

**MUHAMMAD'S CALL REVISITED:**  
**A Critical Approach to Muslim Tradition**

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July, 1996

A thesis submitted to  
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts.

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ISBN 0-612-19913-4

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## ABSTRACT

**Author** : Hyondo Park

**Title** : *Muhammad's Call Revisited: A Critical Approach to Muslim Tradition*

**Department** : Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University

**Degree** : Master of Arts

This thesis is an examination of Muslim traditions concerning Muḥammad's call to prophethood. Although Muḥammad's initial prophetic call is one of the most crucial events in the history of Islamic religious tradition, Muslim records of the event are too inconsistent to be reconciled. At the expense of sound source criticism, some influential modern Islamicists, like Tor Andrae and W. M. Watt, have tried to reconstruct Muḥammad's call from inconsistent *ḥadīths*. Drawing on the works of four Muslim traditionists, i.e. Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Sa'd, al-Bukhārī and al-Ṭabarī, this thesis points out that, other than the fact that Muḥammad must have gone through a fundamental religious experience, Muslim traditions do not permit a reconstruction of the historical event of Muḥammad's call; they do provide, however, evidence of the complex ways in which Muslims understood the event, suited to their religio-theological interpretation of the Qur'ānic allusions to the modes of Muḥammad's religious experiences.

## RÉSUMÉ

**Auteur** : Hyondo Park

**Titre** : *L'appel fait à Muhammad revisité: une approche critique à l'égard des traditions musulmanes*

**Département** : Institut des études islamiques, Université McGill

**Diplôme** : Maîtrise

Cette thèse constitue une étude des traditions musulmanes traitant de l'appel à la apostolat prophétique fait à Muḥammad. Bien que la révélation initiale reçue par Muḥammad soit l'un des événements les plus marquants de l'histoire des traditions religieuses islamiques, les documents musulmans qui en font état comportent des inconséquences irréconciliables. Cependant, certains grands islamistes modernes, dont Tor Andrae et W. M. Watt, ont tenté de reconstituer l'appel fait à Muḥammad à partir de divers *ḥadīths*, en faisant fi de ces inconséquences. Cette thèse se base sur l'œuvre de quatre traditionnistes musulmans, Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Sa'd, al-Bukhārī et al-Ṭabarī, pour affirmer que les traditions musulmanes, même si elles donnent à croire que Muḥammad a vécu une profonde expérience religieuse, ne permettent pas de reconstruire l'appel fait à Muḥammad à titre d'événement historique. Néanmoins, les traditions étudiées démontrent la complexité de l'entendement des Musulmans par rapport à l'événement, selon l'interprétation religieuse et théologique qu'ils prêtent aux allusions faites dans le Qur'ān aux différentes expériences religieuses vécues par Muḥammad.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

### I. Primary Arabic Sources & Their English Translations

- Al-Bukhārī *Kitāb al-Jāmi al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. Edited by Ludolf Krehl, 4 Vols., Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1892-1908.
- Guillaume Ibn Ishāq, *The Life of Muhammad*. Translated by Alfred Guillaume. London: Oxford University Press, 1955.
- Ibn Ishāq *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*. Edited by Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah*. Edited by Heinrich F. Wüstenfeld, 2 Vols., Göttingen: Minerva, 1858-60.
- Ibn Sa'd *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*. Edited by Eduard Sachau, 14 Vols., Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1905.
- Rosenthal Al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, ed. Ehsan Yar-Shater, vol. I, *General Introduction and from the Creation to the Flood*. Translated and Annotated by Franz Rosenthal. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989.
- Al-Ṭabarī *Ta'rikh al-Ṭabarī: Ta'rikh al-Rusūl wa al-Mulūk*. Edited by M. J. de Goeje et al., 15 Vols., Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1879-1901.
- Watt Al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, ed. Ehsan Yar-Shater, vol. VI, *Muḥammad at Mecca*. Translated and Annotated by W. M. Watt and M. V. McDonald. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988.

### 2. Journals and Encyclopedias

- EF<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (First Edition).
- EF<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Second Edition).
- ER *Encyclopedia of Religion*.
- BJRL *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*.
- BSOAS *Bulletin of the School of the Oriental and African Studies*.
- IJMES *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.
- JAAR *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*.
- JASB *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*.
- JRAS *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*.
- MW *Muslim World*.

## NOTES ON TRANSLATION & TRANSLITERATION

### I. Translation of the Primary Arabic Texts

For Ibn Ishāq's *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, I followed Guillaume's translation. For al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh*, I followed Watt and McDonald. The English translations of Arabic passages in Ibn Sa'd's *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr* and those in al-Bukhārī's *Al-Jāmi' al-Sahīh* are my own, unless otherwise stated in the footnotes. In rendering translations, when similar phrases are found in Watt and McDonald's translation of al-Ṭabarī, I have followed their translation.

The English translation of the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call are given in the first chapter. The Arabic texts are attached in the appendix.

### II. Translation and Numbering of the Qur'ānic Verses

For the Qur'ānic references, I have used the verse numbering of both the standard Egyptian edition of the Qur'ān (*The Royal Edition*, Cairo, 1934/1925) and G. Flügel's edition (*Corani Textus Arabicus*, Lipsiae, 1834). When the numerations differ from each other, that of Flügel's edition is given in parenthesis. Unless otherwise stated in the footnotes, I have followed A. J. Arberry's English translation of the Qur'ān in his *The Koran Interpreted*, 2 Vols (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955).

### III. Transliteration

Transliteration follows the standard method used at McGill's Institute of Islamic Studies. To avoid confusion, titles of works cited and quotes are left in their original forms. Proper names and historical figures have been transliterated. Place names not commonly used in English are transliterated. Common place names and terms, such as Mecca and caliph, appear in their English forms.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Professor Donald P. Little, for his insightful scholarly comments, encouragement and patience. Without him, I would not have been able to develop and refine my ideas on this topic and this thesis would not have been written. I would also like to thank Professors Charles J. Adams, Issa J. Boullata, Wael B. Hallaq, and A. Üner Turgay for sincerely supporting my study of Islam at the Institute.

A number of my friends at McGill have helped me with the writing of this thesis and I would like to extend my sincere thanks to them. I am indebted to Paula Jolin for reasons too numerous to mention here. She not only made valuable comments on the entire manuscript as it developed, but also willingly corrected my English. Jung-Ho Kim and Kyun-Il Rah took every effort to print this thesis, and Alexandra Boivin translated the abstract into French. Yusuf Rahman and Yasmine Badr assisted me with the translation of difficult Arabic passages, and Alan Guenther brought the Armenian and Syriac sources to my attention. The staff of the Islamic Studies Library, Salwa Ferahian, Steve Miller and Wayne St. Thomas, has always been assiduous in finding me important books. Others who have allowed me to enjoy studying at the Institute, so far away from my home in Korea, include AbdelAziz, Amina, Bill, Bruce, Colin, Darren, Eric, Iskandar, Mike, Mark, Richard, Sevak, Shin and Virginie. Without their friendship, the past three years in Montreal would have been as dry as a life in the desert.

I must recognize the love, sacrifice, strong support, and encouragement of my family and parents-in-law in Korea. I would like to confess to my parents, that while studying at McGill, I have come to realize how unfilial I have been as a son: I will remain more faithful and filial to you than ever before, I promise with all my love. Special thanks are due to my brother-in-law Hyon-Chang Kim and two of my sisters Hwang-Hee and Jee-In for taking good care of my parents. Grateful acknowledgement is also given to other members of my family for their unforgettable support: my grandmother, my paternal uncle Chong-Ho Park, my maternal uncle Jin-Ha Yun, my maternal aunt Suk-Kyong Kim, my in-laws Dae-Ki Min, Kyong-Ah and Sung-Woo Chong, and my cousins Woo-Mi and Woo-Jung Shin.

When I expressed my desire to pursue Islamic religious tradition, it was Professors Sung-Hae Kim and Hee-Sung Keel at Sogang University, my alma mater, in Korea, who encouraged me to study at McGill. I would like to thank them. Thanks are also extended to Professor Yang-Mo Chung and my old friends Chong-Rae Cho, In-Sang Ryu, Ji-Sup Oh, Jin-A Kang, Won-Jae Jang and Yeong Hwan Yeo, who have supported me in the past and continue to do so.

These acknowledgements would never be complete if I did not express my appreciation for the caring love and support of my wife Chong-Ah and daughter Chanhie, which has been more valuable than words can say: truly, you are my inspiration for my life.



*For Chong-Ah, Chanhie, My Parents and My Parents-in-law.*

## INTRODUCTION

If we substitute "Muhammad" for the word "Jesus," the thoughtful comments of Morton Smith will read as follows:

Trying to find the actual *Muhammad* is like trying, in atomic physics, to locate a submicroscopic particle and determine its charge. The particle cannot be seen directly, but on a photographic plate we see the lines left by the trajectories of larger particles it put in motion. By tracing these trajectories back to their common origin, and by calculating the force necessary to make the particles move as they did, we can locate and describe the invisible cause. Admittedly, history is more complex than physics; the lines connecting the original figure to the developed legends cannot be traced with mathematical accuracy; the intervention of unknown factors had to be allowed for. Consequently, results can never claim more than probability; but "probability," as Bishop Butler said, "is the very guide of life."<sup>1</sup>

For over one hundred years, enormous efforts have been made to outline a probable picture of the historical Muhammad. But unlike the search for the historical Jesus, the study of the historical Muhammad yields results that are less than satisfactory. Many reasons can be offered, but, in comparison with the search for the historical Jesus, the fundamental problem seems to lie in the Islamic "particles" themselves, that is, the sources that reveal historical evidence.<sup>2</sup> Scholars engaged in the quest for the historical

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<sup>1</sup> Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978) 6.

<sup>2</sup> F. E. Peters has made an extensive comparison between the modern study of the historical Jesus and that of Muhammad. He examines a number of ways in which historians have approached research on the historical Muhammad and highlights the differences between this research and that on the historical Jesus. See Peters, "The Quest of the Historical Muhammad," *JMES* 23 (1991): 291-315 and *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam* (Albany: State University of New York, 1994) 257-268 (Appendix). For the Western scholarship on the life of Muhammad, see also the following articles: Rudi Paret, "Recent European Research on the Life and Work of Prophet Muhammad," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 6 (1958): 81-96 ; Alfred Guillaume, "The Biography of the Prophet in Recent Research," *Islamic Quarterly* 1 (1954): 5-11 ; Maxime Rodinson, "A Critical Survey of Modern Studies on Muhammad," in *Studies on Islam*, trans. & ed. Merlin L. Swartz (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) 23-85. For a critical study of the Western historical approach to Muhammad, see James E. Royster, "The Study of Muhammad: A Survey of Approaches from the Perspective of the History and Phenomenology of Religion," *MW* 62 (1972): 49-70 ; *The Meaning of Muhammad for Muslims: A Phenomenological Study of Recurrent Images of the Prophet* (Ph.D. dissertation, The Hartford Seminary, 1970). For a Muslim review of the Western scholarship on

Jesus have access to sources with a direct or indirect bearing on the life of Jesus. Along with the biblical particles of the four Gospels, they also have non-Biblical "particles"; though meager, these are untainted by religious piety, i.e. Josephus' *Antiquities*, contemporary Greek literature, Roman histories, etc. Against these non-confessional sources, and with the help of modern archeological activities, the biblical "particles" have been examined in an effort to determine their trajectories. As a result, their common origins have been detected as the intentional editing of a certain original text, termed *Q*, behind the text of the four Gospels.<sup>1</sup> The "forces" which made the biblical "particles" move have been calculated as theological interpretations not of Jesus, but of Christ, and the invisible cause has been located and described as faith. But how about the historical Muḥammad?

Unlike the historical Jesus research, there is, in the historical Muḥammad research, no external particles against which the trajectories of Islamic particles can be scrutinized. For research on the historical Muḥammad, the only available sources are the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth*. The Qur'ān is generally recognized by non-Muslim scholars as the preaching of Muḥammad (although not without a voice of disagreement),<sup>4</sup> but it is by no means a historical work. It gives barely any historical information on Muḥammad.<sup>5</sup> Even when it does give historical information, it does not offer any

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Muḥammad, see M. Benaboud, "Orientalism on the Revelation of the Prophet: The Case of W. M. Watt, Maxime Rodinson, and D. B. McDonald," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 3 (1986): 309-326.

<sup>3</sup> *Q* is from the German *Quelle*, meaning source. This is believed to have contained sayings of Jesus without Passion or Easter tradition.

<sup>4</sup> John Wansbrough holds that the Qur'ān was compiled over a span of more than two centuries after the death of Muḥammad in the course of sectarian controversy, which means that it cannot be used as a reliable historical source. See Wansbrough, *Qur'ānic Studies: Sources and Method of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

<sup>5</sup> Michael Cook, *Muhammad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) 69-70: "Taken on its own, the Koran tells us very little about the events of Muhammad's career. It does not narrate these events, but merely refers to them; and in doing so, it has a tendency not to name names. Some do occur in

context through which a given text can be properly understood. In fact, the Qurʾānic verses are nothing but "a text without context"<sup>6</sup> and cannot yield any solid information on the historical Muḥammad without a context supplied by the *ḥadīth*, the record of the sayings and doings of Muḥammad. But the *ḥadīth* are not a reliable collection of particles against which to examine the Qurʾānic text. They were written down about one hundred fifty years after the death of Muḥammad. Worse, in many instances they appear to be merely expanded exegetical literature of the very Qurʾānic verses they purport to explain<sup>7</sup>; in addition, a considerable number of them are suspected of being later fabrications invented for the sake of legal advice in the early Muslim community.<sup>8</sup>

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contemporary contexts: four religious communities are named (Jews, Christians, Magians, and the mysterious Sabians), as are three Arabian deities (all female), three humans (of whom Muḥammad is one), two ethnic groups (Quraysh and the Romans), and nine places. Of these places, four are mentioned in military connections (Badr, Mecca, Hunayn, Yathrib), and four are connected with the sanctuary (three of them we have already met in connection with the rites of pilgrimage while the fourth is 'Bakka', said to be an alternative name for Mecca). The final place is Mount Sinai, which seems to be associated with the growing of olives. Leaving aside the ubiquitous Christians and Jews, none of these names occurs very often: Muḥammad is named four or five times (once as 'Ahmad'), the Sabians thrice, Mount Sinai twice, and the rest one each. Identifying what the Koran is talking about in a contemporary context is therefore usually impossible without interpretation ... For such interpretation we are naturally dependent mainly on tradition. Without it we could probably infer that the protagonist of the Koran was Muḥammad, that the scene of his life was in western Arabia, and that he bitterly resented the frequent dismissal of his claims to prophecy by his contemporaries. But we could not tell that the sanctuary was in Mecca, or that Muḥammad himself came from there, and we could only guess that he established himself in Yathrib. We might indeed prefer a more northerly location altogether, on the grounds that the site of God's destruction of Lot's people (i.e. Sodom) is said to be one which those addressed pass by morning and night."

<sup>6</sup> Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam*, 259.

<sup>7</sup> For a thoughtful analysis on the nature of the *ḥadīth*, see Patricia Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 203-230 (Chapter 9: The Sources). See also Cook, *Muhammad*, 61-76 (Chapter 7: The Sources).

<sup>8</sup> Since Ignaz Goldziher, Western scholarship has been sceptical of the authenticity of the *ḥadīth*: its contents and the *isnād*. According to him, a great number of *ḥadīths* were fabricated from the late 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th century. See Goldziher's brilliant argument in "On the Development of the Hadīth," the first part of his famous *Muslim Studies* vol. II, tr. S. M. Stern (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1971), 17-251. Goldziher's thesis was further pursued and expanded by Joseph Schacht, who proposed that since the imposing appearance of the *isnāds* reaching back to the Prophet in the classical collections of *ḥadīths* began to be widely used only in the middle of the 2nd/8th century, *ḥadīths* in general are fictitious, lacking any true historical value as they purport to contain. See Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950) ; "A Revaluation of Islamic Traditions," *JRAS* (1949): 143-154. For a general discussion of the early Islamic historical tradition, see R. Stephen Humphreys's thoughtful survey

Aware of the problems inherent in the sources, modern Islamicists have reacted differently to the historical Muḥammad research. Interpretations range from that of William Montgomery Watt, who has a fair degree of confidence in the Islamic sources for the historical Muḥammad,<sup>9</sup> to those of Michael Cook and Patricia Crone, who are sceptical of the possibility of any meaningful historical reconstruction of the life of Muḥammad.<sup>10</sup> No one can hope to reconcile these two extreme viewpoints.

Let us be more practical and pay attention to a specific event in the life of Muḥammad: Muḥammad's call as it is described in the Muslim sources. The Muslim sources offer a number of diverse and irreconcilable *ḥadīths* in their narrative details of Muḥammad's first prophetic call; although this is one of the most crucial events in the history of Islam, the sources do not agree on its details. For example, according to one *ḥadīth*, Muḥammad's prophetic call began with the Qur'ānic revelation of *Sūrah* 96 on Mount Ḥirā'. According to another, Muḥammad underwent an other worldly experience on his way from his retreat on Mount Ḥirā' to the bottom of the wadi, and it was *Sūrah* 74, not *Sūrah* 96, that was first revealed to him while he was terror-stricken. How reliably can we, then, reconstruct the historical event of Muḥammad's call from the inconsistent *ḥadīths*? Indeed, in trying to extract a particular historical

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in his *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry*, rev. ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1991) 69-103. See also Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1994), pp. 17-28.

<sup>9</sup> W. M. Watt's positivistic attitude towards Muslim tradition regarding Muḥammad is well expressed in the following passages: "Once the modern student is aware of the tendencies of the early historians and their sources ... it ought to be possible for him to some extent to make allowance for the distortion and to present the data in an unbiased form; and the admission of 'tendential shaping' should have as its corollary the acceptance of the general soundness of the material." (*Muḥammad at Mecca*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953, p. xiii). For Watt's positive reconstruction of the historical Muḥammad, see also *Muḥammad at Medina* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956) ; *Muḥammad: Prophet and Statesman* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

<sup>10</sup> Cook and Crone represent a modern revisionistic interpretation of Islamic tradition. See their *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

fact, one cannot but be embarrassed at the sheer contradictions and inconsistencies inherent in the sources.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, some modern Islamicists have attempted to reconstruct the event of Muḥammad's call from the various Muslim traditions.<sup>12</sup>

The Islamicists' conclusions are flawed by carelessness in methodology. In an attempt to arrive at a positive historical assumption, they reconstruct the event by singling out one *ḥadīth* as reliable or harmonizing inconsistent *ḥadīths*: they do this without offering any criteria for determining acceptable *ḥadīth*, or in light of the allusive Qurʾānic references to Muḥammad's religious experience. But the Qurʾānic verses do not offer any solid historical references to the beginning of Muḥammad's call: they merely allude to the various modes of Muḥammad's religious experiences. Nor could the various *ḥadīths* be reconciled without contradiction.

Drawing on the four earliest available Muslim sources, i.e. Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Saʿd, al-Bukhārī and al-Ṭabarī, this thesis will endeavor to show that it is not feasible to retrieve a reliable historical picture of Muḥammad's call from the Muslim sources of *ḥadīth*, as some modern Islamicists have tried to do. A critical examination of the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call will demonstrate that Muslim sources seem to reflect the complex ways in which Muslims understood the event, suited to their religio-theological interpretation of the Qurʾānic allusions to the various modes of Muḥammad's religious

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<sup>11</sup> The basic methodological differences between the traditional, or positive approach and the revisionist one are well summarized in J. Koren and Y. D. Nevo, "Methodological Approaches to Islamic Studies," *Der Islam* 98 (1991): 87-101.

<sup>12</sup> We may take some books for example: Rodinson, *Mohammed*, tr. A. Carter (London: Penguin Books, 1971) ; F. M. Denny, *Islam* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1987) and *An Introduction to Islam*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1994) ; Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life based on the Earliest Sources* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1991) ; Tor Andrae, *Mohammed: the Man and His Faith*, trans. Theophil Menzel (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960) ; Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca and Muḥammad*.

experiences.

This thesis is composed of two main chapters. The first chapter discusses the earliest available Muslim sources on the event of Muḥammad's call preserved by Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Saʿd, al-Bukhārī and al-Ṭabarī in chronological order. In order to properly understand the nature of the *ḥadīth* on Muḥammad's call, an effort will be made to analyze the ways in which information about Muḥammad's call has been presented in Muslim sources and to trace the evolution of this event in *ḥadīth* narratives. The second chapter discusses several modern Islamicists' approaches to the traditional account of Muḥammad's call: how they have evaluated the traditions and what methodological tools they have used to do this. This will show what can be learnt and unlearnt about Muḥammad's call when a scholar sets out to read and interpret history from *ḥadīths* on the event. All the Islamicists' works consulted are in the English original or translation.

