

DIVINE REVELATION AS THE SOURCE OF DIALOGUE AMONG RELIGIOUS FORMS

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Abstract: *Divine Revelation is rarely considered in its all-embracing importance. We find more often particularistic interpretations defined by certain traditions, confessions, and theoretical schools rooted in a certain historical period. Such approaches are valuable contributions as they offer a possible way to understand the world in a more-than-trivial fashion. Philosophical and theological developments based on particularistic traditions are also helpful because they show the power of genuine inspiration. Nevertheless, the problem of divine revelation cannot be confined to a particular tradition. The concept of revelation suggests that revelation as a basic concept rises above historical, cultural, and denominational forms and elevates human persons to a sphere where divine reality discloses an overarching design. In today's world, where various traditions, religious forms, and denominations are becoming interconnected, it is essential to understand divine revelation in a way that is not distorted by various particularisms. In a few published works, I have repeatedly pointed out the essential feature of divine revelation as unrestricted newness. In the following text, I will argue that this newness comes to the fore as soon as we perceive revelation properly. Focusing on newness, we can reconsider particular narratives of divine revelation from the perspective of their renewing power leading to a global community of human beings. To achieve this, I emphasize the importance of spiritual practice, such as revelatory meditation, through which people of various backgrounds can think through their understandings of divine revelation. By doing so, we can open the possibility of finding a common theoretical praxis to mend the world.*

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1. Introduction: Divine Revelation Naturalized

The present approach to divine revelation belongs to what we term the academic study of religions (Waardenburg, 1983; Segal, 2006; Mezei, 2017c). Such study, nevertheless, can be understood in several ways. First, it can be an empirical investigation of positive religious forms, such as the ones we know from historical and contemporary sources. Second, the academic study of religions can be a comparative analysis that investigates religious forms based on their historical correlations, such as for instance Buddhism's influence on early Christianity or Christianity's influence on Islam, and *vice versa*. Third, the academic study of religions is better called the study of *religion* (in the singular) because it investigates human religiosity in its natural forms. My understanding of the academic study of religions belongs to this latter approach, i.e., it is fundamentally about the natural or naturalized notion of revelation – the more exact meaning of which I will clarify below (see also Mezei, 2016, 2-22; Mezei, 2017b).

Naturalism in the sense applied here has an appropriate methodology. It begins with the supposition that human knowledge has an ultimate source. Certainly, this claim is not beyond dispute. We can argue, nevertheless, that human knowledge has various external sources, e.g., sense perceptions. There are further sources, such as inner perceptions, proprioception, and the like. Language and culture can be added to this list: they are important sources of our knowledge of reality. However, there is an interesting feature of human knowledge, i.e., its unified character. This is already present in sense perception when we perceive an object as a whole, while the perceptual data are always partial, aspectual, or fragmentary, such as one visible side of an object which is still perceived as this or that object, i.e., in the sense of the whole object. Or take the following experience which may trivially happen: We see a friend just for a few seconds as he or she turns around the corner. We straightforwardly identify the content of this optical perception with John or Mary, i.e., as the whole person, even if it is only a few sensual data given in actual perception. This example serves as a pattern of the way human knowledge works: characteristically, we do not develop our knowledge on the basis of induction but rather deductively, in which inductive procedures are also included. We begin with a clear understanding of the fact of our knowledge of ourselves and the world, while the details must be worked out and fit in with our aprioristic structures. Typically, we are aware of the fact that we know things and ourselves in a unitary fashion. We know *that* we know, as already Aristotle claimed in the *Nicomachean ethics* (Aristoteles, 1957, 1170a). We understand *that* we understand, and this understanding is always complete in principle; in detail, it can and must be corrected and complemented.

The unified character of human knowledge cannot be sufficiently explained by a plurality of sources. Perhaps there is an ultimate function that produces the unity of knowledge such as self-consciousness or the knowledge of the fundamental logical

principles (cf. Nagel, 2021; Purcell, forthcoming in 2025). But if there is such a function, it cannot be localized in a certain chunk of the human brain. We may continue thinking even if we lose half of our brain, as clinical experience proves it. This allows us to suppose that the function of unity of our knowledge belongs rather to the *mind* and not merely to the brain. The mind is not identical to the brain because the former cannot be physically localized in certain parts of the brain. In particular, the mind cannot be *reduced* to the brain, as Karl Popper and John Eccles showed many years ago (Popper & Eccles, 1977; see also Lommel, 2011; Laszlo, 2016). The function of the unity of awareness is a feature of the mind.

