in Rahman's theory, it is imperative to elucidate the precise nature of this "emergence."

To resolve this ambiguity, this paper employs the concept of "inner speech" as developed by the American pragmatist philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. By applying Peirce's framework, the study aims to provide a clearer understanding of the cognitive and linguistic processes underlying Rahman's theory of revelation.



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