## CHAPTER ONE

### SOURCES FOR MUḤAMMAD'S CALL

Prophetic *ḥadīth*, the record of the deeds and sayings of Muḥammad, was the main vehicle of Islamic religious expression in the classical period of Islamic history. Early Muslims were eager to obtain detailed information on their prophet Muḥammad for a better understanding of the true meaning of an Islamic life; early Islamic scholarship evolved out of this search for knowledge of the Prophet. Among many questions that arose about Muḥammad, textual evidence shows that the beginning of his prophethood was certainly a topic of Muslim curiosity: how did Muḥammad become a prophet? A great deal of information was proffered in the form of *ḥadīth* and eventually recorded, more or less selectively, beginning in the 8th century with Ibn Ishāq's *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*. Ibn Ishāq (d. 767 or 768) was followed by Ibn Saʿd (784-845), al-Bukhārī (810-870) and al-Ṭabarī (838?-923).

This chapter is limited to a study of the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call preserved by the above four writers. Although they functioned as mere transmitters of the *ḥadīths*, each had his own concerns and method of presenting *ḥadīth* according to a specific literary scheme. By attempting to determine which *ḥadīths* were available to the authors of the works and in what form they are found, this chapter tries to place the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call in the larger context of the works that contain them: the author's method of presentation, perception of the event, theological reflection, chronological scheme, etc. In addition, a vertical, or chronological examination of the *ḥadīths* as they are found in the above works, will be made in the hope that we may trace the evolution of the *ḥadīth* narratives on Muḥammad's call: an examination of the variations and expansion of the narration around certain narrative elements and reference to the same authority for the inconsistent *ḥadīths*.



## A. Ibn Ishāq (d. 767 or 768)

Born of a non-Arab Muslim family in Medina, Ibn Ishāq is reported to have been an assiduous scholar, collecting a great number of *ḥadīths* on the life of Muḥammad, to the extent that he was called "Prince of muḥaddiths' or even 'Commander of the Believers in ḥadīth' by men of his own generation."<sup>1</sup> He wrote his famous *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, the earliest extant biography of Muḥammad, in which the earliest accounts of Muḥammad's call are found. The book has been handed down to us in a later form, edited by Ibn Hishām (d. 834).<sup>2</sup> It originally contained three sections: *Kitāb al-Mubtada'*, *Kitāb al-Maḥath*, and *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, but Ibn Hishām omitted almost the entire first section *Kitāb al-Mubtada'* which deals with the period from Creation to pre-Islamic Arabian history.<sup>3</sup> For the first section, *Kitāb al-Mubtada'*, Ibn Ishāq used so-called *Isrā'īliyyāh* materials, i.e. biblical stories, drawn from Jews and Christians. It connects the life of Muḥammad to the Biblical scriptures. Ibn Ishāq's intention in using the biblical stories seems quite apparent; Muḥammad is the seal of the prophets whose appearance was foretold by Isaiah and whose life was the "replica of the prophets and the patriarchs, just as Islam was the restoration of the true monotheistic

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<sup>1</sup> Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, 34.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Hishām had his own principles in editing Ibn Ishāq's work. He says at the very beginning of his edited version of Ibn Ishāq's work: "God willing I shall begin this book with Ismā'īl son of Ibrāhīm and mention those of his offspring who were the ancestors of God's apostle one by one with what is known about them, taking no account of Ismā'īl's other children, for the sake of brevity, confining myself to the prophet's biography and omitting some of the things which Ibn Ishāq has recorded in this book in which there is no mention of the apostle and about which the Quran says nothing and which are not relevant to anything in this book or an explanation of it or evidence for it; poems which he quotes that no authority on poetry whom I have met knows of; things which it is disgraceful to discuss; matters which would distress certain people; and such reports as al-Bakkā'ī told me he could not accept as trustworthy --- all these things I have omitted. But God willing I shall give a full account of everything else so far as it is known and trustworthy tradition is available." (Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 3 ; Guillaume, 691).

<sup>3</sup> But since it was widely circulated and favored by Muslim traditionists such as al-Ṭabarī, it seems now possible to reconstruct it. Gordon Darnell Newby reconstructs this portion from the later works dependent on Ibn Ishāq. See *The Making of the Last Prophet: A Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muhammad* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).

worship of God."<sup>4</sup> The second section, *Kitāb al-Mabʿath*, starts with the genealogy of Muḥammad and ends with "the first fighting from his base in Medina."<sup>5</sup> The third section, *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, contains stories about the military campaigns Muḥammad was engaged in and ends with his death and burial.

Ibn Ishāq's biography of Muḥammad is by no means a product of dispassionate scholarship geared toward providing an objective description of Muḥammad's life, but rather a polemical work designed to raise Muḥammad above the Jewish and Christian prophets. It seems possible to understand his work against his historical background: Ibn Ishāq served the ʿAbbāsid regime<sup>6</sup> and lived in a world where Muslims were outnumbered by non-Muslims, i. e. Jews and Christians. Utilizing Arab legends, oral traditions from converts to Islam, biblical stories, poetry and *ḥadīth* reports, he endeavors to demonstrate that "time's course led to Islam, which embraced the prophets and holy men of Judaism and Christianity, and finally produced the regime of the ʿAbbāsid, whose empire embraced Muslims, Christians, and Jews."<sup>7</sup>

Ibn Ishāq's accounts of Muḥammad's call are placed in the second section, *Kitāb al-Mabʿath*. According to Ibn Ishāq, this event took place after Muḥammad's marriage to Khadijah and his participation in rebuilding the Kaʿbah. Before the accounts of Muḥammad's call, Ibn Ishāq writes that Muḥammad's mission as a prophet was predicted and recognized by Jewish rabbis and Christian monks who expressed their Messianic hope for Muḥammad's prophethood. Among the Arabs, four men had broken with Meccan polytheism to become the seekers of an Abrahamic monotheistic religion called *ḥanīf* before

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>5</sup> Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ishāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955) xviii.

<sup>6</sup> It is not known with certainty when Ibn Ishāq wrote this book. Later in his life, he served in the court of the caliph al-Manṣūr as a tutor for Prince al-Maḥdī. Newby holds that at that time Ibn Ishāq "seems to have completed his plan for the *Sīrah*" and that it was sponsored by the caliph, partly as an educational source book for Prince al-Maḥdī. See Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet*, 7.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

the advent of Muḥammad. A Syrian monk told one of them that their seeking for true monotheism would be finalized by a prophet sent down to Mecca.<sup>8</sup> Also, according to Ibn Ishāq's interpretation, the Bible predicts the coming of Muḥammad as a prophet.<sup>9</sup> All these narratives appear to be very similar to the biblical theme that the advent of Jesus was foretold by John the Baptist, and signify that the time was ripe for Muḥammad to appear as a prophet. In his presentation of Muḥammad's call, Ibn Ishāq combined different *ḥadīths* and unfolded them in a well-knit coherent order according to his theological belief that Muḥammad rose as a prophet to confirm God's covenant with the previous prophets. The *ḥadīths* regarding Muḥammad's call in Ibn Ishāq consist of four parts: (1) introduction; (2) Muḥammad's pre-prophetic experiences; (3) his first prophetic experience; (4) his post-prophetic experience with Gabriel, an angelic messenger, which also serves as conclusion.

The introductory part is Ibn Ishāq's own theological discourse on the nature of Muḥammad's prophethood.<sup>10</sup> Ibn Ishāq specifies that at the age of forty, Muḥammad was

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<sup>8</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 143-149 ; Guillaume, 98-103.

<sup>9</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 149-150 ; Guillaume, 103-104: "Among the things which have reached me about what Jesus the Son of Mary stated in the Gospel which he received from God for the followers of the Gospel, in applying a term to describe the apostle of God, is the following. It is extracted from what John the Apostle set down for them when he wrote the Gospel for them from the Testament of Jesus Son of Mary: 'He that hateth me hath hated the Lord. And if I had not done in their presence works which none other before me did, they had not had sin: but from now they are puffed up with pride and think that they will overcome me and also the Lord. But the word that is in the law must be fulfilled, "They hated me without a cause" (i.e. without reason). But when the Comforter has come whom God will send to you from the Lord's presence, and the spirit of truth which will have gone forth from the Lord's presence he (shall bear) witness of me and ye also, because ye have been with me from the beginning. I have spoken unto you about this that ye should not be in doubt.' The *Munahhemana* (God bless and preserve him!) in Syriac is Muhammad; in Greek he is the paraclete."

<sup>10</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 150:8-17 ; Guillaume, 104-105: "When Muhammad the apostle of God reached the age of forty God sent him in compassion to mankind, 'as an evangelist to all men.' Now God had made a covenant with every prophet whom he had sent before him that he should believe in him, testify to his truth and help him against his adversaries, and he required of them that they should transmit that to everyone who believed in them, and they carried out their obligations in that respect. God said to Muhammad, 'When God made a covenant with the prophets (He said) this is the scripture and wisdom which I have given you, afterwards an apostle will come confirming what you know that you may believe in him and help him.' He said, 'Do you accept this and take up my burden?' i.e. the burden of my agreement which I have laid upon you. They said, 'We accept it.' He answered, 'Then bear witness and I am a witness with you.' Thus God made a covenant with all the prophets that they should testify to his

sent "in compassion to mankind 'as an evangelist of all men.'" <sup>11</sup> According to him, all the prophets prior to Muḥammad had made covenants with God, knowing that Muḥammad would come to confirm their covenants; they had the burden of prophethood to testify to Muḥammad's truth, help him against his adversaries and transmit that obligation to those who believed in them among the followers of both Judaism and Christianity. The beginning of Muḥammad's prophethood finalized this divine enterprise. With this theological interpretation in mind, Ibn Ishāq unfolds the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call according to his own chronological scheme: the pre-prophetic, prophetic and post-prophetic periods. First of all, he provides two pre-prophetic experiences of Muḥammad. The first one concerned true visions (*al-Ru'ya al-Ṣādiqah*) that came to Muḥammad while he was sleeping, which Ibn Ishāq regarded as the first sign of prophethood. <sup>12</sup> No context is provided for the event; it is uncertain where it took place and whether or not Muḥammad was engaged in any religious devotion at that time. After the visionary experience, Muḥammad is said to have come to love solitude more than anything else. Another experience was a miraculous unnatural phenomenon that foretells the imminence of Muḥammad's prophethood; trees and stones recognized Muḥammad as the Apostle of Allāh when he was far afield alone. <sup>13</sup>

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truth and help him against his adversaries and they transmitted that obligation to those who believed in them among the two monotheistic religions."

<sup>11</sup> See the above note 10. The expression 'as an evangelist to all men' is from Qur'ān 34:27.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:2-5 ; Guillaume, 105: "Al-Zuhri related from 'Urwa b. Zubayr that 'Ā'isha told him that when Allah desired to honour Muḥammad and have mercy on His servants by means of him, the first sign of prophethood vouchsafed to the apostle was true visions, resembling the brightness of daybreak, which were shown to him in his sleep. And Allah, she said, made him love solitude so that he liked nothing better than to be alone."

<sup>13</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:7-14 ; Guillaume, 105: "'Abdu'l-Malik b. 'Ubaydullah b. Abū Sufyān b. al-'Alā' b. Jāriya the Ṭhaqafite who had a retentive memory related to me from a certain scholar that the apostle at the time when Allah willed to bestow His grace upon him and endow him with prophethood would go forth for his affair and journey far afield until he reached the glens of Mecca and the beds of its valleys where no house was in sight; and not a stone or tree that he passed by but would say, 'Peace unto thee, O apostle of Allah.' And the apostle would turn to his right and left and look behind him and he would see naught but trees and stones. Thus he stayed seeing and hearing so long as it pleased Allah that he should stay. Then Gabriel came to him with gift of God's grace whilst he was on Ḥirā' in the month of Ramaḍān."

By placing the two *ḥadīths* together, Ibn Ishāq seems to indicate that since true vision (*al-Ru'yā al-Ṣādiqah*) made Muḥammad love solitude, he went alone very far to the glens of Mecca and the beds of its ravine.

The two descriptions of Muḥammad's pre-prophetic experiences are followed by the accounts of his prophetic experience, composed of two main events: (1) Muḥammad's practice of *taḥannuth* and (2) the first revelation, i.e. *Sūrah* 96.<sup>14</sup> *Taḥannuth* is reported to

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<sup>14</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:16-154:5 ; Guillaume, 105-107: "Wahb b. Kaisān a client of the family of al-Zubayr told me: I heard 'Abdullah b. al-Zubayr say to 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr b. Qatāda the Laythite, 'O 'Ubayd tell us how began the prophethood which was first bestowed on the apostle when Gabriel came to him.' And 'Ubayd in my presence related to 'Abdullah and those with him as follows: The apostle would pray in seclusion on Ḥirā' every year for a month to practice *taḥannuth* as was the custom of Quraysh in heathen days. *Taḥannuth* is religious devotion. Abū Ṭālib said:

By Thaur and him who made Thabīr firm in its place

And by those going up to ascend Ḥirā' and coming down.

Wahb b. Kaisān told me that 'Ubayd said to him: Every year during that month the apostle would pray in seclusion and give food to the poor that came to him. And when he completed the month and returned from his seclusion, first of all before entering his house he would go to the Ka'ba and walk around it seven times or as often as it pleased God; then he would go back to his house until in the year when God sent him, in the month of Ramaḍān in which God willed concerning him what He willed of His grace, the apostle set forth to Ḥirā' as was his wont, and his family with him. When it was the night on which God honoured him with his mission and showed mercy on His servants thereby, Gabriel brought him the command of God. 'He came to me,' said the apostle of God, 'while I was asleep, with a coverlet of brocade whereon was some writing, and said, "Read!" I said, "What shall I read?" He pressed me with it so tightly that I thought it was death; then he let me go and said, "Read!" I said, "What shall I read?" He pressed me with it again so that I thought it was death; then he let me go and said "Read!" I said, "What shall I read?" He pressed me with it the third time so that I thought it was death and said "Read!" I said, "What then shall I read?" --- and this I said only to deliver myself from him, lest he should do the same to me again. He said: "Read in the name of thy Lord who created, Who created man of blood coagulated. Read! Thy Lord is the most beneficent, Who taught by the pen, Taught that which they knew not unto men." So I read it, and he departed from me. And I awoke from my sleep, and it was as though these words were written on my heart. When I was midway on the mountain, I heard a voice from heaven saying, "O Muhammad! thou art the apostle of God and I am Gabriel." I raised my head towards heaven to see (who was speaking), and lo, Gabriel in the form of a man with feet astride the horizon, saying, "O Muhammad! thou art the apostle of God and I am Gabriel." I stood gazing at him, moving neither forward nor backward; then I began to turn my face away from him, but towards whatever region of the sky I looked, I saw him as before. And I continued standing there, neither advancing nor turning back, until Khadija sent her messengers in search of me and they gained the high ground above Mecca and returned to her while I was standing in the same place; then he parted from me and I from him, returning to my family. And I came to Khadija and sat by her thigh and drew close to her. She said, "O Abū'l-Qāsim, where hast thou been? By God I sent my messengers in search of thee, and they reached the high ground above Mecca and returned to me." Then I told her of what I had seen; and she said, "Rejoice, O son of my uncle, and be of good heart. Verily, by Him in whose hand is Khadija's soul, I have hope that thou wilt be the prophet of this people." Then she rose and gathered her garments about her and set forth to her cousin Waraqa b. Nawfal b. Asad b. 'Abdu'l-'Uzzā b. Quṣayy, who had become a Christian and read the scriptures and

have been a Quraysh custom in *Jāhiliyyah* times and glossed as *tabarrur*,<sup>15</sup> but its exact nature is uncertain.<sup>16</sup> Muḥammad is said to have observed it every year for a month on Hīrā'. He stayed there (*yujāwiru*)<sup>17</sup> giving food to the poor and ended the practice by circumambulating the Ka'bah before returning home. When he was about to be called to prophethood, he went to Hīrā' to observe this practice with his family. This was during the month of Ramadān and apparently he was alone practicing *taḥannuth*. One night, while he was sleeping, he received the first Qur'ānic revelation of *Sūrah* 96 from the angel Gabriel. After

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learned from those that follow the Torah and the Gospel. And when she related to him what the apostle of God told her he had seen and heard, Waraqah cried, 'Holy! Holy! Verily by Him in whose hand is Waraqa's soul, if thou hast spoken to me the truth, O Khadija, there has come unto him the greatest Nāmūs who came to Moses aforetime, and lo, he is the prophet of this people. Bid him be of good heart.' So Khadija returned to the apostle of God and told him what Waraqa had said. And when the apostle of God had finished his period of seclusion and returned (to Mecca), in the first place he performed the circumambulation of the Ka'ba, as his wont. While he was doing it, Waraqa met him and said, 'O son of my brother, tell me what thou hast seen and heard.' The apostle told him, and Waraqa said, 'Surely, by Him in whose hand is Waraqa's soul, thou art the prophet of this people. Thou wilt be called a liar, and they will use thee spitefully and cast thee out and fight against thee. Verily, if I live to see that day, I will help God in such wise as He knoweth.' Then he brought his head near to him and kissed his forehead; and the apostle went to his own house."

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 152:4 ; Guillaume, 105. Ibn Hishām thinks that *taḥannuth* is synonymous with *taḥannuf*: "The Arabs say *taḥannuth* and *taḥannuf* meaning the Hanifite religion, substituting *f* for *th*, just as they say *jadhath* and *jadhaf* meaning a grave..... Abū 'Ubayda told me that the Arabs say *fumma* instead of *thumma* (Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 152 ; Guillaume, 713, n. 147)." To explain the term the Hanifite religion, it requires a thesis. Here it would suffice to say that *ḥanīf*, the singular of *ḥunafā'*, means one who follows the pure and true monotheism which preceded Judaism and Christianity. In the Qur'ān, it is used twelve times and solely connected with Abraham or 'the religion of Abraham (*millat Ibrāhīm*). In the context of the Qur'ān, the religion of Abraham as a *ḥanīf* provides a self-identification of Islam in contrast to Arabian pagan polytheism and Judaeo-Christian tradition. According to Muslim tradition, before Muḥammad was called, some Arabs were said to have been known as *ḥanīfs*, who rejected polytheism and believed in one God; they were Zaid b. 'Amr b. Nufayl in Mecca, Umayya b. Abī al-Ṣalt in Ṭā'if, Abū 'Amir al-Rāhib and Abū Qais b. al-Aslah in Medina. In the later tradition, the term *ḥanīf* often means a Muslim. In modern Western scholarship, there is a controversy concerning the historical value of the term: that is, whether or not the *ḥanīfs* were historical people. Richard Bell thinks that they were the product of Muḥammad's "unresting mind" (Bell, "Who were the Hanifs?" *MIV* 20 (1930): 124), while J. Fueck maintains that they were historical people (Fueck, "The Originality of the Arabian Prophet," in *Studies on Islam*, 86-98). For more detailed studies and references on the topic, see *EP*, v. 3, s. v. "Hanīf," by Watt ; Uri Rubin, "*Ḥanifiyya* and Ka'ba: An Inquiry into the Arabian Pre-Islamic Background of *Dīn Ibrāhīm*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 13 (1990): 85-112.

<sup>16</sup> *Taḥannuth* is hard to define. It will be discussed in the following pages.

<sup>17</sup> Guillaume translates it as "The apostle would pray in seclusion." See p. 12, n. 14.

the revelation, he went up the mountain for some unspecified reason,<sup>18</sup> where he had another religious experience, i. e. the vision of Gabriel on the horizon calling Muḥammad as the apostle of God. He returned to his family and told Khadijah about his religious experiences. Khadijah rejoiced at the news and expressed her hope that Muḥammad would become a prophet. She went to consult Waraqah, a Christian, about Muḥammad's experiences. Waraqah provided a final confirmation of Muḥammad's religious experience as the beginning of a true prophetic vocation like that experienced by Moses. Waraqah's role in this *ḥadīth* is significant. Earlier in his book, Ibn Ishāq stated that Muḥammad's call was foretold by the Jews and Christians. Now, it is finally confirmed as true prophethood by the Christian Waraqah. This fits Ibn Ishāq's theological reflection that Muḥammad came to confirm previous prophets' covenant with God.<sup>19</sup> More broadly speaking, it serves as a reminder of Ibn Ishāq's intention to place Islam above other existing religious traditions in a world where non-Muslims outnumbered the Muslim population. Waraqah also foretold the unfavorable situation that Muḥammad would have to deal with in the near future as a prophet: strong opposition from his people against his prophecy. This goes well with Ibn Ishāq's perception of prophecy; it is a burdensome affair that only strong and resolute messengers can bear by God's help and grace, for opposition from unbelievers awaits them. But Muḥammad did his job willingly in spite of opposition and maltreatment from his people, Ibn Ishāq asserts.<sup>20</sup>

Ibn Ishāq ends the traditional account of Muḥammad's call with two *ḥadīth* reports on Muḥammad's post-prophetic experience with the intermediary agent of revelation.<sup>21</sup> The

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<sup>18</sup> According to a similar *ḥadīth* alleged to have been transmitted from Ibn Ishāq in al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad went up the mountain to commit suicide for fear of his insanity. See al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5-1152:5 ; Watt, 70-73.