Interestingly, we conceive this function of our mind in what we term the ultimate source of knowledge. One may say that it is only a general presupposition which cannot be verified. However, it is necessary that there is an ultimate foundation of logic, i.e., the most basic logical principle, the principle of identity. Similarly, the principle of unity expresses that knowledge is ultimately one and – precisely as knowledge – it has a source. That is, human knowledge is never fully self-contained but is derived from certain sources; and as unified knowledge (in the sense of Aristotle) it has an ultimate source. Here comes the crucial step: This source necessarily lies beyond the mind. Were the mind its own source, precisely by understanding the mind as such we would postulate a further source that lies beyond the mind. If there is no infinite regress, as again Aristotle pointed out perhaps for the first time, then what is beyond the mind is just beyond the mind (cf. Cameron, 2023). It is not a physical or even a logical “beyond”; rather it is a “beyond” in the sense of the ultimate source of our understanding of knowledge. Natural thinking presupposes all these “beyonds”, and so it presupposes the final source of knowledge as well. In other words: We naturally postulate that there is an ultimate source of knowledge.²

My claim is that this awareness of the naturally given ultimate source of knowledge is the naturalized understanding of divine revelation. We are aware of the fact that what is naturally given is natural revelation; and that natural revelation originates in a higher instance, i.e., in divine revelation. Thus, it is naturally so that we conceive of divine revelation as the genuinely ultimate source of our knowledge. The concrete or positive forms of divine revelation – God’s law, His incarnate Word, His eternal Book etc. – are all based on this natural knowledge of revelation as the ultimate source of our knowledge. Positive versions of divine revelation, thus, postulate the natural understanding of revelation, i.e., natural revelation.³ I cannot say that

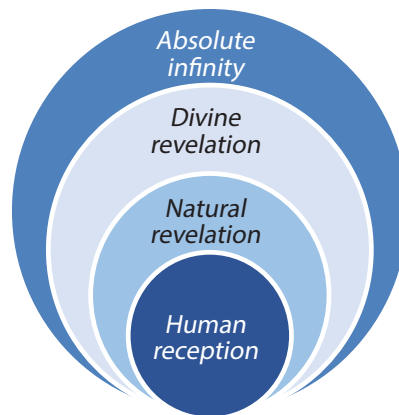
² I am aware that this argument is difficult, but the following may help: a) All knowledge is dependent on sources that do not belong to a given piece of knowledge. b) The unity of knowledge, of which we are aware in various ways, possesses the same character, i.e., it has a source not identical to the unity of knowledge. c) Therefore, there is an external source of knowledge and, beyond all particular sources (empirical, mental or logical), there is an ultimate source of knowledge. d) This ultimate source of knowledge can be called revelation in some sense. Q.E.D.

³ The point that positive forms of revelation postulate the reality of natural revelation cannot be doubted on logical basis. Human minds are not pieces of white paper onto which whatever can be written, as proposed by Plato and Locke in their respective epistemologies. Rather, human minds are pre-given structures that in a certain

historically defined positive forms of divine revelation unproblematically fit with the natural understanding of revelation; but I say that it is on the basis of natural revelation that we are capable of talking about positive forms of divine revelation, such as the ones in historical or positive religions. In other words, the human mind operates on the basis of the awareness of a unified source of knowledge – a source that makes possible the effectiveness of particular sources, such as external or inner perception, logical principles, or essential intuition. This source can be conceived of as natural revelation, i.e., as the naturalized form of absolute or divine revelation. That is to say, we are aware, even if in an inarticulate fashion, not only of the natural but at least indirectly also of the supernatural source of revelation. The natural form of revelation is nevertheless the central moment that helps us understand the entire build-up of knowledge.

I mention here that in the study of religion we methodically apply the natural notion of revelation either implicitly or explicitly. This is what makes it possible to discuss various subjects in and of religious forms. The same notion makes it possible that we discuss meaningfully both the significance of natural revelation *per se* and also its importance for positive forms of divine revelation.