<sup>19</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 149-150 ; Guillaume, 103-104.

<sup>20</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 155 ; Guillaume, 111.

<sup>21</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 154:7-16 ; Guillaume, 107: "Ismā'īl b. Abū Ḥakīm, a freedman of the family of al-Zubayr, told me on Khadija's authority that she said to the apostle of God, 'O son of my uncle, are you

two *ḥadīths* served to establish that what came to Muḥammad bearing revelation was the angel Gabriel, not Satan. According to them, Khadījah wanted to examine the one who brought revelation to Muḥammad. Thus, when Muḥammad was visited by Gabriel, she was undressed, took off her veil and asked Muḥammad to sit in her lap or come inside her shift. Gabriel disappeared. This confirmed for her that Gabriel was indeed an angel.

We may extract some characteristics from Ibn Ishāq's handling of the traditions. First of all, although Ibn Ishāq carefully instills a sense of Islamic superiority over Judaism and Christianity in his description of Muḥammad's call, he is unconcerned about pagan influences on Muḥammad as shown clearly by Muḥammad's performance of the *Jāhiliyyah* custom of *taḥannuth*. Second, while Ibn Ishāq chronologically arranged *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's religious experience, i.e. pre-prophetic, prophetic and post-prophetic sequences, he did not try to reconcile a conflict between the texts. In one *ḥadīth*, Muḥammad is said to have come to love solitude after true visions, a pre-prophetic experience; in another *ḥadīth*, when he was called to prophethood, he is reported to have practiced the solitary vigil of *taḥannuth* as a Quraysh custom in *Jāhiliyyah* times. It is not clear whether Muḥammad's love of solitude after his experience of the visions was, by any means, linked to his practice of *taḥannuth*. Did he experience true visions while he was engaged in *taḥannuth*? If he did so, this contradicts the *ḥadīth* in which he practiced

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able to tell me about your visitant, when he comes to you?' He replied that he could, and she asked him to tell her when he came. So when Gabriel came to him, as he was wont, the apostle said to Khadījah, 'This is Gabriel who has just come to me.' 'Get up, O son of my uncle,' she said, 'and sit by my left thigh.' The apostle did so, and she said, 'Can you see him?' 'Yes,' he said. She said, 'Then turn round and sit on my right thigh.' He did so, and she said 'Can you see him?' When he said that he could she asked him to move and sit in her lap. When he had done this she again asked if he could see him, and when he said yes, she disclosed her form and cast aside her veil while the apostle was sitting in her lap. Then she said, 'Can you see him?' And he replied, 'No.' She said, 'O son of my uncle, rejoice and be of good heart, by God he is an angel and not a satan.'"

Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 154:16-20 ; Guillaume, 107: "I told 'Abdullah b. Hasan this story and he said, 'I heard my mother Fāṭima, daughter of Husayn, talking about this tradition from Khadījah, but as I heard it she made the apostle of God come inside her shift, and thereupon Gabriel departed, and she said to the apostle of God, "This verily is an angel and not a satan."'"



*tahannuth* as a Quraysh custom. Then, did he come to follow *tahannuth* as the Quraysh custom only after true visions made him love solitude? If Muhammad had followed the Quraysh custom, it seems more logical to think that Muhammad had true visions while he was practicing *tahannuth*. In neither case does Ibn Ishāq attempt to clarify the relationship between the two texts. Interestingly, generations later, Muhammad's experience of true vision and his practice of *tahannuth* emerged closely related in Ibn Sa'd, al-Bukhārī and al-Ṭabarī. According to them, Muhammad practiced *tahannuth* only because true visions had made him love solitude. This will be discussed later in this chapter. Third, without referring to the Qur'ān or any *ḥadīth*, Ibn Ishāq authoritatively claims that Muhammad became a prophet at the age of forty.<sup>22</sup> But he relies heavily on the Qur'ānic verses for chronological information as to the month, date and day when the event of the call took place. According to a *ḥadīth*, Muhammad was called to prophethood on an unspecified night in the month of Ramadān. Ibn Ishāq supports the claim with the three Qur'ānic verses, *Sūrah*s 2:181, 97 and 44:1-4.<sup>23</sup> Then he quotes Qur'ān 8:42:

Had you believed in God and what we sent down to Our servant on the day of decision, the day on which the two parties met.<sup>24</sup>

Ibn Ishāq interprets 'the day' as

the meeting of the apostle with the polytheists in Badr. Abū Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn told me that the apostle of God met the polytheists in Badr on the morning of Friday, the 17th of Ramadān.<sup>25</sup>

To sum up Ibn Ishāq's chronology of the event of the call, Muhammad is said to have become a prophet on the night or the morning of Friday, the seventeenth of Ramadān.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 150:8 ; Guillaume, 104-105.

<sup>23</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 155.

<sup>24</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 155.

<sup>25</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 155.

<sup>26</sup> According to Watt and McDonald, Ibn Ishāq is also attributed as saying that the first Qur'ānic revelation came on Monday, twenty-fourth of Ramadān. They think that Ibn Hishām omitted this phrase in his edited Ibn Ishāq's *Sirat Rasūl Allāh*. See al-Ṭabarī, III, 1142 ; Watt, 63, n. 82.

Finally, mention should be made of Ibn Hishām's principles in editing Ibn Ishāq's text. Since he claimed that he omitted what was not supported by the Qurʾān, he must have thought that the Qurʾān supported the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call found in his edited version of Ibn Ishāq's text, where Muḥammad experienced true vision and the first revelation while he was sleeping, received revelation through Gabriel in Ramaḍān, and saw him on the horizon. In fact, the Qurʾānic verses endorse the mode of Muḥammad's religious experience at his call in Ibn Ishāq's text. In the Qurʾān, revelation was sent down during the night in the month of Ramaḍān<sup>27</sup> through the angel Gabriel<sup>28</sup>; God shows a vision (*ruʾyā*)<sup>29</sup> and reveals His sign to Muḥammad in his sleep (*manām*)<sup>30</sup>; Muḥammad twice saw a divine being on the high horizon.<sup>31</sup> Thus it is safe to assume that at least Ibn Hishām might have considered that his edited version of Ibn Ishāq's text on Muḥammad's call conformed to the Qurʾānic mode of Muḥammad's prophetic experiences.

#### B. Ibn Saʿd (784-845)

A generation after Ibn Ishāq, *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call were collected by Ibn Saʿd in *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*. Born in Baṣrah, Ibn Saʿd is said to have travelled widely in search of *ḥadīth* and finally settled in Baghdād, where he studied genealogy under Hishām b. al-Kalbī and worked as a secretary for al-Wāqidī, learning traditions from him; thus he became known as *kātib al-Wāqidī*. It is reported that it was primarily from these two teachers that Ibn Saʿd compiled many of his scholarly works, but only three titles of his books are

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<sup>27</sup> Qurʾān 2:81.

<sup>28</sup> Qurʾān 2:97 (91).

<sup>29</sup> Qurʾān 17:60.

<sup>30</sup> Qurʾān 8:43.

<sup>31</sup> Qurʾān 81:15-25; 53:1-12.

known to us: *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, *Kitāb Akhbār al-Nabī* and *Kitāb al-Ṣaghīr*.<sup>32</sup> *Kitāb Akhbār al-Nabī* is believed to have constituted the first part of *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, which deals with the *Sīrah* of the Prophet,<sup>33</sup> while *Kitāb al-Ṣaghīr* is reported to have been an abridged edition of *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, which has not been handed down to us. Around the year 912, Aḥmad b. Maʿrūf al-Khashshāb (d. 322 / 933) combined both *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr* and *Kitāb Akhbār al-Nabī*, placing the biography of Muḥammad first, which was handed down as Ibn Saʿd's *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, through Abū ʿUmar Aḥmad b. ʿAbbas (295-382 / 907-992) and al-Jauharī (363-454 / 973-1062).<sup>34</sup> This book consists of two parts: the life of Muḥammad, and biographical information on "some 4,250 persons who, from the beginning of Islam down to the author's time, had played a role as narrators or transmitters of traditions about the Prophet's sayings and doings."<sup>35</sup>

The Prophet's biography is composed of two parts: the first portion contains the main events in the life of Muḥammad arranged in chronological order, while the second part is a *ḥadīth* collection of the deeds and sayings of Muḥammad arranged according to subject-matter, such as his manner of eating food, his dress, etc. Although Ibn Saʿd did not utilize biblical stories in the life of Muḥammad, an attempt to establish the superiority of Islam over other monotheistic traditions was undertaken: Muḥammad is the seal of the prophets and his prophethood was foretold by other religious communities, such as Christians and Jews, etc.

The *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call are found in the first part of the *Sīrah* section and consist of three parts: (1) chronology,<sup>36</sup> (2) the coming of the revelation<sup>37</sup> and (3) the first

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<sup>32</sup> S. Moinul Haq, trans. *Ibn Saʿd's Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, vol. 1 (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1976), xxi.

<sup>33</sup> *EP*<sup>1</sup>, v. 3, s. v. "Ibn Saʿd," by E. Mittwoch.

<sup>34</sup> Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, *Ḥadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development, Special Features and Criticism* (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1961) 173-174.

<sup>35</sup> *EP*<sup>2</sup>, vol. 3, s. v. "Ibn Saʿd," by J. W. Fück.

<sup>36</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 126-129.

Qur'ānic revelation and *fatrat al-wahy* (the interruption of the revelation).<sup>38</sup> In the chronological section, the *ḥadīths* attempt to answer when and why Muḥammad was called to prophethood, and which angel appeared to him. The *ḥadīths* in Ibn Sa'd seem to indicate that Muḥammad was called to prophethood on Monday, the 17th of Ramaḍān, at the age of forty. *Ḥadīths* agree that an angel appeared to Muḥammad from the beginning of his prophethood, but the identification of the angel was in some dispute; in most cases, it is identified as Gabriel, but Isrāfil is also mentioned. Muḥammad's exact mission is a concern of the traditions. Many theological interpretations are proffered: he is a mercy given to people as a gift, he has been commissioned for all mankind, and so on.<sup>39</sup> While Ibn Ishāq expresses his own theological interpretation or presents information in his own words often without providing any *isnāds*, Ibn Sa'd adheres faithfully to his method of presenting *ḥadīths* with *isnāds* and never includes any personal analysis. One may detect the voice of authority in Ibn Ishāq, and a sense of objectivity in Ibn Sa'd. This may reflect the fact that Ibn Sa'd is distinctly more like a historian "in the sense that the didactic and homiletic elements in the work of Ibn Ishāq ... are less explicit and secondary to the establishment of well-attested, consensually accepted facts."<sup>40</sup>

Following the chronological data, Ibn Sa'd presents *ḥadīths* about Muḥammad's call, starting with a *ḥadīth* which is an exegetical expansion of the Qur'ānic verse.<sup>41</sup> According to this *ḥadīth*, the angel Gabriel is closely affiliated with Muḥammad's prophethood. By placing this *ḥadīth* at the very beginning of the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call, Ibn Sa'd leads the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 129-130.

<sup>38</sup> Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 130-131. Muslim tradition holds that revelation ceased to come to Muḥammad for a while after he was called to prophethood. It is generally called "*fatrat al-wahy*" in Arabic.

<sup>39</sup> Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 127-129.

<sup>40</sup> Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, 44.

<sup>41</sup> Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 129:15-16: Muḥammad b. Ḥumayd Abū Ṣufyān al-ʿĀbdī --- Maʿmar --- Qatādah: Concerning the verse "and we confirmed him with the Holy Spirit (Qurʾān 2:87)," he (Qatādah) said: It (the Holy Spirit) means Gabriel.

reader to presume that Gabriel plays a certain important role in Muḥammad's call. Indeed, the *ḥadīth* on Muḥammad's first prophetic experience is Muḥammad's vision of Gabriel, calling to Muḥammad from the horizon. Ibn Saʿd seems to have a chronological scheme in presenting *ḥadīths* on the beginning of the revelation, for he places first a *ḥadīth* on Muḥammad's pre-prophetic experience, which is followed by three *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's experience at his call. For his pre-prophetic experience, a *ḥadīth* is presented on the authority of ʿĀʾishah: the beginning of revelation was in the form of true vision (*al-Ruʾyā al-Ṣādiqah*), after which Muḥammad came to love solitude; this led him to go to the cave of Ḥirāʾ, taking provisions with him. At Ḥirāʾ, he practiced *taḥannuth* for several nights until the truth (*al-ḥaqq*) came to him.<sup>42</sup> Then Ibn Saʿd provides a *ḥadīth* on Muḥammad's vision of the angel Gabriel. According to it, at Aḡyād Muḥammad saw Gabriel on the horizon calling him. It was his first prophetic experience. He was afraid, but Khadijah relieved him of his fear and Waraqah confirmed his mysterious experience as the beginning of his prophethood.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129:16-22: Muḥammad b. ʿUmar --- Maʿmar b. Rāshid and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh --- Al-Zuhri --- ʿUrwah --- ʿĀʾishah: The beginning of the revelation to the Apostle of Allāh was in the form of true visions (*al-ruʾyā al-ṣādiqah*). It came to him like the break of dawn (*falaq al-ṣubḥ*). He remained in that condition as long as Allāh willed. He was made to love solitude (*khawlah*). Nothing was dearer to him than that. He used to retire (*yukhlū*) to the cave of Ḥirāʾ, where he practiced *taḥannuth* for a number of nights before returning to his family. He would return to Khadijah and supply himself with provisions for a similar number of nights until the Truth (*al-ḥaqq*) came to him while he was in the cave of Ḥirāʾ.

<sup>43</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129:22-130:8: Muḥammad b. ʿUmar --- Ibrāhīm b. Ismāʿīl b. Abī Ḥabībah --- Dāwūd b. al-Ḥuṣayn --- ʿIkrimah --- Ibn ʿAbbās: When the Apostle of Allāh was at Aḡyād, he saw an angel on the horizon, with one foot crossed over the other, calling, "O Muḥammad! I am Gabriel. O Muḥammad! I am Gabriel." The Apostle of Allāh was frightened. Whenever he raised his head towards the heaven he saw him. So he returned hastily to Khadijah and told her what had happened to him. He said, "O Khadijah! By Allāh, I never hated anything so much as soothsayers, and I fear that I have become a soothsayer." She said, "O my uncle's son, do not say that! Allāh will not do that to you, for you treat your kinsfolk well, speak the truth, deliver what is entrusted to you, and your character is noble." Then she rushed to Waraqah b. Nawfal and it was the first time that she approached him. She told him what the Apostle of Allāh had told her. Waraqah said, "By Allāh, your uncle's son is truthful; this is the beginning of his prophethood and *al-Nāmūs al-Akbar* visits him. Tell him to think but good about himself."

Following this, Ibn Saʿd provides two more *ḥadīths*. They contain different texts from the above *ḥadīth* on the remarks by Muḥammad, Khadijah and Waraqah.

Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 130:8-11: ʿAffān b. Muslim --- Ḥammād b. Salamah --- Hishām b. ʿUrwah --- ʿUrwah: The Apostle of Allāh said, "O Khadijah, I see a light and hear a voice and I fear that I have become a

From Ibn Saʿd's presentation of the *ḥadīth*, we may extract three important points. First of all, Ibn Saʿd seems to show that Muḥammad's religious call was part of a recurrent pattern of prophetic experience from the time of Adam: the appearance of Gabriel, speaking to Muḥammad, is not a religious phenomenon unique to him. In *al-Ṭabaqāt*, prophets before Muḥammad are associated with angels. Gabriel talked to Eve when she gave birth to Shīth,<sup>44</sup> advised Shīth to say funeral prayers over his father Adam,<sup>45</sup> and not only conversed with Ismāʿīl<sup>46</sup> but led him to the Kaʿbah.<sup>47</sup> Adam had an experience similar to that of Muḥammad: he is said to have "heard the voices of the angels and seen them circumambulating round the Throne."<sup>48</sup> By connecting Muḥammad's prophetic experience with those of previous prophets, Ibn Saʿd seems to stress that Muḥammad is a true successor to the earlier prophets.

Second, it is worth noting that even though Ibn Saʿd keeps intact the themes of Islam as superior to all other religions and the advent of Muḥammad as the seal of the prophets predicted by Jews and Christians, unlike Ibn Ishāq, he has not necessarily expressed Islamic superiority over other monotheistic religions through the role of Waraqah in the *ḥadīth* on Muḥammad's call. In Ibn Ishāq, Waraqah as a Christian confirmed that Muḥammad was called to a true prophetic vocation like the one that had been bestowed upon Moses. But in Ibn Saʿd, Waraqah does not appear as a Christian. Nor does he link Muḥammad's

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soothsayer." She said, "Allāh will not do that to you, for you speak the truth, deliver what is entrusted to you, and treat your kinsfolk well."

Ibn Saʿd, I, 130:12-18: Yahyā b. ʿAbbād and ʿAffān b. Muslim --- Ḥammād b. Salamah --- ʿAmmār b. Abī ʿAmmār / (another chain) Yahyā b. ʿAbbād --- Ḥammād b. Salamah --- Ibn ʿAbbās: The Prophet said, "O Khadījah I hear a voice and see a light and I fear that I am mad." She said, "Allāh will not do that to you, O son of ʿAbd Allāh!" Then she approached Waraqah b. Nawfal and told it to him. He said, "If what you say is true, this is *al-Nāmīs* like that of Moses's. If he is commissioned (to prophethood), while I am alive, I will support him, help him and believe in him."

<sup>44</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 14.

<sup>45</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 15.

<sup>46</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 107.

<sup>47</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 24.

<sup>48</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 13.

prophethood to that of Moses, though he affirms that Muḥammad was called to prophethood. It is also interesting to observe that Khadījah is said to have approached Waraqah for the first time. This certainly leaves a strong literary impact on the reader, indicating that Muḥammad's experience was serious enough that it caused Khadījah to seek Waraqah's advice for the first time: the "suddenness" of Muḥammad's prophetic call seems to be emphasized.

Third, unlike Ibn Ishāq, Muḥammad's first prophetic experience in Ibn Sa'd does not include the Qur'ānic revelation. He arranges traditions about the description of the call and those about the first Qur'ānic revelation under separate headings: in Ibn Ishāq, these traditions are resolved into one narration of the event which allegedly took place on Mount Ḥirā'. In doing this, Ibn Sa'd seems to show that the revelation of the first *Sūrah* is not connected to the beginning of Muḥammad's prophetic call. Following the *ḥadīth* on the coming of the revelation, Ibn Sa'd provides traditions on the first Qur'ānic revelations. They seem to have served as an answer to the general inquiry that may well have been posed by early Muslims: which *Sūrah* was first revealed to Muḥammad? The *ḥadīths* in this section unanimously assert that *Sūrah* 96 was the first revelation.<sup>49</sup> It is said to have come to Muḥammad while he was on Ḥirā'. But it is not specified whether or not Muḥammad was practicing *taḥannuth* at that time. Nor is any intermediary agent of revelation mentioned. Only a *ḥadīth* on *fatrat al-wahy*, immediately following the *ḥadīths* on the first Qur'ānic revelation of *Sūrah* 96, seems to imply that Gabriel functioned as the angelic agent of

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<sup>49</sup> There are two *ḥadīths* offered.

Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 130:20-25: Muḥammad b. 'Umar --- Ma'mar b. Rāshid --- Al-Zuhri --- Muḥammad b. 'Abbād b. Ja'far --- some learned men: The first revelation to the Prophet was: "Recite! In the Name of thy Lord who created, created Man of a blood-clot. Recite! And thy Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the Pen, taught man that he knew not (Qur'ān 96:1-5)." This is the beginning of the revelation that was sent to the Prophet on the day of Ḥirā'. Then other verses came down after that as Allāh willed.

Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 130:25-27: Hāshim b. al-Qāsim al-Kinānī --- Shu'bah --- 'Amrū b. Dīnār --- 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr: The first *Sūrah* that was revealed to the Prophet was "Recite! In the Name of thy Lord who created (Qur'ān 96:1)."

revelation for the first Qurʾānic revelation.<sup>50</sup> Here Muḥammad's first prophetic experience of his vision of Gabriel on the horizon is once again repeated at the time of *fatrat al-wahy*. According to the *ḥadīth*, revelation stopped for a while after the first revelation; Muḥammad was so grieved that he tried to commit suicide. Before he could do so, Gabriel appeared to him on a throne on the horizon. Muḥammad was relieved and the revelation recommenced.

A comparison of the *ḥadīths* presented by Ibn Ishāq and by Ibn Saʿd reveals how Muslim accounts of Muḥammad's call evolved freely, utilizing common narrative elements<sup>51</sup>: true vision (*al-Ruʾyā al-Ṣādiqah*), *taḥannuth*, the vision of Gabriel on the horizon, and the role of Khadijah and Waraqah.<sup>52</sup> These elements were deployed in entirely different contexts, however. In Ibn Ishāq, Muḥammad is said to have experienced the vision of Gabriel on the horizon shortly after he received the first Qurʾānic revelation of *Sūrah* 96. In Ibn Saʿd, the vision of Gabriel on the horizon was Muḥammad's first prophetic experience at the time of his call; at *fatrat al-wahy*, when he became distressed because

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<sup>50</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 130:27-131:9: Muḥammad b. ʿUmar --- Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Abī Mūsā --- Dāwūd b. al-Husayn --- Ibn Ghaṭfān b. ʿAṭīf --- Ibn ʿAbbās: After the revelation was sent to the Apostle of Allāh at Ḥirāʾ, it was suspended for a few days. He did not see Gabriel, so he felt much grief. He went once to Ṭabīr and at another time to Ḥirāʾ in order to throw himself down from there. When the apostle of Allāh intended to do that from one of these mountains, he heard a voice from heaven. The Apostle of Allāh stopped because of the thunderous voice. Then he raised his head, and lo, Gabriel was sitting on a throne between heaven and earth, saying, "O Muḥammad! You are truly the Apostle of Allāh, and I am Gabriel." The Apostle of Allāh left, and Allāh settled him and made him remain calm. Then the revelation followed.

Following this *ḥadīth*, Ibn Saʿd presents another tradition, which he seems to think is connected with Muḥammad's experience at *fatrat al-wahy*.

Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 131:9-12: "Muḥammad b. Muṣʿab al-Qarqasānī --- Abū Bakr b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Maryam: The apostle of Allāh said: It was said to me, "O Muḥammad! Let your eye sleep, let your ear hear and let your heart remember." The Prophet said, "My eye slept, my heart remembered and my ear heard."

<sup>51</sup> I do not mean that the *ḥadīths* by Ibn Ishāq reflects more genuine historical circumstances. Nor do I imply that in the time of Ibn Ishāq, only the *ḥadīths* which he used existed. We do not know how many *ḥadīths* were available to both Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Saʿd, nor is it certain how many each discarded. What I mean here by evolution of narration strictly depends on the extant textual evidences in the works of Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Saʿd.

<sup>52</sup> In the *ḥadīth* on Muḥammad's call in Ibn Hishām's edition of Ibn Ishāq's *Sīrah*, there is no mention of Muḥammad's suicide attempt. Thus, I do not include it as the narrative element for comparison here. In a *ḥadīth* in al-Ṭabarī on the event of Muḥammad's call which is alleged to have been transmitted from Ibn Ishāq, Muḥammad is said to have attempted suicide after the first Qurʾānic revelation of *Sūrah* 96. For comparison of the texts between Ibn Hishām and al-Ṭabarī, please see Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:16-154:5 and al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5-1152:5.



revelation had stopped for a while, Muḥammad is said to have experienced the same vision again. Unlike Ibn Ishāq's *ḥadīth* on Muḥammad's call, that of Ibn Sa'd does not mention Muḥammad's practicing *tahannuth* in the cave of Hirā', nor any indication of the Qur'ānic revelation. Nevertheless the two *ḥadīths* employ the same narrative elements, though with minor differences in the details of remarks made by both Khadījah and Waraqah.<sup>53</sup> Muḥammad told Khadījah about his experience, after which Khadījah consulted Waraqah, who confirmed the beginning of Muḥammad's prophethood.

What is more interesting is the textual evidence that the variations and expansion of narration around certain narrative elements are attributed to the same authorities of transmission. Thus, in the cases of true vision and *tahannuth*, we find that the famous *isnāds*, i.e. al-Zuhrī --- 'Urwah --- 'Ā'ishah, are responsible for the inconsistent information.<sup>54</sup> In Ibn Ishāq, the above authority is said to have transmitted a *ḥadīth* only about Muḥammad's experience of true vision, of which his practice of *tahannuth* is an independent anecdote reported to have been transmitted from the *isnād* Wahb b. Kaisān --- 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr b. Qatādah al-Layth. But in Ibn Sa'd, the true vision and *tahannuth* are woven into one well-knit *ḥadīth* alleged to have been ascribed through "Muḥammad b. 'Umar --- Ma'mar b. Rāshid and Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh" to "al-Zuhrī --- 'Urwah --- 'Ā'ishah." In both versions, the *isnād* of al-Zuhrī --- 'Urwah --- 'Ā'ishah function as "a common link."<sup>55</sup> Even in terms of true vision alone, the two accounts are slightly different: in Ibn Ishāq, true vision

<sup>53</sup> Compare Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:16-154:5 with Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 129:22-130:8 ; 130:8-11 ; 130:12-18.

<sup>54</sup> Let us look at the *isnāds* of the two accounts, one in Ibn Ishāq and another in Ibn Sa'd. The former has al-Zuhrī --- 'Urwah --- 'Ā'ishah, while the latter Muḥammad Ibn 'Umar --- Ma'mar Ibn Rāshid and Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd Allāh --- al-Zuhrī --- 'Urwah --- 'Ā'ishah. Would it be due to Muḥammad Ibn 'Umar, Ma'mar Ibn Rāshid and Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd Allāh that the two *ḥadīths* diverged from each other? No one can tell. What is certain is that the *ḥadīth* of Ibn Sa'd's appeared later in a more expanded form in al-Bukhārī and al-Ṭabarī. There, the common links, i.e. al-Zuhrī --- 'Urwah --- 'Ā'ishah, are maintained with more added later *isnāds*. See (1) Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna had' al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 4:14-6:1 ; (2) Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, Sūrah 96, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 380:2-381:5 ; (3) Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Kitāb Ta'bīr al-Ru'yā, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 347:4-348:11 ; (4) Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1-1148:8.

<sup>55</sup> Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, 171 f.

came to Muḥammad in his sleep, whereas, in Ibn Saʿd, Muḥammad is not said to have been asleep when he experienced it.

It is inexplicable whether the textual differences between the two *ḥadīths* which claim the same early authorities are due to later authorities in Ibn Saʿd, i. e., Muḥammad b. ʿUmar --- Maʿmar b. Rāshid and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh, or to Ibn Hishām who might have thought of *taḥannuth* as a Quraysh custom, and edited out the lines concerning the practice, or to "some other circumstances of origin and transmission."<sup>56</sup> A certain force was already moving the wheel of narrative evolution on Muḥammad's call, but it remains still uncertain when it actually began. This phenomenal expansion of Muslim accounts of Muḥammad's call around narrative themes was to be continuously observed in later collection of *ḥadīths* by al-Bukhārī and al-Ṭabarī.

### C. Al-Bukhārī (810-870)

One of the greatest experts in early *ḥadīth* literature, al-Bukhārī was born of an Iranian family in Bukhārā. He is said to have shown an outstanding talent in learning *ḥadīth* from an early age and travelled widely to the main cities of scholarly activities in search of more *ḥadīths*. Even before reaching maturity, he had firmly established himself as a *ḥadīth* scholar and received due respect for "the thoroughness and exactitude with which he collected and learned *ḥadīth*."<sup>57</sup> His famous work *Al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* is the product of his scholarship.<sup>58</sup> For 16 years, al-Bukhārī is said to have examined 600,000 *ḥadīth* materials that

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<sup>56</sup> Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Maghāzī and the Muḥaddithūn: Reconsidering the treatment of "Historical" Materials in Early Collections of Hadīth," *JMES* 28 (1996): 9.

<sup>57</sup> *ER*, vol. 2, s. v. "al-Bukhārī," by R. Marston Speight.

<sup>58</sup> There is an argument that al-Bukhārī did not write the book. See Ṣiddīqī, *Ḥadīth Literature*, 97, n. 2.

were in circulation. He finally selected some nine thousand *ḥadīths*<sup>59</sup> and arranged them according to subject-matter in 97 books with 3,450 chapters (*bāb*). This monumental *ḥadīth* collection is regarded "by Muslims in general as an authority next only to the Qur'ān."<sup>60</sup> It is reported that al-Bukhārī launched the project to collect authentic *ḥadīths* upon the remark of Ishāq b. Rāhwayh that "some traditionists should compile a short comprehensive book containing the genuine traditions only."<sup>61</sup> Some *ḥadīths* in the *Al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ* seem to imply that al-Bukhārī might have also felt obliged to collect them for the sake of future generations.

Look for the *ḥadīth* of the Apostle of Allāh and write it down, for I am afraid of the extinction of the knowledge (*al-ʿilm*) and the loss of the learned men (*al-ʿulamāʾ*). Accept only the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet.<sup>62</sup>

Let the witness convey the knowledge to those who are absent.<sup>63</sup>

Nowhere in his book does al-Bukhārī spell out his methodology for determining authentic *ḥadīths*. But it is generally agreed that, like other traditionists, he examined the transmitters of *ḥadīths* and their reliability, not the contents of the *ḥadīth*. This means that as long as transmitters and the chain of transmission turned out to be reliable, the *ḥadīth* was determined genuine regardless of its content. This may be one of the main reasons why irreconcilable *ḥadīths* on the same topic or identical texts with minor differences were accepted as authentic.

Unlike his predecessors Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Saʿd, al-Bukhārī did not incorporate the chronology of the event in the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call; he seemed less interested in it than they were. Muḥammad's age at his call --- forty years old --- is provided only in other

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<sup>59</sup> Many *ḥadīths* are repeated under different headings. Speight calculates the total number of *ḥadīth* as 9,082, including repetitions (*ER*, vol. 2, s. v. "al-Bukhārī," by Speight).

<sup>60</sup> Ṣiddiqī, *Ḥadīth Literature*, 89.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>62</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 3 *Kitāb al-ʿilm*, *bāb* 34, p. 37:16.

<sup>63</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 3 *Kitāb al-ʿilm*, *bāb* 37, p. 38:20.

parts of the collection.<sup>64</sup> Otherwise, chronological information can be inferred from *ḥadīths* that seem somewhat related to the event of Muḥammad's call. Thus, the *ḥadīth* about Gabriel and his practice of reviewing revelation with Muḥammad in the month of Ramaḍān may hint at the month when Muḥammad's call took place.<sup>65</sup> Al-Bukhārī was not concerned with the historical reconstruction of the event as Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Saʿd were. Of course, Muḥammad's call was still presented as sacred and religio-theologically interpreted in Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Saʿd. Nevertheless, it is unfolded and explained chronologically in the two authors' larger historical scheme to reconstruct the life of Muḥammad.

Al-Bukhārī did not, however, follow his predecessors as he tried to "divest normative sunna of many of its historical trappings."<sup>66</sup> His main concern was its religio-theological and exegetical interpretation of Muḥammad's call, as his handling of the *ḥadīths* shows. He provides *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call in three different sections of his collection: (1) *Bāb kaifa kāna badʿ al-wahy* (Beginning of Revelation); (2) *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān* (Qurʾānic Exegesis); (3) *Kitāb Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā* (Interpretation of Vision). The *ḥadīths* can be divided into two groups according to their contents: one group is in favor of *Sūrah* 96 as the first revelation and another is in favor of *Sūrah* 74. In both cases, Muḥammad's first prophetic experience is considered to have included Qurʾānic revelation.

Although there are differences in detail, the main narrative elements in both traditions are more or less the same. The three *ḥadīths* in favor of *Sūrah* 96 as the first revelation<sup>67</sup> make the following main points: (1) Muḥammad's experience of true vision (*al-Ruʾyā al-Ṣādiqah*<sup>68</sup>); (2) his love of solitude and practice of *tahannuth*; (3) the revelation of

<sup>64</sup> Al-Bukhārī, II, 61 *Kitāb al-Manāqib*, *bāb* 23, no. 6, p. 391:18 ; *bāb* 23, no. 7, p. 392:4.

<sup>65</sup> Al-Bukhārī, II, 61 *Kitāb al-Manāqib*, *bāb* 23, no. 13, p. 393:3 ; *bāb* 25, no. 48, p. 410:10.

<sup>66</sup> Zaman, "Maghāzī and the Muḥaddithūn," 14.

<sup>67</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna badʿ al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, *Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā*, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 347:4.

<sup>68</sup> Two *ḥadīths* render the term as "*al-Ruʾyā al-Ṣādiqah*" (see Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, *Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā*, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 347:4) ; whereas one *ḥadīth* terms

*Sūrah* 96 through an angel; (4) fear of the divine manifestation; (5) consolation by Khadījah and (6) confirmation of Muḥammad's becoming a prophet by Waraqah. The main ideas of the two *ḥadīths* in favor of *Sūrah* 74 as the first revelation<sup>69</sup> are: (1) the refutation of *Sūrah* 96 as the first revelation; (2) Muḥammad's exercise of retreat (*jīwār*) in the cave of Ḥirā'; (3) Muḥammad's audio-visual experience of a certain being calling him after his sojourn in Ḥirā'; (4) rushing to Khadījah; (5) fear of the divine manifestation and (6) the revelation of the *Sūrah* 74. It should be noted that al-Bukhārī also provides *ḥadīths* which negate the *Sūrah* 74 as the first revelation. According to these *ḥadīth*, it was sent to Muḥammad only after *Sūrah* 96 had been revealed first.

Although presenting both rival traditions, al-Bukhārī seems to have preferred the *ḥadīth* which claims *Sūrah* 96 was the first revelation, for he chose to include it at the very beginning of his *ḥadīth* collection. The first book of the collection, *Bad' al-wahy*, provides a *ḥadīth* in favor of *Sūrah* 96,<sup>70</sup> prefaced by *ḥadīths* on the mode of revelation to

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it as "*al-Ru'yā al-Ṣāliḥah*" (see Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna bad' al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 4:14).

<sup>69</sup> Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, *Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 365:4 ; *bāb* 3, no. 1, p. 365:15.

<sup>70</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna bad' al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 4:14-6:1: Yahyā b. 'Abd Allāh b. Bukayr --- Al-Layth --- 'Uqayl --- Ibn Shihāb --- 'Urwah b. al-Zubayr --- 'Ā'ishah: The beginning of the revelation to the Apostle of Allāh was in the form of true visions (*al-ru'yā al-ṣāliḥah*) in his sleep. It came to him like the break of dawn (*falaq al-ṣubḥ*). Then he was made to love solitude, and used to retire to the cave of Ḥirā', where he practiced *taḥannuth*, which is *ta'abbud*, for a number of nights before returning to his family in order to take provisions for it (*taḥannuth*). He would go back to Khadījah and take provisions for a similar number of nights. This continued until the Truth (*al-ḥaqq*) came to him. When he was in the cave of Ḥirā', the angel (*al-malak*) came to him and said, "Recite!" The Apostle of Allāh said, "I cannot recite." He (Muḥammad) said: He (the angel) grabbed me and pressed me until I could not bear it any more. Then, he released me and said, "Recite!" I said, "I cannot recite." He grabbed me and pressed me again until I could not bear it any more. Then he released me and said, "Recite!" I said, "I cannot recite." Then he grabbed me and pressed me the third time until I could not bear it any more. Then he released me and said, "Recite! In the Name of thy Lord who created, created Man of a blood-clot. Recite! And thy Lord is the Most Generous (96:1-3)." Then the Apostle of Allāh returned with it (the revelation) and with his heart beating. He went to Khadījah bint Khuwailid and said, "Wrap me up! Wrap me up!" So they wrapped him. When his fear was over, he told Khadījah what had happened to him and said, "I am afraid." Khadījah said, "No! By Allāh, Allāh will not disgrace you, for you treat your kinsfolk well, endure fatigue, bestow alms on the poor, offer hospitality to the guest and aid people in misfortune." Then she took him to Waraqah b. Nawfal b. Asad b. 'Abd al-'Uzzā, the son of her paternal uncle. He became a Christian during the age of the *Jāhiliyyah* and used to write in Arabic and would write from the Gospel in Arabic as long as Allāh willed him to write. He was old and blind. Khadījah said to him, "O, cousin, listen to your brother's son." Waraqah said to him (Muḥammad), "O, son of my brother, what did you see?" So the

Muhammad, and followed by *ḥadīths* on his post-prophetic experiences, including the revelation of *Sūrah* 74 at *fatrat al-wahy*,<sup>71</sup> and foreign recognition (i.e. that of Byzantine Imperial court) of Muhammad as a prophet. A close look at the structure and contents of *Bad' al-wahy* seems to reveal al-Bukhārī's grand scheme to present the nature of Muhammad's call with a theological reflection: Muhammad received revelation through the angel who came to him in the form of a man, and became a prophet in line with biblical prophets. His prophethood was fully acknowledged and the victory of Islam was foretold and feared by the other religious communities; Muhammad was expected to be a world conqueror.

In the *Tafsīr*, as the title of the book suggests, al-Bukhārī's concern is mainly exegetical presentation of the *ḥadīths* on Muhammad's call. Two contending ideas on Muhammad's prophetic experience are reported: which *Sūrah* was first revealed to him, *Sūrah* 74 or 96? Both claims are represented in the form of *ḥadīth* as *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation).<sup>72</sup> Interestingly, along with *ḥadīths* in favor of *Sūrah* 74 as the first

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Apostle of Allāh told him what he had seen. Then Waraqah said, "This is *al-Nāmūs* that Allāh sent to Mūsā. If only I were a young man now, and if only I could be alive when your people drive you out!" The Apostle of Allāh said, "Will they drive me out?" He (Waraqah) said, "Yes. No man has ever brought something similar to what you have brought without being met with hostility. If I live to see your day, I will support you strongly." Then Waraqah died soon and the revelation stopped.

<sup>71</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna bad' al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 6:1-7: Ibn Shihāb --- Abū Salamah b. 'Abd al-Rahman --- Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī: Concerning the interruption of the revelation (*fatrat al-wahy*), the Apostle of Allāh said: While I was walking, I heard a voice from heaven. I looked up and saw the angel (*al-malak*) who had come to me at Hīrā<sup>2</sup> seated on a throne between heaven and earth. I was frightened by him, so I returned and said, "Wrap me up!" Then Allāh revealed, "O thou shrouded in thy mantle, arise, and warn! Thy Lord magnify, thy robes purify and defilement flee! (74:1-5)" Then the revelation followed.

<sup>72</sup> In the *Tafsīr*, two *ḥadīths* claim *Sūrah* 74 as the first revelation and one *ḥadīth* regards *Sūrah* 96 to have been the first Qur'ānic revelation.

(1) Two *ḥadīths* in favor of *Sūrah* 74 as the first revelation

Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, *Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 365:4-12: Yahyā --- Wakīf --- 'Alī b. al-Mubārak --- Yahyā b. Abī Kathīr: I asked Abū Salamah b. 'Abd al-Rahman which part of the Qur'ān had been revealed first, and he said, "It was 'O thou shrouded in thy mantle (Qur'ān 74:1).'" I said, "They say that it was 'Recite! In the Name of thy Lord (Qur'ān 96:1).'" Abū Salamah said: I asked Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh about that. I told him the same as you have said. Then Jābir said: What I am telling you is what the Apostle of Allāh told me. The Apostle of Allāh said: I was in retreat (*jāwirtu*) on Hīrā<sup>2</sup>. When I had completed my retreat (*jāwāri*), I came down. Then I heard a voice calling me. I looked right, but saw nothing. I looked left, but saw nothing. I looked in front of me, but saw nothing. I looked back, but saw

Qur'ānic revelation, al-Bukhārī places *ḥadīths* claiming that it was sent down after *Sūrah* 96 at *fatrat al-wahy*.<sup>73</sup> The *ḥadīths* on the revelation of *Sūrah* 74 agree that it was sent down

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nothing. Then, I raised my head and saw something. I went to Khadījah and said, "Envelop me and pour cold water!" Then "O thou shrouded in thy mantle, arise, and warn! Thy Lord magnify (74:1-3)" was revealed.

Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 3, no. 1, p. 365:15-366:4: Ishaq b. Mansūr --- Abd al-Samad --- Harb --- Yahyā: I asked Abū Salamah which part of the Qur'ān had been revealed first. Abū Salamah said, "It was 'O thou shrouded in thy mantle (Qur'ān 74:1).'" I said, "I was informed that it was 'Recite! In the Name of thy Lord who created (Qur'ān 96:1).'" Abū Salamah said: I asked Jābir b. Abd Allāh which part of the Qur'ān had been revealed first. He (Jābir) said, "It was 'O thou shrouded in thy mantle (Qur'ān 74:1).'" I said, "I was informed that it was 'Recite! In the Name of thy Lord who created (Qur'ān 96:1).'" Then he (Jābir) said: What I am telling you is what the Apostle of Allāh told me. The Apostle of Allāh said: I was in retreat (*jāwīr*) on Hīrā'. When I had completed my retreat (*jūwār*), I came down and reached the bottom of the wadi. Then I heard a voice calling me. I looked in front, back, right and left, and lo, he was sitting on a throne between heaven and earth. I went to Khadījah and said, "Envelop me and pour cold water!" Then "O thou shrouded in thy mantle, arise, and warn! Thy Lord magnify (74:1-3)" was revealed.