The following diagram shows my understanding of the position of natural revelation between transcendental revelation and human reception.⁴



2. Radical Revelation and Natural Revelation

I offered a systematic elaboration of the concept of *radical revelation* in a few works of mine (for instance Mezei, 2017a; Mezei, forthcoming in 2024). In what follows, I want briefly to explain the relationship between natural revelation and radical revelation.

way prefigure anything that can be written on them. If there is no pre-given structure, any external impact on the mind must remain unconceivable as was pointed out among others by Husserl.

⁴This horizontal diagram is complemented by a twin diagram in a vertical perspective at the end of the present paper.

What is natural is traditionally contrasted with the supernatural. Any definition of the natural, naturalism, or anything naturalistic uses and applies this difference. Even if one denies the reality of the supernatural, one defines natural as full immanence. However, only by understanding "immanence" properly, the contradistinction to the supernatural is tacitly supposed. Moreover, while most of the representatives of historical teleology maintain the overall view of an immanentistic naturalism, this teleological naturalism presupposes again a context in which the purpose of this teleology is posited. Call it Paradise, Kingdom of God, or communism, the tacit presupposition of a supernatural context is logically given. Logically demonstrated we can say that if $a_1, a_2, a_3 \dots a_n$ is such that if a_n is given (of which a_1, a_2, a_3 are instances), then a_n is not an integral part of this series; a_n is beyond the series; it refers to the non-serial matrix of all a -s.

Here we have two options. If we accept the natural is defined by the supernatural, we necessarily suppose that there is a natural presence of the supernatural as a link between the natural and the supernatural. The other possibility is that immanentistic naturalism is defined as the proper object of unified knowledge, an object which in this sense is the source of knowledge. Both options, thus, lead to a natural understanding of divine revelation, while the first option takes this step explicitly, the second option only implicitly.

My conclusion is that we cannot dispense with the natural notion of divine revelation. This notion is hard-wired into our makeup. The only question is this: to what extent and at what level do we acknowledge the existence of this knowledge? We may define it as an ultimate presupposition, a structural background or an actively defining principle of our intellectual workings. Whatever we do, we acknowledge the relevance of divine revelation – not only epistemologically but also ontologically. For what is the ultimate horizon of knowledge necessarily refers to the ultimate horizon of being inasmuch as "truth signifies being" ("Verum significat esse rei." cf. Aquinas, 1952, I, Sed contra, 3).

The notion of radical revelation is built on this conclusion, but it is different to some extent. By using the expression of radical revelation, I actually refer to the ultimate source of divine revelation, i.e., the utmost source of revelation in the godhead. In other words, radical revelation is the ultimate source of everything ontological and epistemological, moral and eschatological: this is the *radix* or root of revelation, i.e., "radical" revelation. However, radical revelation as an expression may be used in more than one sense. It may refer to the relative origin of revelation; the natural notion of revelation is precisely such a relative source. This means that the natural notion of revelation is *naturalized* radical revelation.

However, in what follows I keep "radical revelation" as the expression of the absolute foundation of being and nothing. Being: inasmuch as revelation may reveal itself; nothing: inasmuch as revelation may withdraw itself. The dialectics of being and nothing, revealedness and non-revealedness is what constitute the genuine life of divine revelation. However, even the naturalized notion of radical revelation, reve-

lation in its natural presence, possesses something of this dialectic. For even natural revelation is such that it can show and/or hide itself. While logically speaking it is undeniable that we refer to, make use of, or apply the natural notion of revelation, there are arguments to the effect that absolute immanentism does not need a horizon of revelation. This may be true in practice in that some people actually think it so; but it cannot be so in principle, logically, or even philosophically: as I briefly argued above, even the best immanentism presupposes the source of unified knowledge, i.e., a natural notion of revelation.