(2) A *ḥadīth* in favor of *Sūrah* 96 as the first revelation

Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2-381:5: Yahyā --- Al-Layth --- 'Uqayl --- Ibn Shihāb / (another chain) Sa'īd b. Marwān --- Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Abī Razmah --- Abū Šālih Salmūyah --- 'Abd Allāh --- Yūnus b. Yazīd --- Ibn Shihāb --- 'Urwah b. al-Zubayr --- 'Ā'ishah: The beginning of the revelation to the Apostle of Allāh was in the form of true vision (*al-ru'yā al-ṣādiqah*) in his sleep. It came to him like the break of dawn (*ḡalaq al-ṣubḥ*). Then he was made to love solitude, and used to retire to the cave of Hīrā', where he practiced *taḥannuth*, which is *ta'abbud*, for a number of nights before returning to his family in order to take provisions for it (*taḥannuth*). He would go back to Khadījah and take provisions for a similar number of nights. This continued until the Truth (*al-ḥaqq*) came to him. When he was in the cave of Hīrā', the angel (*al-malak*) came to him and said, "Recite!" The Apostle of Allāh said, "I cannot recite." He (Muḥammad) said: He (the angel) grabbed me and pressed me until I could not bear it any more. Then, he released me and said, "Recite!" I said, "I cannot recite." He grabbed me and pressed me again until I could not bear it any more. Then he released me and said, "Recite!" I said, "I cannot recite." Then he grabbed me and pressed me the third time until I could not bear it any more. Then he released me and said, "Recite! In the Name of thy Lord who created, created Man of a blood-clot. Recite! And thy Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the Pen, taught Man that he knew not (96:1-5)." Then the Apostle of Allāh returned with it (the revelation) and with his heart beating. He went to Khadījah and said, "Wrap me up! Wrap me up!" So they wrapped him. When his fear was over, he said to Khadījah, "O, Khadījah, what's wrong with me? I am afraid." Then he told her what had happened to him. Khadījah said, "No! Rejoice, for Allāh will not disgrace you. You treat your kinsfolk well, speak the truth, endure fatigue, bestow alms on the poor, offer hospitality to the guest and aid people in misfortune." Then she took him to Waraqah b. Nawfal, the son of her paternal uncle. He became a Christian during the age of *Jāhiliyyah* and used to write in Hebrew and would write from the Gospel in Hebrew as long as Allāh willed him to write. He was old and blind. Khadījah said to him, "O, cousin, listen to your brother's son." Waraqah said, "O, son of my brother, what did you see?" So the Apostle of Allāh told him what he had seen. Then Waraqah said, "This is *al-Nāmūs* that Allāh sent to Mūsā. If only I were a young man now, and if only I could be alive!" He made some other remarks. The Apostle of Allāh said, "Will they drive me out?" He (Waraqah) said, "Yes. No man has ever brought what you have brought without being met with hostility. If I live to see your day, I will support you strongly." Then Waraqah died soon and the revelation stopped, so the Apostle of Allāh was grieved.

after Muḥammad's visionary experiences of a heavenly being on the horizon. They differ, however, not only as to whether the revelation of *Sūrah* 74 took place during the occasion of his call, or during *fatrat al-wahy*, but also as to the object of Muḥammad's vision: in the *ḥadīths* in which *Sūrah* 74 is claimed to have been revealed at the event of the call, Muḥammad's visionary object is said to have been "he (*huwa*)" or "something (*shayʿan*)" whereas in the *ḥadīth* that claim *Sūrah* 74 to have been revealed at *fatrat al-wahy*, Muḥammad is said to have seen the angel who had come to him who had revealed *Sūrah* 96 at the event of the call on Ḥirāʾ. There is no reconciling these differences. Nor does al-Bukhārī attempt to account for the discrepancies: nowhere did he offer his own analysis of the conflicting *ḥadīths*. However, it is not entirely impossible to interpret his opinion of the matter. Considering al-Bukhārī's arrangement of the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call, he seems

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<sup>73</sup> In the *Tafsīr*, there are presented three *ḥadīths* claiming that *Sūrah* 74 was not the first Qurʾānic revelation. According to them, after the first revelation reported to have been *Sūrah* 96 or unspecified, revelation ceased to come for a while. Then, *Sūrah* 74 was sent to Muḥammad.

Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 4, no. 1, p. 366:4-10: Yahyā b. Bukayr --- Al-Layth --- ʿUqayl --- Ibn Shihāb / (another chain) ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad --- ʿAbd al-Razzāq --- Maʿmar --- Al-Zuhri --- Abū Salamah b. Abd al-Raḥman --- Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh: Concerning the interruption of the revelation (*fatrat al-wahy*), the Apostle of Allāh said: While I was walking, I heard a voice from heaven. So I raised my head, and lo, the angel (*al-malak*) who had come to me on Ḥirāʾ was sitting on a throne between heaven and earth. I was so much frightened by him that I returned and said, "Wrap me up!" So they envelopped me. Then Allāh revealed "O thou shrouded in thy mantle" up to "defilement flee! (74:1-5)." It (*al-Rijz*?) means idols.

Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 5, no. 1, p. 366:11-17: ʿAbd Allāh b. Yūsuf --- Al-Layth --- ʿUqayl --- Ibn Shihāb --- Abū Salamah --- Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh: Concerning the interruption of the revelation (*fatrat al-wahy*), the Apostle of Allāh said: While I was walking, I heard a voice from heaven. So I looked up to heaven, and lo, the angel (*al-malak*) who had come to me on Ḥirāʾ was sitting on a throne between heaven and earth. I was so frightened by him that I fell down on the ground. Then I went to my family and said, "Wrap me up! Wrap me up!" So they wrapped me. Then Allāh revealed "O thou shrouded in thy mantle" up to "defilement flee! (74:1-5)." Abū Salamah said, "*Al-Rijz* means idols." Then the revelation followed.

Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 381:5-11: Muḥammad b. Shihāb --- Abū Salamah --- Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī: Concerning the interruption in the revelation (*fatrat al-wahy*), the Apostle of Allāh said: While I was walking, I heard a voice from heaven. I looked up and saw the angel (*al-malak*) who had come to me at Ḥirāʾ seated on a throne between heaven and earth. I was frightened by him, so I returned and said, "Wrap me up! Wrap me up!" So they envelopped him. Then Allāh revealed, "O thou shrouded in thy mantle, arise, and warn! Thy Lord magnify, thy robes purify and defilement flee! (74:1-5)" Abū Salamah said, "It (*al-Rijz*?) is the idol that people worshipped during the age of the *Jāhiliyyah*." After that, the revelation followed.



to have thought that *Sūrah* 74 was revealed at *fatrat al-wahy*. In the chapter on the angels of *Kitāb al-Khalq* (Book of Creation), he presents only the *ḥadīth* that claim *Sūrah* 74 was revealed at *fatrat al-wahy*, wherein Muḥammad's visionary object is described as the angel who came to him at Ḥirā'.<sup>74</sup> It is still hypothetical, but al-Bukhārī seems to have preferred the claim that Muḥammad received *Sūrah* 96 at the event of his call and *Sūrah* 74 at *fatrat al-wahy*, if his choice of the *ḥadīth* on *Sūrah* 74 at *fatrat al-wahy* in *Kitāb al-Khalq* is considered along with his presentation of the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call in the very beginning of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, i.e. *Bad' al-wahy*. In that case, *Sūrah* 96 was sent down at the event of the call, followed by the revelation of *Sūrah* 74 at *fatrat al-wahy*.

In *Ta'bir al-Ru'yā*, al-Bukhārī is concerned with the religio-theological interpretation of visions. Many visions are interpreted and religious guidelines as to certain visions are proffered. For example, if one had a bad dream, he is advised to "spit on the left."<sup>75</sup> A *ḥadīth* on Muḥammad's call in favor of *Sūrah* 96 as the first revelation is provided at the very beginning of the book.<sup>76</sup> The visionary aspects of his religious experience at his call is

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<sup>74</sup> Al-Bukhārī, III, 59 *Kitāb Bad' al-Khalq*, bāb 7, no. 15, p. 313:10-16: 'Abd Allāh b. Yūsūf --- Al-Layth --- 'Uqayl --- Ibn Shihāb --- Abū Salamah --- Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh: Concerning the interruption of the revelation (*fatrat al-wahy*), the Apostle of Allāh said: While I was walking, I heard a voice from heaven. So I looked up to heaven, and lo, the angel (*al-malak*) who had come to me at Ḥirā' was sitting on a throne between heaven and earth. I was so frightened by him that I fell down on the ground. Then I went to my family and said, "Wrap me up! Wrap me up!" So they wrapped me. Then Allāh revealed "O thou shrouded in thy mantle, arise and warn" up to "defilement flee! (74:1-5)." Abū Salamah said, "*Al-Rijz* means idols."

<sup>75</sup> Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Kitāb Ta'bir al-Ru'yā*, bāb 4, no. 1, p. 349:3.

<sup>76</sup> Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Ta'bir al-Ru'yā*, bāb 1, no. 1, p. 347:4-348:11: Yaḥyā b. Bukayr --- Al-Layth --- 'Uqayl --- Ibn Shihāb / (another chain) 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad --- 'Abd al-Razzāq --- Ma'mar --- Al-Zuhri --- 'Urwah --- 'Ā'ishah: The beginning of the revelation to the Apostle of Allāh was in the form of true visions (*al-ru'yā al-ṣādiqah*) in his sleep. It came to him like the break of dawn (*falaq al-ṣubḥ*). He used to go to Ḥirā', where he practiced *taḥannuth*, which is *ta'abbud*, for a number of nights before returning to his family in order to take provisions for it (*taḥannuth*). He would go back to Khadījah and take provisions for a similar number of nights. This continued until the Truth (*al-ḥaqq*) came to him. When he was in the cave of Ḥirā', the angel (*al-malak*) came to him and said, "Recite!" The Apostle of Allāh said, "I cannot recite." He (Muḥammad) said: He (the angel) grabbed me and pressed me until I could not bear it any more. Then, he released me and said, "Recite!" I said, "I cannot recite." He grabbed me and pressed me again until I could not bear it any more. Then he released me and said, "Recite!" I said, "I cannot recite." Then he grabbed me and pressed me the third time until I could not bear it any more. Then he released me and said, "Recite! In the Name of thy Lord who created" up to "that he knew not (96:1-5)." Then the Apostle of Allāh returned with it (the revelation) and with his heart beating. He went to Khadījah

emphasized to have come from God,<sup>77</sup> and serves as the model of the Islamic visions that follow.<sup>78</sup>

Al-Bukhārī's *ḥadīth* collection on Muḥammad's revelatory experience indicates that the details of the event he deemed worth remembering were those that indicated its religious-theological and exegetical value; not its historical content. He utilizes the *ḥadīths* in propagating Muḥammad as the true apostle of Allāh and world conqueror, meeting the Muslims' curiosity about the first *Qurʾānic* revelation, and stressing that his prophetic experience was from Allāh. Textual evidence shows that in the time of al-Bukhārī, the number of *ḥadīths* concerning Muḥammad's call has increased both in volume and contents. Strictly speaking, none of his *ḥadīth* is identical in detail to those of Ibn Ishāq or Ibn Saʿd. If the *ḥadīths* in Ibn Ishāq and in Ibn Saʿd are compared with each other, several discrepancies are found. But viewed independently, each author's presentation of Muḥammad's call gives a more or less straightforward picture of the events. In Ibn Ishāq,

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and said, "Wrap me up!" So they wrapped him. When his fear was over, he said to Khadījah, "O, Khadījah, what's wrong with me?" Then he told her what had happened to him. He said, "I am afraid of myself." Khadījah said, "No! Rejoice, for Allāh will not disgrace you. You treat your kinsfolk well, speak the truth, endure fatigue, offer hospitality to the guest and aid people in misfortune." Then Khadījah took him to Waraqah b. Nawfal b. ʿAbd al-ʿUzzā b. Quṣai, the son of her paternal uncle. He became a Christian during the age of the *Jāhiliyyah* and used to write in Hebrew and would write from the Gospel in Hebrew as long as Allāh willed him to write. He was old and blind. Khadījah said to him, "O, cousin, listen to your brother's son." Waraqah said, "O, son of my brother, what did you see?" So the Apostle of Allāh told him what he had seen. Then Waraqah said, "This is *al-Nāmūs* that was sent to Mūsā. If only I were a young man now, and if only I could be alive when your people drive you out!" The Apostle of Allāh said, "Will they drive me out?" He (Waraqah) said, "Yes. No man has ever brought what you have brought without being met with hostility. If I live to see your day, I will support you strongly." Then, Waraqah died soon and the revelation stopped. We have heard that the Apostle of Allāh was grieved so much that he occasionally went to the top of the mountains in order to fling himself down. Whenever he went to the top of the mountain in order to throw himself down, Gabriel appeared to him and said, "O Muḥammad, you are truly the Apostle of Allāh." Therefore his grief subsided and his heart remained calm. Whenever the interruption of the revelation (*fatrat al-wahy*) grew long, he would go to the same place: whenever he went to the top of the mountain, Gabriel would appear to him and say the same thing to him. Ibn ʿAbbās said, "The splitter of the daybreak (*fāliq al-iṣbāḥ*: Qurʾān 6:96) means the sunlight during the day and the moonlight at night."

<sup>77</sup> Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Kitāb Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā*, bāb 3, p. 348:16.

<sup>78</sup> For a study of *Taʿbīr* in Islam, see N. Bland, "On the Muhammedan Science of *Taʿbīr*, or Interpretation of Dreams," *JRAS* 16 (1856): 118-171.

Muḥammad's first prophetic experience was the reception of *Sūrah* 96 from Gabriel when he practiced *taḥannuth* in Ḥirāʾ; in Ibn Saʿd, it was his vision of Gabriel on the horizon out in the open at Ajyād. In al-Bukhārī, the picture of the event is kaleidoscopic, even if viewed independently. Conflicting reports on the same event are placed side by side: Muḥammad was called to prophethood in the cave of Ḥirāʾ, or out in the open; the first revelation was *Sūrah* 74 or 96. Muslims were increasingly drawn into the debate on the first *Qurʾānic* revelation; they considered Muḥammad's prophetic experience as inherently connected to the coming of *Qurʾānic* revelation and al-Bukhārī reflects this tendency in his work.

The only common thread between the two rival *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call in al-Bukhārī, i.e. one in favor of *Sūrah* 96 and another in favor of *Sūrah* 74, would be the two narrative elements. One is Muḥammad's exercise of a seemingly religious practice in the cave of Ḥirāʾ, and another is Muḥammad's fear of sudden divine manifestation. In the former *ḥadīth* when Muḥammad practiced *taḥannuth* in the cave of Ḥirāʾ, an angel came to him with the first *Qurʾānic* revelation of *Sūrah* 96, and Muḥammad feared him; in later *ḥadīth*, he is said to have felt fear after experiencing a vision of a certain heavenly being on his way down from Ḥirāʾ where he had been practicing retreat (*jīwār*).<sup>79</sup> These common elements stop short, however, of shedding any meaningful light on the reconstruction of the event. There is no consensus on what Muḥammad practiced on Ḥirāʾ: one *ḥadīth* claims it was *taḥannuth* and another says that it was *jīwār*. Nor is the context of Muḥammad's fear uniform: according to one *ḥadīth*, he felt fear after the revelation of *Sūrah* 96, while according to another he did so before the revelation of *Sūrah* 74.

Common narrative elements were now freely woven into many new contexts or edited out more than in earlier works, setting the evolution of Muslim narration on Muḥammad's

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<sup>79</sup> *Jīwār* is maṣdar of *jūwara* and means neighborhood. It will be discussed later in the Chapter 2. According to K. Wagtendonk, it means in a religious sense "the remaining outside of one's house, in retreat." See Wagtendonk, *Fasting in the Koran* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968) 35. See also *EP*, v. 2, s. v. "*Djīwār*," by J. Lecerf.

call in frantic motion. This movement went hand in hand with the phenomenal appearance of the early authorities in *isnād* to whom inconsistent reports were attributed. In al-Bukhārī, Muslims debated whether *Sūrah* 74 was revealed at the very beginning of Muḥammad's prophethood or later at *fatrat al-wahy*; both rival *ḥadīths* are ascribed to Abū Salamah b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān --- Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī.<sup>80</sup> In the case of *Sūrah* 96, the chief authorities of the *ḥadīths* in al-Bukhārī are "al-Zuhrī --- ʿUrwah b. al-Zubayr --- ʿĀʾishah." As already noted, in Ibn Ishāq, this *isnād* is reported to have told only about Muḥammad's experience of true vision in his sleep, while in Ibn Saʿd it is also, through the later authorities "Muḥammad b. ʿUmar --- Maʿmar b. Rāshid and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh," alleged to have said true vision (not in his sleep) plus *taḥannuth*. In al-Bukhārī, there are three *ḥadīths* attributed to them and the narration expands further: Muḥammad's experience of true vision in his sleep, *taḥannuth*, and revelation of *Sūrah* 96. All three *ḥadīths* have the same *isnads*, that is "Yaḥyā b. Bukayr --- Al-Layth --- ʿUqayl --- Ibn Shihāb (Al-Zuhrī) --- ʿUrwah --- ʿĀʾishah." Two of them have a second *isnād*, in addition to the above *isnād*, one being "Saʿīd b. Marwān --- Muḥammad b. ʿAbd ʿAzīz b. Abī Rizmāh --- Abū Ṣāliḥ Salmūyah --- ʿAbd Allāh --- Yūnus b. Yazīd --- Ibn Shihāb (al-Zuhrī) --- ʿUrwah b. al-Zubayr --- ʿĀʾishah," and another being "ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad --- ʿAbd al-Razzāq --- Maʿmar --- Al-Zuhrī --- ʿUrwah --- ʿĀʾishah."

If any trust at all could be placed in the *isnāds*, we would be obliged to acknowledge that there might have been some later insertion of narrative elements in the *ḥadīths* ascribed to the famous chain of transmission. But, even if this is true, can we hope to trace the original piece of information in a pure untainted form? Should we claim that Ibn Ishāq's *ḥadīth* is closer to the original since it was the earliest of all? Unfortunately, we cannot possibly do so. What is certain is that *ḥadīth* collectors, i.e. Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Saʿd and al-

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<sup>80</sup> This will be discussed later in p. 48.

Bukhārī, never paid any attention to this phenomenal growth of *ḥadīth* attributed to the same authorities; it was mainly due to the lack of the collector's critical check on the text that the evolution of *ḥadīth* for Muḥammad's call went unnoticed.

Thus, in al-Bukhārī, a more liberal extension of popular narrative elements, including the suicide attempt, vision of heavenly being on the horizon, Waraqah, etc., continued; the same narrative themes were deployed in a different context, and more specific new information was added to the narration. In Ibn Sa'd, when the revelation ceased to come for a while after the first revelation, Muḥammad was so distressed that he was ready to kill himself, whereas in al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad attempted suicide whenever revelation stopped. Both Ibn Ishāq and al-Bukhārī present very similar *ḥadīths* that claim Muḥammad received the first revelation of Sūrah 96 while practicing *tahannuth* on Hīrā<sup>81</sup>. They share many narrative elements, but, once again, in a different context, and with irreconcilable information.

In Ibn Ishāq, Muḥammad went to Hīrā<sup>81</sup> for *tahannuth* with his family, while, in al-Bukhārī, he went alone. The vision of a heavenly being in Ibn Ishāq is not found in al-Bukhārī. Rather, they appear in other *ḥadīths* by al-Bukhārī not related to Muḥammad's call, but as a part of his post-prophetic experience. Both narratives claim that Muḥammad went to Khadijah after his encounter with the divine manifestation and that his initial prophetic experience was confirmed by Waraqah; in Ibn Ishāq, Khadijah went to him alone while in al-Bukhārī, she went with Muḥammad. In Ibn Ishāq, Waraqah is depicted as a Christian who "read the scriptures and learned from those that follow the Torah and the Gospel"<sup>81</sup>; he predicted that Muḥammad would meet opposition in the future, implying that he would not live to help Muḥammad. In al-Bukhārī, there are four *ḥadīths* concerning Waraqah, but they differ not only from Ibn Ishāq's *ḥadīth* but also from each other. According to two

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<sup>81</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 153; Guillaume, 107.

traditions, Waraqah, an old, blind Christian, used to write in Arabic and would write from the Gospel in Arabic<sup>82</sup>; according to another, as an old, blind Christian, he used to write in Hebrew and would write from the Gospel in Hebrew<sup>83</sup>; according to the third, he, not a blind man but simply a Christian, used to read the Gospels in Arabic.<sup>84</sup> As in Ibn Ishāq, Waraqah in al-Bukhārī also foretold that he could not live to support Muḥammad's prophethood in times of opposition; furthermore, Waraqah is said to have died a few days after Muḥammad's call. Al-Bukhārī accepted all of the *ḥadīths* as sound perhaps because the narrative element of "the role of Waraqah" fits his theological reflection that Muḥammad was the seal of the prophets. In all four *ḥadīths*, Waraqah is said to have confirmed that Muḥammad was called to prophethood by saying that what came to him in the cave of Mount Ḥirā' is *al-Nāmūs*, that which Allāh had sent to Moses. In "*Kitāb al-Anbiyā'*" (Book of the Prophets) of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Bukhārī connects Waraqah's remarks with the Qur'ānic verse in which Moses, like Muḥammad, was called to prophethood on the Mountain. In doing so, al-Bukhārī seems to show, like Ibn Ishāq, the recurrent theme in Islamic theology that Muḥammad became a prophet in line with the biblical prophets, and was recognized as such by people from the biblical monotheistic religions, such as Waraqah; thus *ḥadīths* say:

The Apostle of Allāh said, "My likeness to the prophets before me is comparable to a person who has built a house nicely and beautifully except for the placing of one brick in a corner. People began to walk around it and were amazed at it and said, 'why hasn't this brick been placed?' So I am the brick and the seal of the prophets."<sup>85</sup>

The Apostle of Allāh said, "I was sent from the best generation of the descendents of Adam..."<sup>86</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna bad' al-waḥy*, no. 3, p. 5:14 ; Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Ta'bir al-Ru'yā, bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 347:20.