The above argument, therefore, aims at showing that natural revelation is properly understood if and only if it is conceived as naturalized revelation, i.e., as revelation belonging to the overall context of divine revelation. The highest level of this context is radical revelation, i.e., the root of the revelatory complex. Thus, natural revelation can be properly conceived as naturalized radical revelation. In this way the importance of natural revelation, radical revelation, and their overall relationship are suitably articulated. In other words, we do not contrast the natural and the supernatural, natural revelation and radical revelation. On the contrary, we consider them as thoroughly interconnected, entangled, i.e., as necessarily belonging together in their complexity.

3. Natural Revelation in Culture

There are several forms of natural revelation worth considering. Culture is certainly one of these forms. By culture, I mean the arts, the sciences, political organization, social life, morality, and in general, purposefulness. This is indeed a complex terrain. However, it can be emphasized that no genuine culture is born without the living source of natural revelation. In art, this leads to the highest products of human invention; in the sciences, discoveries and an ever-deeper understanding of the world and us; in politics, just and peaceful political and social organization where fundamental natural morality rules and life is conceived as naturally meaningful: in truth, in love, in mutual solidarity, in taking care of the weak, the old, and the poor. Of course, such an ideal society has perhaps never existed on earth; yet there have been attempts to reach this ideal in various ways throughout the centuries.

In a more essential form, natural revelation in culture is profoundly eschatological. This means that human persons and their communities are aware of the finitude of their existence and of the fact that this finitude is a natural revelation of the infinite. This recognition leads to an eschatological understanding of the human situation. As a result, various achievements in culture are produced along the lines of this understanding, i.e., the radical understanding of human finitude as opposed to, contrasted with, or with reference to the realm, the symbols, the figures of infinity. Most importantly, the eschatological understanding concerns us: again and again we come to the shocking perception of our finitude which contains, either explic-

itly or implicitly, the perceptions and the expressions of the infinite. In a few cases, human personhood becomes so radically eschatological that leads to unparalleled achievements in a cultural field. “Apocalyptic personhood” is the term I have applied to this phenomenon, since in such persons the awareness of natural revelation is conceived and expressed in forms with a direct reference to radical revelation (cf. Mezei, 2017a, pp. 189-229).

The meaning of the eschatological is not merely about our own finitude. More emphatically it is about a *bias* in our finitude that radicalizes finiteness into deliberate destruction – into the destruction of what is good, meaningful, valuable, constructive, or cooperative, ultimately the destruction of being. This one-sided experience of finitude may lead to melancholy, i.e., to psychological or even physical self-destruction (cf. Mezei, 2023). However, if we face our finitude in its meaningful whole, i.e., with respect to the infinity it entails, then we become aware not only of our finitude and the possibility of its misuse but rather of the infinitely greater might of the infinite. In virtue of our facing evil, we come to understand in a more articulate fashion the infinite dimension of goodness. As is known, this meaning of the eschatological is expressed in many religious writings, imaginations, and theoretical reflections.

Even more than that, the development of our civilization, including the discoveries of the sciences, political organization, and social sensitivities can be seen in the framework of the eschatological dimension, precisely as the result of the inner logic of eschatology. This logic has the form of newness, it is, indeed, a logic of renewal. Eschatology is not primarily about the destruction of outdated structures and contents but much more about the renewal of structures and contents, i.e., an overall renewal of reality. This ultimate renewal is necessarily transcendental; it is about the truth that “God is always new” (Benedetto XVI, 2023). However, while the ultimate orientation points to transcendental renewal, it has the side-effect, as it were, of this-worldly renewal. The latter is the origin of our religious, psychological, cultural, scientific, even political renewals, renewals reflecting the overall renewal of reality. At the same time, the renewals in the secular realm, i.e., in finitude, remain always fragmentary. Scientific discoveries are regularly overwritten, social and political novelties have the dark side of destruction, and even human beings in their religious awareness must reinforce their desire to become new men as they tend to sink into disarray (cf. Tillich, 1955; Jaki, 1979).

4. Natural Revelation in History

If natural revelation is conceived, understood, and followed, it leads to a peaceful and purposeful political and social organization based on the awareness that natural revelation is the window to supernatural revelation. Yet the emphasis remains still on the ordered arrangement of political and social coexistence. Historically, this

is the mission of politics: to create unity, solidarity, and perspective not only on the level of national and cultural individuality but ecumenically or globally as well. This attitude leads to a historical awareness of certain groups of people that strive to reach an ordered, peaceful, and just coexistence of societies and individuals.