<sup>83</sup> Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:19:

<sup>84</sup> Al-Bukhārī, II, 60 *Kitāb al-Anbiyā', bāb* 21, no. 1, p. 352:11.

<sup>85</sup> Al-Bukhārī, II, 61 *Kitāb al-Manāqib, bāb* 18, no. 2, p. 390:3.

<sup>86</sup> Al-Bukhārī, II, 61 *Kitāb al-Manāqib, bāb* 23, no. 16, p. 393:14.

Moreover, by including the narrative element that Waraqah died shortly after Muḥammad's prophetic call, al-Bukhārī seems to tacitly imply that Muḥammad's prophetic vocation would be guided by Divine providence, not by a mere human being.

All of the four traditions concerning Waraqah in al-Bukhārī claim "al-Layth --- 'Uqayl --- al-Zuhrī --- 'Urwah --- Ḍā'ishah" as the common authorities, and three of them have Yahya b. Bukayr as the final authority who heard from al-Layth, while the remaining one is said to have been transmitted through 'Abd Allāh b. Yūsuf from al-Layth. Among the three *ḥadīths* that have the exactly same *isnāds*, i.e. Yahya b. Bukayr --- al-Layth --- 'Uqayl --- al-Zuhrī --- 'Urwah --- Ḍā'ishah, two have different second chains of transmission but the initial early authorities "al-Zuhrī --- 'Urwah --- Ḍā'ishah" remain the same. It remains uncertain how these discrepancies came into being, even if we could speculate that the differences in al-Bukhārī might have been due to 'Abd Allāh b. Yūsuf and the two different second chains of transmission two of the four have, or to other circumstances. What is certain is that the evolution of Muslim narratives on Muḥammad's call went on and on, precluding any hope of making a meaningful reconstruction of the event. A generation later, the complication of Muslim materials on Muḥammad's call was witnessed once more in the *ḥadīths* collection by al-Ṭabarī.

#### D. Al-Ṭabarī (838?-923)

The richest ores for the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call should be extracted from the greatest mine, al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'riḫ al-Rusūl wa al-Mulūk* (the History of the Prophets and the Kings). Born of a financially stable family in Āmul in Ṭabaristān, northern Persia, al-Ṭabarī was able to study, from an early age, in the major cities of Islamic learning in Iraq, Egypt and Syria. He firmly established himself as a religious scholar and historian. His works were prolific enough to include such subjects as mathematics, medicine and poetry, but his

scholarly fame lay mainly in Qur'ānic exegesis and early Islamic history. Along with his Qur'ānic commentary *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, his *Ta'rikh* has been regarded as a scholarly masterpiece up to and including modern times. The book is a comprehensive world history. Starting with the creation and the biblical patriarchs, it deals with Sasanid history, the life of Muḥammad, the first four caliphs, and the Umayyad dynasty, and continues with history of the 'Abbāsīd up to 915. The materials utilized in the work were derived from oral traditions, literary sources and the Arabic version of the Persian *Book of Kings*.<sup>87</sup> These materials took the form of *ḥadīth* with *isnāds*. Al-Ṭabarī limited his editorial role to selection, arrangement, and documentation of the material cited.<sup>88</sup> As he implied in his book, he seemed to care about the *isnād* and transmitters, rather than the contents of the *ḥadīth*.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, on the same matter or event, many discrepancies are found, as well as contradictions and repetitions among the *ḥadīths*. This apparent lack of critical check on the text is mainly due to al-Ṭabarī's historical thought that "knowledge of the past cannot be deduced or inferred; it can only be transmitted."<sup>90</sup> But this does not mean that he was

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<sup>87</sup> *EP*, vol. 7, s. v. "al-Ṭabarī," by R. Paret.

<sup>88</sup> *ER*, vol. 14, s. v. "al-Ṭabarī," by Andrew Rippin.

<sup>89</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, I, 6; Rosenthal, 170: "..... I do this for the purpose of clarifying whose transmission (of traditions) is praised and whose information is accepted, whose transmission is rejected and whose transmission is disregarded, and whose transmission is considered feeble and whose information is considered weak. In addition, I give the reason why someone's information is disregarded and the cause for someone's tradition being considered feeble."

<sup>90</sup> Khalidī, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, 74. Al-Ṭabarī explains his method of presentation of the *ḥadīth* in his *Ta'rikh*: Al-Ṭabarī, I, 6-7; Rosenthal, 170-171: "The reader should know that with respect to all I have mentioned and made it a condition to set down in this book of ours, I rely upon traditions and reports which I have transmitted and which I attribute to their transmitters. I rely only very exceptionally upon what is learned through rational arguments and produced by internal thought processes. For no knowledge of the history of the men of the past and of recent men and events is attainable by those who were not able to observe them and did not live in their time, except through information and transmission provided by informants and transmitters. This knowledge cannot be brought out by reason or produced by internal thought processes. This book of mine may (be found to) contain some information mentioned by us on the authority of certain men of the past, which the reader may disapprove of and the listener may find detestable, because he can find nothing sound and no real meaning in it. In such cases, he should know that it is not our fault that such information comes to him, but fault of someone who transmitted to us. We have merely reported it as it was reported to us."



content to collect the *ḥadīths* handed down to him and unfold them without any analytical framework. At least he attempted to account for the inconsistencies among the *ḥadīths*, as the chronology of Muḥammad's call shows.

In his *Taʾrīkh*, al-Ṭabarī says

two fundamental historical conceptions: on the one hand, the essential oneness of prophetic mission, and on the other, the importance of the experiences of the *umma* and the continuity of these experiences through time. It was of equally great importance to follow the community through times of both unity and discord, its experiences in both situations serving to elucidate how the *umma* was faring through the course of its history.<sup>91</sup>

Al-Ṭabarī seems to have thought that only God knows the nature or causes of events and that Divine providence works in human affairs through prophets, kings and rulers. Muḥammad was among these, but of a superior status: as the seal of the prophets and true messenger of God, through whom God calls

His creation to worship Him. He manifested His command, labored strenuously in His path, advised His nation (*ummah*), and worshipped Him until death came to him from God, never flagging in his effort and never relaxing in his strenuous labor.<sup>92</sup>

In a sense, like Ibn Ishāq, al-Ṭabarī tries to show that the new Islamic *ummah* initiated by Muḥammad, the true apostle of God, is a pinnacle of Divine providence, but with an expanded horizon of historical perception. In light of al-Ṭabarī's literary scheme, then, Muḥammad's call cannot but be emphasized as one of the most important events in world history, for it is from there that the Islamic *ummah* began. Thus, now, Muḥammad is commanded to rise up and warn his people that

God would punish them for their ingratitude to their Lord and for their worship of false gods and idols to the exclusion of Him who created them and gave them their daily bread. He was also to tell them of his Lord's bounty to himself with the words:

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<sup>91</sup> A. A. Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing among the Arabs*, trans. L. I. Conrad (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) 69-70.

<sup>92</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, I, 2; Rosenthal, 165.

"Of the bounty of your Lord let your discourse be (Qurʾān 93:11)."<sup>93</sup>

Like Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabarī also thought that Muḥammad's call took place after his marriage and participation in the rebuilding of the Kaʿbah. His presentation of the traditional accounts of Muḥammad's call begins with the *ḥadīths* on the chronological setting of the event: Muḥammad's age, the day, date and month of the event are discussed. To quote al-Ṭabarī, "the early authorities differ as to the age of the Messenger of God when he became a prophet."<sup>94</sup> Two opinions about the age of Muḥammad at his call are presented: forty and forty-three. It seems that al-Ṭabarī felt the need to reconcile the three year differences among the traditions on Muḥammad's age at his call. Therefore, he appears to have concluded that at the age of forty, Muḥammad was called to prophethood without revelation being sent and the angel Isrāfīl was with him for three years; after that, the angel Gabriel came to Muḥammad bearing the Qurʾānic revelation.<sup>95</sup> In al-Ṭabarī, a scholarly consensus was reached that Muḥammad was called to prophethood on a certain Monday<sup>96</sup> in the month of Ramaḍān, though the date remained undecided.<sup>97</sup> Speaking more exactly, though the angel Gabriel came to Muḥammad on Saturday, the former brought the Qurʾānic revelation to the latter only on Monday.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1156; Watt, 76-77.

<sup>94</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1139 ; Watt, 60.

<sup>95</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1249-1250 ; Watt, 155-156.

<sup>96</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1141-1142 ; Watt, 62.

<sup>97</sup> Even though the traditions in al-Ṭabarī unanimously confirm that Muḥammad became a prophet on Monday, there is, to quote al-Ṭabarī, "a dispute as to which Monday this was." (Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1142 ; Watt, 62). There are three different views recorded on this matter: seventeenth, or eighteenth, or twenty-fourth of Ramaḍān (Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1142-1143 ; Watt, 62-63). There is not much to say about them. But, it is worth noting that Ibn Ishāq is attributed as saying that the first revelation of the Qurʾān came on Monday, the twenty-fourth of Ramaḍān, while, in Ibn Hishām's version, he implies that the event took place on Friday, the seventeenth of Ramaḍān.

<sup>98</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1154:4-8 ; Watt, 74-75: "Hishām b. Muḥammad: Gabriel came to the Messenger of God for the first time on Saturday and Sunday night. On Monday he brought him the commission as Messenger of God, and taught him the ritual ablution, the prayer ritual, and the passage 'Recite in the name of your Lord who created.' On the Monday on which he received the revelation, the Messenger of God was forty years old."

After the chronological setting, al-Ṭabarī presents anecdotes about the signs, predictions and proofs of Muḥammad's prophethood: Muḥammad had the honorable signs of prophethood, or pre-prophetic experiences before his call; followers of other religions, such as Christians, Jews, Magians, soothsayers and idol worshippers, prophesized the rise of Muḥammad as a prophet; Muḥammad performed miracles, which proved his prophethood. Following these anecdotes, al-Ṭabarī provides the *ḥadīths* on the event of Muḥammad's call according to his own order of presentation: (1) introduction; (2) three *ḥadīths* in favor of *Sūrah* 96 as the first Qur'ānic revelation; (3) two *ḥadīths* about Khadijah's confirmation of the agent of revelation as an angel; (4) two *ḥadīths* in favor of *Sūrah* 74 as the first Qur'ānic revelation; (5) a *ḥadīth* about the time when Muḥammad met Gabriel; (6) a *ḥadīth* about the opening of Muḥammad's breast by two angels; (7) a *ḥadīth* in favor of *Sūrah* 96 as the first Qur'ānic revelation and (8) a *ḥadīth* claiming that *Sūrah* 74 was revealed at *fatrat al-wahy*. In the introduction, he says:

We now return to an account of the condition of the Prophet of God at the time when God began to ennoble him by sending Gabriel to him bearing the revelation. We have mentioned previously some of the stories related to the first occasion on which Gabriel brought our Prophet Muḥammad the revelation from God and how old the Prophet was at that time. We shall now describe the manner in which Gabriel began to come to him and to appear to him bringing the revelation of his Lord.<sup>99</sup>

From the above statement, we may glimpse al-Ṭabarī's perception of Muḥammad's call. First, it supports his own interpretation in the chronological section that the angel Gabriel brought the Qur'ānic revelation to Muḥammad three years after the angel Isrāfīl came without bearing revelation. In fact, his collection of *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call seems to reflect this idea; all serve as narratives about the occasion of the first Qur'ānic revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*). No *ḥadīth* concerning Muḥammad's prophetic experience with the angel Isrāfīl is presented in al-Ṭabarī. Second, al-Ṭabarī acknowledges the angel Gabriel as the

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<sup>99</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1146; Watt, 67.

agent of revelation. This is significant, for, although in some *ḥadīths* following the introduction, Muḥammad is said to have had a visionary experience of a heavenly being bearing revelation, no text indicates or names it as Gabriel, but rather simply calls it the angel (*al-Malak*), or he (*huwa*), or something (*shayʿan*). Then, in light of the introduction, al-Ṭabarī must have interpreted it as the angel Gabriel.

Following the introductory statement, al-Ṭabarī presents *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call, mainly *asbāb al-nuzūl* of *Sūrah* 96 and of *Sūrah* 74. There are altogether eight *ḥadīths* presented concerning the circumstances of Muḥammad's call in al-Ṭabarī. Only one *ḥadīth* implies very vaguely that Muḥammad's call was not necessarily connected with the Qurʾānic revelation.<sup>100</sup> The other seven *ḥadīths* tell that Muḥammad's call started with the Qurʾānic revelation: five of them suggest that *Sūrah* 96 was the first revelation, while two *ḥadīths* dispute this by saying that *Sūrah* 74 was revealed first.<sup>101</sup> This seems to imply Muslims in the time of al-Ṭabarī considered Muḥammad's prophetic experience inexorably associated with Qurʾānic revelation.<sup>102</sup> This trend was already indicated in Ibn Ishāq and in al-Bukhārī, and now it manifests itself more fully in al-Ṭabarī in terms of the number of *ḥadīths*.<sup>103</sup>

It is also noted that unlike his predecessors, al-Ṭabarī includes an anecdote about the opening of Muḥammad's breast as a *ḥadīth* for Muḥammad's call. According to it, Muḥammad is said to have been convinced of his prophethood when two angels weighed him, opened his breast and cleansed it in the valley of Mecca. In Ibn Ishāq, a similar account is provided, but the time setting is different: it was when Muḥammad was a child

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<sup>100</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1154:4-8 ; Watt, 74-75.

<sup>101</sup> See al-Ṭabarī, III, 1153:5-1154:5 ; Watt, 73-74. There are also presented two *ḥadīths* claiming that *Sūrah* 74 was not the first revelation. See al-Ṭabarī, III, 1155:6-15 ; Watt, 76 and al-Ṭabarī, III, 1155:16-1156:5 ; Watt, 76.

<sup>102</sup> Thus, we can find in al-Ṭabarī a *ḥadīth* that explains nothing but the first Qurʾānic revelation without description of the occasion: Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1155:15-16 ; Watt, 76: "Al-Zuhri: The first thing to be revealed to him was 'Recite in the name of your Lord who creates ...' as far as the words 'what he knew not.'"

<sup>103</sup> As noted earlier, in Ibn Saʿd, Muḥammad's call is not necessarily connected with the first Qurʾānic revelation. See p. 20, n. 43.

that two men, not two angels, in white cloth opened his breast and cleansed it.<sup>104</sup> By presenting this miraculous event, al-Ṭabarī not only indicates its relevance to Muḥammad's prophetic experience, but also implies his theological perception of Muḥammad's prophethood; no man could rival him; he is the greatest man in the world and destined to be a prophet with his heart pure and sacred as a vehicle of divine revelation.

Along with this theological reflection, al-Ṭabarī seems, like al-Bukhārī, to demonstrate that Muḥammad was called to a prophet in line with biblical prophethood by linking Muḥammad's prophetic experience to that of Moses'. In some *ḥadīths*, Waraqah, a Christian and the paternal cousin of Muḥammad's wife Khadījah, is said to have confirmed Muḥammad's prophetic experience as genuine by saying that Muḥammad received *al-Nāmūs* that Allāh had sent to Moses. In the previous pages of his *Ta'rikh*, al-Ṭabarī presents *ḥadīths* on Moses: there, Moses is said to have had a religious experience at the holy valley of Ṭuwā in the night; he met God, and became afraid of the divine miracle that turned his staff into a serpent. The story of Moses' religious experience has some significant bearings on that of Muḥammad's in al-Ṭabarī: it took place in the night, in such a remote place as in the valley, or on the Mountain; both Moses and Muḥammad are said to have been alone when they had their prophetic experience. Moreover, quoting Qur'ān 46:29-31, al-Ṭabarī indicates that the revelations that Muḥammad received are "a scripture which has been revealed after Moses, confirming that which was before it, guiding to the truth and a right road."<sup>105</sup> Thus, we may presume that by presenting the *ḥadīths* on Moses' religious experience and Waraqah's remarks that Muḥammad's prophetic experience is linked to that of Moses', al-Ṭabarī tried to show that what Muḥammad had experienced was confirmed as "similar to what had been experienced by the prophets of the Bible" by "someone with the requisite

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<sup>104</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 105-106.

<sup>105</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1202 ; Watt, 118.

biblical knowledge."<sup>106</sup>

Al-Ṭabarī's collection of the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call includes some texts identical to those found in the earlier collections: the *ḥadīth* on the Qur'ānic revelation of *Sūrah* 96 by Ibn Ishāq in a slightly more expanded form,<sup>107</sup> and similar texts to those by al-

<sup>106</sup> Watt and McDonald, trans. and anno., *The History of al-Ṭabarī, vol. vi: Muḥammad at Mecca*, xxxviii.

<sup>107</sup> As already discussed above, Ibn Ishāq's *Sīrah* has been preserved in the recension by Ibn Hishām. But, it is reported that there were at least fifteen editions of Ibn Ishāq's work by many of his students. Ibn Ishāq's text on Muḥammad's call in al-Ṭabarī was from one of the editions, i.e. the recension of Salamah b. al-Faḍl al-Abrash (d. 191/206). See Watt, xi-xii. Compare the *ḥadīth* on Muḥammad's call in Ibn Hishām's edition (Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:16-154:5 ; Guillaume, 105-107 ; see p. 12, n. 14) with the following text in al-Ṭabarī from Salamah's edition.

Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5-1152:5 ; Watt, 70-73: "Ibn Ḥumayd --- Salamah --- Muḥammad b. Ishāq --- Walīb b. Kaisān the *mawlā* of the family of al-Zubayr: I heard 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr saying to 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr b. Qatāḍa al-Laythi, 'Relate to us, 'Ubayd, what the beginning of the Messenger of God's prophetic mission was like when Gabriel came to him.' I was present as 'Ubayd related the following account to 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr and those with him. He said, 'The Messenger of God used to spend one month in every year in religious retreat on Hirā'. This was part of the practice of *ṭahannuth* in which Quraysh used to engage during the Jāhiliyyah. *Ṭahannuth* means self-justification. (Mentioning this practice) Abū Tālīb said, 'By those ascending Hirā' and those descending.' The Messenger of God used to spend this month in every year in religious retreat, feeding the poor who came to him. When he had completed his month of retreat the first thing which he would do on leaving, even before going home, was to circumambulate the Ka'bah seven times, or however many times God willed; then he would go home. When the month came in which God willed to ennoble him, in the year in which God made him his Messenger, this being the month of Ramadān, the Messenger of God went out as usual to Hirā' accompanied by his family. When the night came on which God ennobled him by making him his Messenger and thereby showed mercy to his servants, Gabriel brought him the command of God. The Messenger of God said: Gabriel came to me as I was sleeping with a brocade cloth in which was writing. He said, 'Recite!' and I said, 'I cannot recite.' He pressed me tight and almost stifled me, until I thought that I should die. Then he let me go and said, 'Recite!' I said, 'What shall I recite?' only saying that in order to free myself from him, fearing that he might repeat what he had done to me. He said: 'Recite in the name of your Lord who creates! He creates man from a clot of blood. Recite: And your Lord is the most Bountiful, He who teaches by the pen, teaches men what he knew not.' I recited it, and then he desisted and departed. I woke up, and it was as though these words had been written on my heart. There was no one of God's creation more hateful to me than a poet or a madman; I could not bear to look at either of them. I said to myself, 'Your humble servant (meaning himself) is either a poet or a madman, but Quraysh shall never say this of me. I shall take myself to a mountain crag, hurl myself down from it, kill myself, and find relief in that way.' I went out intending to do that, but when I was halfway up the mountain I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'O Muḥammad, you are the Messenger of God, and I am Gabriel.' I raised my head to heaven, and there was Gabriel in the form of a man with his feet set on the horizon, saying, 'O Muḥammad, you are the Messenger of God and I am Gabriel.' I stood looking at him and this distracted me from what I had intended, and I could go neither forward nor back. I turned my face away from him to all points of the horizon, but wherever I looked I saw him in exactly the same form. I remained standing there, neither going forward nor turning back, until Khadijah sent her messengers to look for me. They went as far as Mecca and came back to her, while I was standing in the same place. At last Gabriel left me and I went back to my family. When I came to Khadijah, I sat down with my thigh next to hers, and she said to me, 'Abū al-Qāsim, where have you

Bukhārī about the *asbāb al-nuzūl* of *Sūrah* 74, which claimed to be either the very first revelation or the first after *fatrat al-wahy*.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, al-Ṭabarī made a strenuous effort to

been? I sent messengers to look for you all the way to Mecca and back.' I said to her, 'I am either a poet or a madman,' but she answered, 'May God save you from that, Abū al-Qāsim! God would not do that to you, considering what I know of your truthfulness, your great trustworthiness, your good character, and your good treatment of your kinsfolk. It is not that, cousin. Perhaps you did see something.' 'Yes,' I said, and told her what I had seen. 'Rejoice, cousin, and stand firm,' she said. 'By him is whose hand is Khadijah's soul, I hope that you may be the prophet of this community.' Then she rose, gathered her garments around her, and went to Waraqah b. Nawfal b. Asad, who was her paternal cousin. He had become a Christian, read the Scriptures, and learned from the people of the Torah and the Gospel. She told him what the Messenger of God had told her that he had seen and heard. Waraqah said, 'Holy! Holy! By Him in whose hand is the soul of Waraqah, if what you say is true, Khadijah, there has come to him the greatest Nāmūs --- meaning by Nāmūs, Gabriel --- he who came to Moses. (That means that) Muḥammad is the prophet of this community. Tell him to stand firm.' Khadijah went back to the Messenger of God and told him what Waraqah had said, and this relieved his anxiety somewhat. When he had completed his retreat he went back to Mecca and, as was his usual practice, went first to the Ka'bah and circumambulated it. Waraqah b. Nawfal met him as he was doing this and said, 'Son of my brother, tell me what you saw or heard.' The Messenger of God did so, and Waraqah said to him, 'By Him in whose hand is my soul, you are the prophet of this community, and there has come to you the greatest Nāmūs, he who came to Moses. They will call you a liar, molest you, drive you out, and fight you. If I live to see that, I will come to God's assistance in a way which he knows.' Then he brought his head close and kissed the top of his head. The Messenger of God went home with his resolve strengthened by what Waraqah had said and with some of his anxiety relieved."

<sup>108</sup> (1) For *ḥadīths* in favor of *Sūrah* 74 as the first revelation at Muḥammad's call, compare the following texts with those by Bukhārī (Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, *Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 365:4 ; III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, *Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 3, no. 1, p. 365:15).

Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1153:3-15 ; Watt, 73-74: "Ibn al-Muthannā --- 'Uthmān b. 'Umar b. Fāris --- 'Alī b. al-Mubārak --- Yahyā, that is Ibn Abī Kathīr: I asked Abū Salamah which part of the Qur'ān had been revealed first, and he replied: 'O you enveloped in your cloak, arise and warn!' I said, 'They say that it was "Recite in the name of your Lord,"' but Abū Salamah replied: I asked Jābir b. 'Abdallāh which part of the Qur'ān had been revealed first, and he said, 'O you enveloped in your cloak.' I said, 'What about "Recite in the name of your Lord?"' but he answered, 'What I am telling you is what the prophet told me. He said, 'I was in retreat on Ḥirā', when I had completed my retreat I came down the mountain and went into the bottom of the wādī. Then I heard a voice calling me; I looked right and left, behind me and in front of me, but could not see anything. Then I looked up, and there he was sitting on a throne between heaven and earth, and I was afraid of him (*fa-khashitu minhu*). Ibn al-Muthannā: These were 'Uthmān b. 'Umar's words, but the correct version is 'I was terror-stricken by him (*fa-ju'ithu minhu*).' Then I went to Khadijah and said, 'Envelop me!' So they enveloped me in a cloak and poured water over me, and then 'O you enveloped in your cloak, arise and warn!' was revealed to me."

Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1153:15-1154:4 ; Watt, 74: "Abū Kurayb --- Wakīf --- 'Alī b. al-Mubārak --- Yahyā b. Abī Kathīr: I asked Abū Salamah which part of the Qur'ān had been revealed first, and he said, 'It was "O you enveloped in your cloak."' I said, 'They say that it was "Recite in the name of your Lord who created,"' but he said, 'I asked Jābir b. 'Abdallāh, and he said, "I am only telling you what the Messenger of God told me. He said, 'I was in retreat on Ḥirā', when I had completed my retreat I came down the mountain and heard a voice. I looked left and right and saw nothing, and behind me and saw nothing. Then I raised my head and saw something, and went to Khadijah and said, "Envelop me!" So they enveloped me in a cloak and poured water on me, and then "O you enveloped in your cloak" was revealed to me.'"

collect relevant *ḥadīths* on the event of Muḥammad's call. Thus, we find al-Ṭabarī providing two *ḥadīths* that differ on the nature of the *taḥannuth* that Muḥammad is alleged to have practiced: one holds that Muḥammad practiced it as it was a Quraysh custom, while another maintains that Muḥammad did it because he came to love solitude. Ibn Ishāq chose the former. Ibn Saʿd and al-Bukhārī preferred the latter. Al-Ṭabarī provides both.<sup>109</sup>

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(2) For *ḥadīths* in favor of *Sūrah* 74 as the first revelation after *fatrat al-wahy*, compare the following texts with those by Bukhārī (Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, *Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, *Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 4, no. 1, p. 366:4 ; III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, *Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 5, no. 1, p. 366:11).

Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1155:6-15 ; Watt, 76: "Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Aʿlā --- Ibn Thawr --- Maʿmar --- al-Zuhrī: The inspiration ceased to come to the Messenger of God for a while, and he was deeply grieved. He began to go to the tops of mountain crags, in order to fling himself from them; but every time he reached the summit of a mountain, Gabriel appeared to him and said to him, 'You are the Prophet of God.' Thereupon his anxiety would subside and he would come back to himself. The Prophet used to relate this story as follows: 'I was walking one day when I saw the angel who used to come to me at Ḥirāʾ on a throne between heaven and earth. I was terror-stricken by him, and I went back to Khadījah and said, 'Wrap me up!' So we wrapped him up (*zammalnāhu*), that is, enveloped him in a cloak (*daththamnāhu*), and God revealed: O you enveloped in your cloak, arise and warn! Your Lord magnify, your raiment purify."

Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1155:16-1156:5 ; Watt, 76: "Yūnus b. ʿAbd al-Aʿlā --- Ibn Wahb --- Yūnus --- Ibn Shihāb --- Abū Salamah b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān --- Jābir b. ʿAbdallāh al-Anṣārī: The Messenger of God said, relating the story of the interruption or gap in the revelation, 'As I was walking, I heard a voice from heaven. I looked up, and suddenly saw the angel who came to me at Ḥirāʾ seated on a throne between heaven and earth. I was terror-stricken and went (to Khadījah) and said 'Wrap me up! Wrap me up!' They enveloped me in my cloak, and God revealed, 'O you enveloped in your cloak, arise and warn ... ' as far as 'and pollution shun.' After that, the revelation came in regular succession."

<sup>109</sup> Muḥammad's practice of *taḥannuth* appears twice in al-Ṭabarī, once as a Quraysh custom and again as a non-Quraysh one. For the former, see al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5-1152:5 ; Watt, 70-73 ; for the latter, see the following *ḥadīth*: Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1-1148:8 ; Watt, 67-69: "Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān, known as Abū al-Jawzā --- Wahb b. Jarīr --- his father --- al-Nuʿmān b. Rāshid --- al-Zuhrī --- ʿUrwah --- ʿĀʾishah: The first form in which the revelation came to the Messenger of God was true vision; this used to come to him like the break of dawn. After that, he grew to love solitude and used to remain in a cave on Ḥirāʾ engaged in acts of devotion for a number of days before returning to his family. Then he would return to his family and supply himself with provisions for a similar number of days. This continued until the Truth came to him unexpectedly, and said, 'Muḥammad, you are the Messenger of God.' (Describing what happened next,) the Messenger of God said, 'I had been standing, but fell to my knees; and crawled away, my shoulders trembling. I went to Khadījah and said, "Wrap me up! Wrap me up!" When the terror had left me, he came to me and said, "Muḥammad, you are the Messenger of God." He (Muḥammad) said: I had been thinking of hurling myself down from a mountain crag, but he appeared to me, as I was thinking about this, and said, 'Muḥammad, I am Gabriel and you are the Messenger of God.' Then he said, 'Recite!' I said, 'What shall I recite?' He took me and pressed me three times tightly until I was nearly stifled and was utterly exhausted, then he said: 'Recite in the name of your Lord who created,' and I recited it. Then I went to Khadījah and said, 'I have been in my fear for life.' When I told her what had happened, she said, 'Rejoice, for God will never put you to shame, for you treat your kinsfolk well, tell the truth, deliver what is entrusted to you, endure fatigue, offer hospitality to the guest, and aid people in misfortune.' Then she took



Many discrepancies and contradictions are found among the *ḥadīths* that al-Ṭabarī presents, which in turn account for the continuing trend of narrative evolution on Muḥammad's call: common narrative elements, i.e. true vision, *taḥannuth*, suicide attempt, vision of a heavenly being on the horizon, etc., were combined and woven into a new context. As mentioned in the previous pages,<sup>110</sup> the *ḥadīth* alleged to have been transmitted through al-Zuhrī --- 'Urwah --- 'Ā'ishah contains Muḥammad's experience of true vision in

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me to Waraqah b. Nawfal b. Asad and said to him 'Listen to your brother's son.' He questioned me and I told him what had happened. He said. 'This is the Nāmūs which was sent down to Moses, son of 'Imrān. Would that I were young man now, and would that I could be alive when your people drive you out!' I said, 'Will they drive me out?' 'Yes,' he said. 'No man has ever brought the message which you have brought without being met with enmity. If I live to see that day, I shall come firmly to your aid.' 'The first parts of the Qur'ān to be revealed to me after the *Iqra'* were:

Nūn. By the pen, and that which they write. You are not, through your Lord's favor to you, a madman. Yours will be a reward unfailing, and you are of a great nature. You shall see and they shall see.

and:

O you enveloped in your cloak, arise and warn!

and:

By the forenoon, and by the night when it is still."

See below for a similar *ḥadīth*.

Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1148:8-11 ; Watt, 69: "Yūnus b. 'Abd al-A'ālā --- Ibn Wahb --- Yūnus --- Ibn Shihāb --- 'Urwah --- 'Ā'ishah: A similar account, but omitting the last part from the words "The last part of the Qur'ān....."

Al-Ṭabarī also provides a *ḥadīth* that is very similar to the *ḥadīths* in al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5-1152:5 and 1147:1-1148:8 in its description of Muḥammad's call and the revelation of *Sūrah* 96, but it is entirely silent about Muḥammad's practice of *taḥannuth*.

Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1148:11-1149:5 ; Watt, 69-70: "Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. Abī al-Shawārib --- 'Abd al-Wāḥid b. Ziyād --- Sulaymān al-Shaybānī - 'Abd Allāh b. Shaddād: Gabriel came to Muḥammad and said, 'O Muḥammad, recite!' He said, 'I cannot recite.' Gabriel was violent towards him and then said again, 'O Muḥammad, recite!' He said, 'I cannot recite,' and Gabriel was again was violent towards him. A third time he said, 'O Muḥammad, recite!' He said, 'What shall I recite?' and he said:

Recite in the name of our Lord who creates! He creates man from a clot of blood. Recite: And your Lord is the Most Bountiful, He who teaches by the pen, teaches man what he knew not.

Then he went to Khadijah and said, 'Khadijah, I think that I have gone mad.' 'No, by God,' she said. 'Your Lord would never do that to you. You have never committed a wicked act.' Khadijah went to Waraqah b. Nawfal and told him what had happened. He said, 'If what you say is true, your husband is a prophet. He will meet adversity from his people. If I live long enough, I shall believe in him.' After this, Gabriel did not come to him for a while, and Khadijah said to him, 'I think that your Lord must have come to hate you.' Then God revealed to him:

By the forenoon, and by the night when it is still, your Lord has not forsaken you, nor does he hate you."

<sup>110</sup> See p. 31.

Ibn Ishāq, but true vision plus *taḥannuth* in Ibn Saʿd. At the time of al-Bukhārī, it included true vision, *taḥannuth* and the revelation of *Sūrah* 96 merged in a single connected narrative. In al-Ṭabarī, it follows al-Bukhārī, and they share many narrative elements, but the context and the detailed narrative sequences are entirely different. According to al-Ṭabarī's version, which is reported to have been transmitted from Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān, --- Wahb b. Jarīr --- his father --- al-Nuʿmān b. Rāshid --- al-Zuhrī --- ʿUrwah --- ʿĀʾishah, Muḥammad experienced true vision, and when he practiced *taḥannuth*, suddenly the truth (*al-ḥaqq*) came to him, declaring that he is the messenger of God. Muḥammad rushed home. Then, afraid and unsure of himself, he attempted suicide on a mountain, but Gabriel appeared, stopped him and pressed him to recite *Sūrah* 96. In al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad is said to have experienced true vision in his sleep and there is no indication that the truth came to him saying "you (Muḥammad) are the messenger of God," nor of any suicidal attempt. There, Muḥammad received *Sūrah* 96 through an unspecified angel while engaged in *taḥannuth*. He became afraid and rushed home. Interestingly enough, although the *ḥadīths* in both collections do not agree on the fundamental aspects of Muḥammad's call; the remainder of the stories are basically identical, sharing the same popular themes such as the roles of Khadijah and Waraqah. It is also worth noting that although the above-quoted *ḥadīth* in al-Ṭabarī entirely differs in its content and structure from that of Ibn Saʿd, Khadijah's remarks in consoling Muḥammad remain compatible. Even if the textual differences between the three *ḥadīths* of al-Bukhārī's and those of al-Ṭabarī were due to later authorities following the common chains al-Zuhrī --- ʿUrwah --- ʿĀʾishah, it seems impossible to trace the original form of the *ḥadīth*.

A comparison of the traditions concerning the revelation of *Sūrah* 74 in both al-Bukhārī and al-Ṭabarī also reveals some noteworthy characteristics. Eleven *ḥadīths* are provided *in toto*, seven in al-Bukhārī and four in al-Ṭabarī. With the exception of one *ḥadīth* in al-Ṭabarī, all the *ḥadīths* are ascribed to Abū Salamah b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān --- Jābir b.

‘Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī. In the four *ḥadīths* (two in al-Bukhārī<sup>111</sup> and two in al-Ṭabarī<sup>112</sup>), Muḥammad is said to have received *Sūrah* 74 at the event of his call. Shortly before it was revealed, Muḥammad had a vision of a heavenly being on his way down from Mount Ḥirā’ following his practice of retreat (*jīwār*). But they differ as to the object of Muḥammad’s visionary experience: Muḥammad saw "something (*huwa*), according to two *ḥadīths* (one in al-Bukhārī<sup>113</sup>, and another in al-Ṭabarī<sup>114</sup>); whereas Muḥammad saw "he (*huwa*)," according to another two *ḥadīths* (one in al-Bukhārī<sup>115</sup>, and another in al-Ṭabarī).<sup>116</sup> It is hard to tell how this discrepancy came to exist, although we can suspect, from the *isnāds* of the texts, that, broadly speaking the difference might have been due to the later authorities after Yaḥyā b. Abī Kathīr (i. e. Wakī’ for the *ḥadīth* that claims Muḥammad’s visionary object as "something," and Ḥarb or ‘Uthmān b. ‘Umar b. Fāris for the *ḥadīth* in which the object is regarded as "he").

In the remaining seven *ḥadīths*,<sup>117</sup> *Sūrah* 74 was revealed at *fatrat al-waḥy*. Unlike the four *ḥadīths* which claim it was the first Qur’ānic revelation, these seven *ḥadīths* remain identical and do not mention Muḥammad’s practice of retreat in the cave of Ḥirā’. Rather, Muḥammad is said to have experienced the vision of a heavenly being simply while he was walking, and his visionary object is reported to have been the same angel who appeared to Muḥammad at the event of his call. In terms of *isnāds*, there is a significant difference

<sup>111</sup> Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 365:4 ; *bāb* 3, no. 1, p. 365:15.

<sup>112</sup> (1) Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1153:3-15 ; Watt, 73-74 ; (2) Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1153:15-1154:4 ; Watt, 74.

<sup>113</sup> Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 365:4: Yaḥyā --- Wakī’ --- ‘Alī b. al-Mubārak --- Yaḥyā b. Abī Kathīr --- Abū Salamah b. ‘Abd al-Raḥman --- Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh.

<sup>114</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1153:15: Abū Kurayb --- Wakī’ --- ‘Alī b. al-Mubārak --- Yaḥyā b. Abī Kathīr --- Abū Salamah b. ‘Abd al-Raḥman --- Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh.

<sup>115</sup> Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 3, no. 1, p. 365:15: Ishaq b. Maṣṣūr --- ‘Abd al-Ṣamad --- Ḥarb --- Yaḥyā b. Abī Kathīr --- Abū Salamah b. ‘Abd al-Raḥman --- Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh.

<sup>116</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1153:3: Ibn al-Muthannā --- ‘Uthmān b. ‘Umar b. Fāris --- ‘Alī b. al-Mubārak --- Yaḥyā b. Abī Kathīr --- Abū Salamah b. ‘Abd al-Raḥman --- Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh.

<sup>117</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna bad’ al-waḥy*, no. 3, p. 6:1 ; III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 4, no. 1, p. 366:4 ; III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 5, no. 1, p. 366:11 ; III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 381:5 ; III, 59 *Kitāb Bad’ al-Khalq, bāb* 7, no. 15, p. 313:10.

between the two groups of *ḥadīths*: in the four *ḥadīths* which regard *Sūrah* 74 as the first revelation, Yaḥyā b. Abī Kathīr --- Abū Salamah b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān --- Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī are the common early authorities, while in six *ḥadīths* out of seven *ḥadīths* which claim that it was revealed at *fatrat al-waḥy*, the common early authorities are al-Zuhrī --- Abū Salamah b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān --- Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī.<sup>118</sup>

The common elements between the two groups of the *ḥadīths* are: (1) Muḥammad had a vision of a certain heavenly being on the horizon; (2) he asked to be wrapped up in garments; (3) *Sūrah* 74 was revealed. Even if we might presume, on the basis of the *isnāds*, that Yaḥyā b. Abī Kathīr regarded a tradition from Abū Salamah b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān --- Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī to have belonged to Muḥammad's first prophetic call, and al-Zuhrī considered that it fit into Muḥammad's religious experience at *fatrat al-waḥy*, it is still difficult, even impossible, to retrieve the original form might have been. Significant differences remain to be settled: whether Muḥammad practiced *jūwār* on *Ḥirāʾ* before he experienced the vision of a heavenly being, and what the object of his vision was. It is also noteworthy that the earliest authorities of the *ḥadīths* concerning the revelation of *Sūrah* 74 were not always alleged to have been transmitted from Abū Salamah b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān --- Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī. According to a *ḥadīth* in al-Ṭabarī, *Sūrah* 74 was revealed at *fatrat al-waḥy*; there, the text, which is normally attributed to "al-Zuhrī --- Abū Salamah b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān --- Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī" is combined with a *ḥadīth* concerning his experience when revelation ceased to come for a short time, and claims al-Zuhrī as its earliest authority without mentioning al-Zuhrī --- Abū Salamah b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān --- Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī.

To sum up the development of Muslim narration on Muḥammad's call from Ibn

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<sup>118</sup> One *ḥadīth* which says that *Sūrah* 74 was revealed at *fatrat al-waḥy* claims al-Zuhrī as the earliest authority without mentioning Abū Salamah b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān --- Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī (al-Ṭabarī, III, 1155:7).