This striving becomes eschatological as soon as it faces opposing powers that try to disrupt unity, stir revolutions and wars, and attempt to create chaos with the sole purpose of misusing human and non-human resources for their own supposed benefit. It is beyond question that, in certain periods of history, such destructive powers emerge and come to the fore and even reach certain results. Some of these results are obviously chaotic; other results include an immanentistic conception of life in which it is only the subjective satisfaction that counts. The so-called welfare states of modernity are often bent over to a hedonistic and selfish conception of life that loses genuine purposefulness. Considering such biases, an eschatological understanding of history emerges which understands human existence as a struggle between good and evil powers; and history is conceived along the lines of such a struggle, which again sharpens our sensitivity of radical revelation.⁵

The main point here is that a dualistic conception of history can be understood in three basic ways. For one, history may be interpreted as a perpetual struggle without any meaning, end, or fulfilment. For two, history may be interpreted as the history of the struggle between good and evil powers, a struggle leading to the victory of goodness here and now – embodied in Hegel's absolute state or in Fukuyama's concept of the end of history in the realization of global liberalism (Fukuyama, 1992; Hegel, 2001, 121). There is however a third interpretation: the struggle and fulfilment of history is always fragmentary and refers to a transcendental dimension where absolute distinctions, relations, and fulfilments are realized at a metaphysical level. In a sense already Hegel's notion of the absolute can be interpreted in this way; other thinkers, such as Heidegger or Hans Urs von Balthasar become time and again explicit about the importance of the transcendental dimension as the *source* of our secular understandings of history (Heidegger, 1993; Balthasar, 1994, 323). In the present interpretation, it is the radical dimension of revelation that shapes, as it were, natural revelation as the basis of our understanding of history. This understanding becomes more meaningful as it moves closer to the vision of radical revelation opening up in the realm of natural revelation.

We may continue considering various aspects of history where natural revelation figures as the focus of human activity. Let it suffice to say so much for now that despite our best efforts, our immanentistic approaches to history have to face again and again the danger of misuse of such conceptions for ideological reasons or even

⁵ Such a dualistic conception of history, society, and politics is too widespread to offer specific literature on it in the present context. We certainly know the historical origins of such conceptions in ancient Zoroastrianism, Manicheism, and partially also in Christianity. The later has defined our understanding of history in various ways leading even to contemporary social movements based on theories of climate change or gender equality, movements directly indebted to the long history of metaphysical, historical, and social-political dualisms.

the collapse of historic movements attempting to realize the fulfilment of history already in this world. Perhaps it is safe to suggest that immanentistic movements in our known history has led to dramatic collapses just because they tried to understand the dimension of natural revelation as the ultimate realm. They considered their own ideology, i.e., their version of natural revelation, as fullness without any further aspect or reference.⁶ Natural revelation, however, is seriously misunderstood if it is separated from radical revelation. If natural revelation is not considered as a window to the fullness of radical revelation, if it is seen as a fullness in empirical terms in this world, then the result is unavoidably a dramatic collapse. Even worse, there are ideologies that try to use the immanentistic conception of natural revelation for this worldly profit (in terms of material riches, informal influence, political power, etc.). These ideologies appear very often as enemies of the natural understanding of natural revelation as a reference to radical revelation, a reference these ideologies want to abolish. Indeed, from time to time, we face powers that seek to destroy what is naturally good. When faced with such events, the eschatological understanding of history emerges, and we realize that we must confront the power of destruction so that we may maintain our sound relation to radical revelation (cf. Maybaum, 1965; Singh, A., 2009 [including Mezei, 2009]; Mezei, 2017a, pp. 215-229; Mezei, 2013, pp. 3-29).

5. Natural Revelation in Religious Forms

Various religious groups formulate their demand to be accepted merely on the basis of intrinsic arguments. Intrinsic arguments are such that claim the truth of their propositions internal to the content of the proposed faith. Certainly, time and again we find external arguments as well that are developed with the purpose of leading to the acknowledgment of the truth of internal propositions. In Buddhism, Islam, even in Judaism there are arguments to convince people of the truth of intrinsic arguments. In this way they presuppose a general human rationality that can accept internal arguments as true. In Christianity, an entire discipline has been developed to assist human persons to turn their attention to the intrinsic truth of faith, i.e., natural theology or theological introduction. The emphasis on the natural capacity of the human mind is strongly presupposed in traditional Christian authors and the emphatic understanding of the possibility of our natural reason to find divine truth is even formulated as a dogma (Leo XIII, 1879; John Paul II, 1998).

What is rarely seen in this context is the tremendous importance of natural revelation. Of course, there are authors who emphasize some forms of natural revelation, but their conceptions vary from the created order of the world through a supposed

⁶ The most obvious example here is the ideology of Soviet communism; however, other ideologies come close to this, such as the ideology of „manifest destiny“ of Americanism.

(and often immanentistically understood) natural law to forms of excessive rationalism where there is no place for radical revelation. Even if natural revelation is acknowledged, it is not properly understood or conceived in its full strength. What I want to emphasize here is the elementary power of natural revelation, obvious as soon as it is properly conceived. In various religious forms, natural revelation is the concrete or natural matrix in which the positive form of revelation can be grasped, nurtured, and developed. But precisely as matrix, natural revelation deserves more attention.

Natural revelation is not simply about faith in God – as it happens in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and in a few other religious forms. Natural revelation is about the ultimate source of our knowledge and being, a source more important than other sources in human life. Natural revelation is the living presupposition not only of our human existence and coexistence but of our religious being as well. Natural revelation is the mother of our religious being, as it were, a mother (*mater, matrix*) requiring deep respect and acknowledgment for her labor, care, and guidance. Natural revelation is about the entire human being and his or her religious identity; it is what educates us to fit in with a positive religious pattern of a certain sort. Intellectually, it is the guide of our mind; volitionally, it strengthens our will to find truth; emotionally, it motivates us to love religious truth with all our mind, soul, and power. Existentially, the concrete matrix of natural revelation defines our humanity; socially and politically, it guides us to consider ourselves and other human beings as belonging to one family.

Natural revelation as the concrete matrix of religious truth is very often underestimated. It is frequently seen as just a formula which possesses content merely in a positive religious form. Natural revelation, thus, would be only an empty category to be used as a logical presupposition of a certain set of some positive truths of a religious form. However, this approach to natural revelation is misguided. It is impossible to use natural revelation only as a logical form the content of which is given merely in positive religious dogmatics. On the contrary, natural revelation is the fullness out of which positive religious forms derive their own set of dogmatic truths. Natural revelation is the whole, the *Gestalt*, which is specified or particularized in a set of positive religious form. Natural revelation is a form, nevertheless, which is not fulfilled by itself; it is fulfilled if and only if it refers to its absolute source, i.e., radical revelation. In a different approach, I developed the concept of natural revelation as the *prototheological* lifeworld of our everyday experience, a lifeworld that is shaped by its inner core, the transcendental reality of radical revelation (cf. Mezei, 1997).

Finally, natural revelation is the common platform where various religious forms can find a common denominator and discuss their convergences and divergences in such a way that we may find a shared path of action for better human existence and coexistence. Natural revelation is the call to all of us to be humane to one another; to love our neighbor as ourselves; to find and share the truth of life; to prepare and open ourselves for the overarching event of the irruption of radical revelation. Nat-

ural revelation becomes eschatological when facing the destructive powers in humanity and the world; and since we live in an age when such powers have become pervasive, it is again and again natural revelation that helps us open our eyes to see the difference between good and evil, truth and falsity, the genuine closeness of radical revelation, or the propaganda of false prophets.

6. Natural Revelation as Opening and Openness

Natural revelation is the original opening in our human darkness to receive genuine light. It is natural revelation that frees us from the slavery of untruth of biased demagoguery and prepares us to receive genuine revelation, i.e., radical revelation. As an opening, natural revelation lets light enter our minds and prepares us to receive authentic truth. Indeed, without natural revelation, we are nothing; we do not even exist, as it is due to the creative power of natural revelation that there is something at all and rather not nothing.

Then again natural revelation is not only an original opening but the power to create genuine openness. In the age of human cultures reaching out to one another globally, it is inevitable to realize a certain openness to one another in all relevant senses: culturally, linguistically, nationally, in terms of civilization, traditions, and religious forms. This latter is perhaps the most important for us here and now. Various religious forms need to be aware of the power of natural revelation as a fundamental opening and the impetus to open ourselves to one another so that we understand each other properly. More than that: natural revelation is the greatest help assisting us to move ahead to reach our common platform and realize common objectives for the benefit of humanity in terms of religious, spiritual, and generally cultural dialogues.

Natural revelation is an introduction to radical revelation; it is a window that should not be closed. Inasmuch as it is open, we have a chance to catch sight of the rise of radical revelation, the revelation of freedom, love, and cooperation. Radical revelation appears very often as the concrete religious form of revelational content. However, radical revelation is more than just a certain revelational content of a positive religious form. It is the genuine newness of revelation, often described apocalyptically in various traditions. In Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam, just as in various branches of Christianity, there is an overall agreement on the importance of the apocalyptic dimension of religion. In this dimension, in this *apocalypsis*, the newness of revelation enters our dimension; indeed, radical revelation is realized in an ultimately new way. *Natural revelation* only creates the possibility to focus on this apocalyptic dimension of revelation so that we may be united in our openness to the newness of revelation.

This line of argument can be continued but perhaps so much is enough for us to see that the importance of natural revelation is beyond any justified doubt: it is not

only an original opening but also the power to realize openness, an openness not to some imaginary or ideological utopia but rather to the most real fulfillment of truth and reality, *ens et verum*.

7. Natural Revelation as Praxis

The theory of natural revelation can be developed in more detail in the framework of the academic study of religions as a philosophical introduction. However, it may not remain simply theoretical. Natural revelation is action. It is a form of life. It is existence and coexistence; it is community; it is the fundamental opening to newness. As an opening, natural revelation takes the form of an overall existential attitude, an attitude defining our entire life so that we may become more perceptive of divine revelation as absolute newness. There is a practical dimension to it which can be summarized as follows.

In our situation today, the world is on the brink of a terrible collapse. The higher our awareness of natural revelation the clearer we see this danger. The danger consists in the utmost destruction of human beings. To save the world, to save humanity requires practical actions of revelational nature. Natural revelation is an opening and an openness, and so our practice must pursue both aspects. In emphasizing the opening dimension, we help ourselves to realize the ultimate importance of recognizing revelation in our existence and coexistence. In emphasizing the openness dimension of natural revelation, we help ourselves to realize the complete newness of radical revelation. We must prepare ourselves for this newness.

First, we must prepare ourselves individually. The development of our natural awareness of revelation leads to an overall attitude to see the importance of the naturalness of revelation. This guides our thinking, our behavior, our morality, our intellectual work, and our practice as well. One may imagine this revelational attitude as a spiritual code of inner and outer, individual and communal behavior.

Second, we need to find those who are ready to develop themselves along the path of natural revelation leading to the threshold of radical revelation. What is important here is to form a community – a community of persons, because the individual aspect of a human being remains crucial even in the community of family, friends, and colleagues.

Third, we need to strengthen this coexistence as much as possible. I would not say that in our situation today the formation of a revelative community is easily achieved. Not at all. There are traditional spiritual and religious communities and for many people these communities are sufficient for their spiritual needs. From the point of view of natural revelation, however, the practical community at a certain level is indispensable. We should not hope for too much here; what is genuinely fundamental is the personal attitude; if a community is formed it is always the result of the intervention of a higher power. However, since the destructive forces in our

world are evidently taking the lead, the resulting eschatological situation forces us to find new ways to form revelatory communities.

One form of such a community is the institution. An institution of revelation may sound weird, but it is indeed needed; if it can be realized, it must be again the effect of the opening power of revelation. Prayer, meditation and above all personal attitude are here the decisive factors.

Conclusion

I have begun my argument by developing the notion of natural revelation in the framework of the academic study of religions. Natural revelation is divine revelation understood naturally or considered naturalized. As I pointed out, natural revelation is the concrete matrix that opens the possibility of reaching higher levels of divine revelation. What I term radical revelation is the living core of divine revelation.

I have also pointed out that the natural notion of revelation belongs to our epistemological makeup; it is hard-wired into our brains, yet it cannot be reduced to the physical brain. The mind as a broader concept has natural revelation as its defining ontological feature. Yet even the mind points beyond itself to radical revelation as the irruption of the infinite into our finite reality.

Natural revelation must be investigated thoroughly; it is not to be identified with rationalism or traditionalism. It is the most important factor in our existence and coexistence, and this importance is to be thoroughly acknowledged.

This acknowledgment helps us understand the opening function of natural revelation, and this function leads to the openness of revelation and thus to the reception of radical revelation, the root of all revelation in our world.

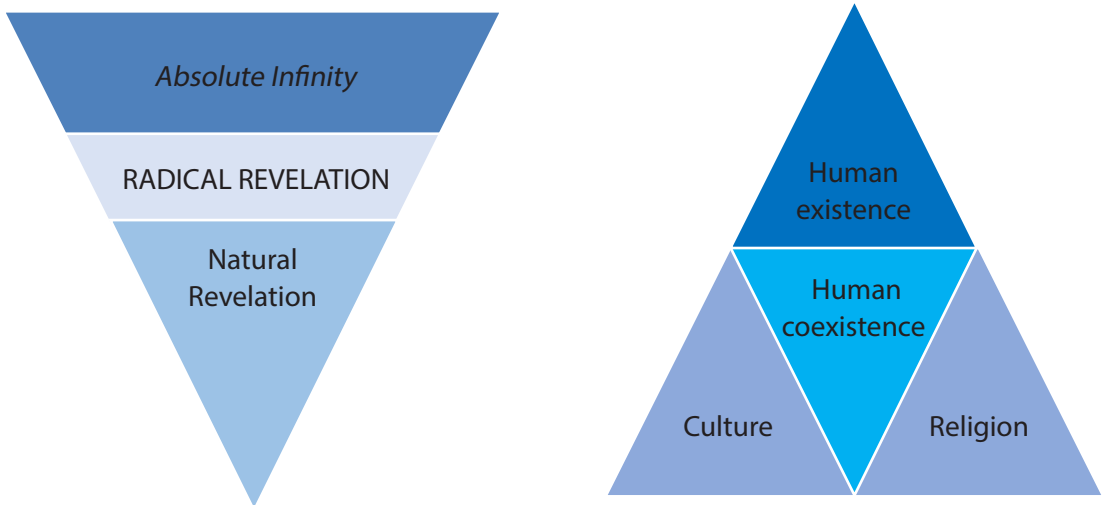
By working out the importance of natural revelation we find a common platform for discussion with different cultures, nations, and religious forms. Important in this discussion is the openness to the newness of radical revelation. The eschatological dimension present in most religious forms helps us realize the real danger we are facing today in the form of the destruction of humanity. This eschatological situation sharpens our sight to see properly the importance of natural revelation as the path to the absolute newness of radical revelation.

Finally, I mention that in most of my publications from the late 1990s I have returned again and again to the central problems of divine revelation. In my native tongue, and in English as well, I have published works focusing on this exceptionally important subject matter. It is my plan to continue my efforts to understand better divine revelation in our world today, its past, present, and future, as much as it is realistically possible.

Hans-Georg Gadamer mentioned in one of the last interviews he gave on his 100th birthday in 2000: "Die Aufgabe der Philosophie für die XXI. Jahrhundert ist der Dia-

log zwischen den Religionen.”⁷⁷ (Gadamer, 2000) I have found these words inspiring and I even expanded on them by stating that, in our age, it is not only important to have a dialogue between religions, but *a fortiori* to have a dialogue on the common ground of divine revelation, natural and supranatural; ultimately, *radical*.

The following twin diagram shows the relationship between revelation and its human reception. On the part of revelation, natural revelation is derived from radical revelation, while the latter is rooted in absolute infinity. On the part of the reception, the second diagram shows human existence as directed to the reception of revelation, while at the same time embedded in the dimensions of human coexistence and cultural-religious forms. While the diagram I used at the beginning of my argument offers a horizontal view of this relationship, the present twin diagram describes a vertical perspective of the same relationship.



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⁷⁷“The task of philosophy in the twenty-first century is the [enhancing of] the dialogue between the religions.”

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