Ishāq to al-Ṭabarī, we may trace new narration to Muslims' unlimited utilization of narrative elements: chronology, the first Qurʾānic revelation, the agent of revelation, Muḥammad's vision of a heavenly being on the horizon, the place where Muḥammad was called to prophethood, *taḥannuth*, Khadījah's role, Waraqah's role and his biographical information, Muḥammad's suicide attempt. Hand in hand with the evolution of the narratives went the phenomenon that Muslims often attributed irreconcilable *ḥadīths* to the same early authorities, probably in the hope that it could highlight their claim as more authentic. Thus, we have colorful pictures of Muḥammad's call; Muḥammad was called to be a prophet in the month of Ramaḍān at the age of forty, or forty three; it was on Friday, the 17th of Ramaḍān, or on Monday, the 17th, or 18th, or 24th of Ramaḍān; the angel, or Gabriel, or Israfil was the agent of the first revelation to Muḥammad; Muḥammad was called to prophethood at the cave on Ḥirāʾ, or simply on Ḥirāʾ, or on his way down from Ḥirāʾ or out in the open at Ajyād; Muḥammad's initial prophetic call was the revelation of *Sūrah* 96, which Muḥammad was commanded to recite by Gabriel who came to him in his sleep (or not) and pressed him with or without a coverlet of brocade, or by the angel who pressed him; or Muḥammad's initial prophetic call was his vision of a heavenly being on the horizon often affiliated with the revelation of *Sūrah* 74; what he saw on the horizon was Gabriel, or *huwa*, or *shayʿan*, or the angel; Muḥammad practiced *taḥannuth* as a Quraysh custom or because he came to love solitude after his experience of true vision or simply after his experience of true vision; he experienced true vision in his sleep or not; he went to Ḥirāʾ to practice *taḥannuth* alone or with his family; Muḥammad attempted suicide for fear of the divine manifestation after the revelation of *Sūrah* 96, or before it when *al-ḥaqq* came to him saying he was Allāh's apostle, or he tried suicide when revelation ceased coming for a while, or whenever revelation stopped; after an initial prophetic experience, Muḥammad conveyed with Khadījah and they went to consult Waraqah for the experience together, or Khadījah went alone and Muḥammad later met Waraqah separately, or whether or not Khadījah

approached Waraqah for the first time was a concern for some Muslims; as Khadijah's cousin, Waraqah was a blind old Christian who used to write in Hebrew, or in Arabic, or he was a Christian who read the scriptures and learned from those that followed the Torah and the Gospel, or he, not as a blind man, but simply as a Christian, used to read the Gospels in Arabic, or no biographical information of his was mentioned at all. Even if the different stories that share common narrative particles were not deliberately invented, it must be admitted in face of textual evidence that there was a creation of narration through transmission, whether oral or written.<sup>119</sup> In the time of al-Ṭabarī, this tendency certainly existed, and al-Ṭabarī, "the 'imām' of *Hadith* historiography,"<sup>120</sup> faithfully reveals it to us.

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<sup>119</sup> The origin of recorded *ḥadīth* is certainly a controversial topic in modern Islamic scholarship. A brief introduction as well as references to the topic may be obtained from Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, p. 20, n. 6. See also Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 76-87.

<sup>120</sup> Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, 73.

## CHAPTER TWO

### MODERN INTERPRETATION OF MUḤAMMAD'S CALL

In the previous chapter, we discussed the manner in which Muslim sources presented Muḥammad's call. Each of the four traditionists discussed, i.e. Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Sa'd, al-Bukhārī and al-Ṭabarī, had his own perception of Muḥammad's call and his own editing scheme for arranging and selecting *ḥadīths*. In the course of the survey, we also observed that the textual evidence shows the evolution of *ḥadīth* around certain narrative elements from the time of Ibn Ishāq to that of al-Ṭabarī; many discrepancies are found in narrative details. The *ḥadīths* do not agree with each other on what really happened to Muḥammad during his call. The only consensus the traditions seem to present is that the Muslims who transmitted the *ḥadīths* about the event of Muḥammad's call, whether oral or written, were not certain about what really happened. In fact, out of the six common principles that historical writing is based on (when, where, who, what, how, and why), they agree on only two: who and what --- Muḥammad had a certain fundamental religious experience.

The four traditionists offer little comment on the contents of the *ḥadīth*, nor do they dare to interpret them. In those days, the *muḥaddith's* task was "decisively *not* to interpret or evaluate the past as such; rather, he was simply to determine which reports about it (*akhbār*) were acceptable and to compile these reports in a convenient order."<sup>1</sup> This being the case, the task of analyzing the sources to discern the kernel of truth surrounding Muḥammad's call is left in the hands of modern readers. Unfortunately, modern Islamicists generally reconstruct the event of Muḥammad's call by singling out one *ḥadīth* as reliable or synthesizing several different *ḥadīths* without using a critical methodology. For instance,

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<sup>1</sup> Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 74.

Alfred Guillaume accepts the *ḥadīth* of Ibn Ishāq.<sup>2</sup> Maxime Rodinson considers the *ḥadīth* on the authority of Aḥmad ʿUthmān preserved in al-Ṭabarī reliable.<sup>3</sup> F. M. Denny reconstructs the event by connecting that *ḥadīth* with an anecdote about Muḥammad's visionary experience of a heavenly being on the horizon.<sup>4</sup> In his prize-winning book *Muhammad*, Martin Lings reconstructs the event of Muḥammad's call based on the earliest sources, namely the *ḥadīths* of Ibn Ishāq and al-Bukhārī.<sup>5</sup> None of the scholars explains what, if any, criteria he uses for determining the acceptable *ḥadīth*, remaining silent about the reason why one *ḥadīth* is deemed more reliable than another. Some other scholars examine the *ḥadīths* against the Qurʾānic verses and reached different conclusions. Thus, Tor Andrae confidently affirms that "the legend of the call which Ibn Saʿd accepted reproduces most faithfully the actual event."<sup>6</sup> In his book "*Muhammad at Mecca*," W. M. Watt expresses his positive view that the earliest *ḥadīths* from al-Zuhri, if handled properly, can offer us a generally reliable picture about the event of Muḥammad's call.<sup>7</sup> The Qurʾānic verses do not, however, yield any solid historical information on the event of the call: they only refer to various modes of Muḥammad's religious experiences.

Schacht states that this attitude seems to result from "historical intuition" which "takes the place of sound historical criticism" and with which an historian attempts to "arrive at positive conclusions" from contradictory *ḥadīths*.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the traditional accounts of Muḥammad's call are too inconsistent to be reconciled and seem to be a later exegetical reading of the Qurʾānic allusions to Muḥammad's religious experience rather than an authentic description of the event. This chapter will evaluate modern Western

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<sup>2</sup> Guillaume, *Islam*, 28-30.

<sup>3</sup> Rodinson, *Mohammed*, 70-71.

<sup>4</sup> Denny, *Islam*, 26-27 ; *An Introduction to Islam*, 60-61.

<sup>5</sup> Lings, *Muhammad*, 43-45.

<sup>6</sup> Andrae, *Mohammed*, 47.

<sup>7</sup> Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, 39-59.

<sup>8</sup> Schacht, "A Revaluation of Islamic Traditions," 142-143.



interpretations of the event by reference to representative influential Western scholars, such as Andrae and Watt. In so doing, this chapter will discuss what can be learnt and unlearnt about Muḥammad's call as a historical event, and attempt to show that extracting any historical information from inconsistent *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call, as some Islamicists have done, is not feasible.

### A. Chronology

Muslim accounts of the chronology of Muḥammad's call have a unique style of exposition: Muslims kept the *ḥadīths* about the time and the manner of the first revelation separate. Thus, it is very rare to find *ḥadīths* connecting the chronological scheme with a description of the event. Most simply tell the age, month, date and day in which Muḥammad was called without providing details of the event. Muslim traditions endeavor to know when Muḥammad was called to prophethood, but they do not succeed in establishing a consensus; moreover, Muslim attempts to establish the chronology of Muḥammad's call appear to have been built around a certain popular religious belief, or an exegetical expansion of the Qurʾānic references to Muḥammad's revelatory and prophetical experiences.

Muslim accounts unanimously hold that Muḥammad became a prophet in the month of Ramaḍān.<sup>9</sup> This uniformity is derived from Qurʾān 2:181 (185):

The month of Ramaḍān, wherein the Qurʾān was sent down to be a guidance to the people, and as clear signs of the Guidance and the Salvation.

From other verses,<sup>10</sup> we know that the Qurʾān was revealed gradually; thus the above verse might not be implying that the Qurʾān was revealed as a whole as we now have it. The term

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<sup>9</sup> Wagtendonk denies that Muḥammad's call took place in the month of Ramaḍān. According to him, it occurred on the night of the 27th of Rajab. See his *Fasting in the Koran*, 60-68 and 82-122.

<sup>10</sup> Qurʾān 17: 106 (107) ; 25: 32 (34).

"Qurʾān" in the above verse may refer to a single passage recited,<sup>11</sup> or to a collection of such passages already delivered.<sup>12</sup> This would be probably all we can say about the verse. It is by no means certain from this verse what part of the Qurʾān was revealed in the month of Ramaḍān. Nor is it possible to tell whether it means that Muḥammad had his first Qurʾānic revelation in the month of Ramaḍān. In fact, the Qurʾān does not mention the moment of Muḥammad's first revelation. Nevertheless, from Qurʾān 2:181 (185), Muslim traditionists have deduced that Muḥammad was called to prophethood in the month of Ramaḍān. Indeed, Ibn Ishāq cites this verse as his source for the chronology of Muḥammad's call.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, some *ḥadīths* even connect the event of Muḥammad's call with the Battle of Badr by exegetically reading Qurʾān 2:181 (185) and 8:41 together: in the former verse, Qurʾān was sent down in the month of Ramaḍān, and in the latter, a certain form of Qurʾān was revealed on the day when the two armies met allegedly at Badr. Neither verse refers specifically to the moment of Muḥammad's initial prophetic call. Muslim traditions interpret, however, that both events fell on the same date: the 17th of Ramaḍān.<sup>14</sup> The tendency for Muslim traditionists to extract chronological information on Muḥammad's call from Qurʾānic verses is also observed in the *ḥadīths* of both Ibn Ishāq and al-Ṭabarī, which claim the call took place in the night. They are apparently exegetical readings of Qurʾān 44:1-4 and 97:1 where the Book (Qurʾān) was sent down in a blessed night or on the Night of Power (*Laylat al-qadr*), although these verses do not specifically refer to Muḥammad's first revelation.

Other *ḥadīths* do not necessarily link the date of Muḥammad's call to that of the Battle of Badr, but they still hold on to the exegetical reading of Qurʾān 2: 181 (185) that Muḥammad was called in the month of Ramaḍān. Moreover, they seem to calculate the date

<sup>11</sup> Qurʾān 10:61 (62) ; 13:30 (31).

<sup>12</sup> Watt, *Bell's Introduction to the Qurʾān* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994) 136.

<sup>13</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 155 ; Guillaume, 111.

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 155 (see Chapter 1, p. 16-17) ; Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129:9 and II/1, 13 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1142-43.

of the event on the basis of popular belief in "propitious" or "sacred" Mondays among early Muslims; thus Muḥammad was believed to have been conceived,<sup>15</sup> been born,<sup>16</sup> received his call,<sup>17</sup> migrated to Medina<sup>18</sup> and even died<sup>19</sup> on Mondays. According to this belief, Ibn Saʿd and al-Ṭabarī offer three different dates: the seventeenth, eighteenth, and twenty-fourth of Ramaḍān.<sup>20</sup> Having considered Muslim utilizations of the Qurʾānic allusions and a popular religious belief as the basis of the chronology, i.e., month, day, and date, of the event of Muḥammad's call, it seems hard to accept them as reliable sources for the historical Muḥammad.

Early Muslims were not confident about Muḥammad's age at the time of his call and put forward two opinions: forty and forty-three. Ibn Ishāq states that Muḥammad became a prophet at the age of forty<sup>21</sup> and started to preach in public at the age of forty-three.<sup>22</sup> Ibn Saʿd simply presents various *ḥadīths* without revealing his own interpretation: Muḥammad became a prophet at the age of forty or forty-three. Al-Bukhārī accepts the *ḥadīths* that claim that Muḥammad was called to prophethood at the age of forty. After exhaustively presenting different *ḥadīths* on the matter of age, al-Ṭabarī suggests, like Ibn Ishāq, that Muḥammad received his call at the age of forty and started to summon people openly to God at the age of forty-three.<sup>23</sup> If we may translate the term "*raʾs*" as "the beginning," it seems that some of early Muslims wanted to establish a more specific time for the event,

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<sup>15</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 60.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1141-1142 ; Watt, 62.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1141-1142. See also Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129.

<sup>18</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 415 ; Guillaume, 281.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, IV, 1836-1837.

<sup>20</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1141-1143.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 10, n. 10.

<sup>22</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 150 ; Guillaume, 104. Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 166 ; Guillaume, 117.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1248-50 ; Watt, 155-156.

possibly the beginning of Muḥammad's fortieth year.<sup>24</sup> Many *ḥadīths* concerning Muḥammad's age at his call are combined with his stay in Mecca as a prophet and are expressed, for example, as "The Messenger of God commenced his mission at the age of forty, and remained in Mecca for thirteen years."<sup>25</sup> The length of Muḥammad's stay in Mecca does not contribute to our search for Muḥammad's age at his call, since there is no agreement on this matter; although two dominant opinions reckon it as either ten or thirteen years, there are also *ḥadīths* that claim it was eight or fifteen years. In an effort to make some sense out of the different reports, al-Ṭabarī seems to suggest that those who think that Muḥammad stayed in Mecca for ten years calculated the length of his stay from the time that he began to preach in public at the age of forty-three, while the others who believe that Muḥammad spent thirteen years in Mecca count from the beginning of his prophethood at the age of forty.

Al-Ṭabarī's analysis is not, however, successful. First of all, al-Ṭabarī himself did not take into consideration a *ḥadīth* in which Muḥammad is said to have become a prophet at the age of forty; after which he spent ten years in Mecca, not thirteen.<sup>26</sup> Second, in al-Ṭabarī, *ḥadīths* agree that Muḥammad spent ten years in Medina until his death. If al-

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<sup>24</sup> See al-Ṭabarī, III, 1139 : Watt, 60: "Al-ʿAbbās b. al-Walīd --- his father --- al-Awzāʿī --- Rabīʿah b. Abī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān --- Anas b. Mālik: The Messenger of God commenced his mission at the beginning of his fortieth year." Arabic text read: *Anna rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallama buʿītha ʿalā raʿs arbaʿīn*. In al-Ṭabarī alone, the phrase "*ʿalā raʿs arbaʿīn*" shows up three times. See the following traditions in the same page: (a) ʿAmr b. ʿAlī and Ibn al-Muthannā --- Yahyā b. Muḥammad b. Qays --- Rabīʿah b. Abī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān --- Anas b. Mālik: ... *Rasūl Allāh ... buʿītha ʿalā raʿs arbaʿīn*.; (b) Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Barqī --- ʿAmr b. Abī Salamah --- al-Awzāʿī --- Rabīʿah b. Abī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān --- Anas b. Mālik: ... *Rasūl Allāh ... buʿītha ʿalā raʿs arbaʿīn*. The term *raʿs* could be used for emphasis, in which case the sentence would mean: Muḥammad was called to prophethood "exactly" at the age of forty, no more and no less than that. On the other hand, the term *raʿs* can mean both "the beginning" and "the end." (Arabic-English Lexicon I, 3: 995-996). Therefore, it can mean that Muḥammad was called to prophethood either at the beginning or at the end of his fortieth year. The translation by Watt and McDonald is misleading. They translate the "*ʿalā raʿs arbaʿīn*" as "the beginning of the fortieth year" in the tradition from al-ʿAbbās b. al-Walīd on Anas b. Mālik, while as "the end of the fortieth year" in (a) and (b). They do not explain why. See their translation of the traditions in Watt, 60.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1140 : Watt, 61.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1246 : Watt, 153.

Ṭabarī's interpretation stands firm, Muḥammad must have died at the age of sixty-three. However, al-Ṭabarī neither considers Muḥammad's age at his death in his interpretation, nor was he sure of when Muḥammad died. He merely suggests three possibilities: sixty, sixty-three and sixty-five. Furthermore, al-Ṭabarī's analysis cannot account for the *ḥadīths* in Ibn Saʿd in which Muḥammad is said to have remained in Mecca for fifteen years,<sup>27</sup> nor the *ḥadīths* in al-Bukhārī in which Muḥammad became a prophet at the age of forty, stayed for ten years each in Mecca and Medina<sup>28</sup> and died at the age of sixty-three.<sup>29</sup> The *ḥadīths* on the length of Muḥammad's stay in Mecca are too contradictory to be reconciled. There might be a kernel of truth somewhere in the various *ḥadīths*, but the hazy memories of early Muslims do not allow us to discern it.

Muslim discussion of Muḥammad's age at the time of his call cannot be deemed reliable for the historical reconstruction of the event: the *ḥadīths* which claim that he was called at the age of forty seem to have been based on both pagan Arab and Islamic belief in the number forty as a symbolic number: 'forty' indicated a man had reached maturity.<sup>30</sup> Largely founded on *ḥadīths* in which Muḥammad is said to have become a prophet in his fortieth year, the *ḥadīths* placing Muḥammad's age at forty-three years old at the time of his call also appear to be an effort to account for the three year difference between when Muḥammad had certain prophetic experiences without receiving any Qurʾānic revelation and the time that he began to receive it, rather than a historical reference.

Accepting the generally prevalent traditional account that Muḥammad was called to prophethood at the age of forty, some Islamicists believe the event must have taken place

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<sup>27</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 151.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Bukhārī, II, 61 *Kitāb al-Manāqib*, *bāb* 23, no. 6, p. 391:18 ; *bāb* 23, no. 7, p. 392:4.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Bukhārī, II, 61 *Kitāb al-Manāqib*, *bāb* 19, no. 1, p. 390:7.

<sup>30</sup> Lawrence I. Conrad, "Abraha and Muḥammad: Some Observations Apropos of Chronology and Literary *Topoi* in the Early Arabic Historical Tradition," *BSOAS* 50 (1987): 232.

around 610.<sup>31</sup> This calculation is based on the Muslim belief that Muḥammad was born in the year of the Elephant, roughly 570, when Abraha's incursion into the Ḥijāz region was defeated by the Meccans with divine assistance. Recent archeological evidence uncovered in the Murayghān inscription suggests that Abraha's expedition may have happened prior to 554.<sup>32</sup> If the Muslim accounts that link the birth of Muḥammad to the expedition of Abraha are reliable and Muḥammad was called to prophethood at the age of forty as many traditions allege then his initial prophetical call must have taken place before 594.

It is hard to accept this postulation for two reasons. First of all, it must be emphasized that there is an underlying theological reflection involved in the Muslim accounts which place the birth of Muḥammad in the year of the Elephant: Muḥammad was born during a time in which God manifested his divine power in the affairs of the Meccans. Furthermore, some Arabic literature does not connect the birth of Muḥammad with the expedition of Abraha but places the expedition in the year 552, very close to the date of the Murayghān inscription.<sup>33</sup> Thus the birth of Muḥammad in the Year of Elephant should not be understood as a historical event but rather as a theological one. Secondly, as Lawrence I. Conrad demonstrates, Muslim accounts asserting that Muḥammad was forty years old at his call were a reflection of the popular belief that the number forty symbolized "notions of perfection, completion, or culmination."<sup>34</sup> The number forty is simply symbolic and a literary *topos*. Conrad put forward two Qurʾānic verses along with a large amount of traditional evidence to support his thesis. First of all, Qurʾān 10:17 (16) reads:

Say: "Had God willed I would not have recited it to you, neither would He have taught you it; I abode among you a lifetime before it --- will you not understand?"

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<sup>31</sup> We may take Watt and Denny for example. Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca*, 33, 59 ; *Muḥammad*, 12. Denny, *Islam*, 27 ; *An Introduction to Islam*, 60-61.

<sup>32</sup> Conrad, "Abraha and Muḥammad," 227-228.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 228 ; M. J. Kister, "The Campaign of Ḥulubān: A New Light on the Expedition of Abraha" *Le Muséon* 78 (1965): 427-8.

<sup>34</sup> Conrad, "Abraha and Muḥammad," 230.

Here *ʿumr* is the term for "lifetime" and was interpreted as a period of forty years by the medieval exegetes in accordance with the more general symbolism of forty.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Qurʾān 46: 15 reads:

Until, when he is fully grown, and reaches forty years, he says, "O my Lord, dispose me that I may be thankful for Thy blessing wherewith Thou hast blessed me and my father and mother, and that I may do righteousness well-pleasing to Thee; and make me righteous also in my seed. Behold, I repent to Thee, and am among those that surrender."

The verse clearly expresses that "the fully grown man is said to be the one who has reached the age of forty."<sup>36</sup> Thus Muḥammad's age as forty at his call should be interpreted not as a historical fact, but as the *topos* of *Akme*, "the view commonly held in both pagan Arabian and Islamic culture that a man only reaches the peak of his physical and intellectual powers when he becomes forty years old."<sup>37</sup> It refers to "the message of Muḥammad's qualifications for prophethood, and probably originates in application of the *topos* 'forty' to the exegesis of the Qurʾānic reference to 'his lifetime' (*ʿumr*) among his people prior to the *mabʿuth*."<sup>38</sup>

If Muslim accounts which present Muḥammad's age as forty years old at the time of his call do not contain historical information as Conrad powerfully demonstrates, it is hard to trust *ḥadīths* placing Muḥammad's age at forty-three years old at the time of his call. While accepting that Muḥammad's call occurred when he was forty years old, they seem to associate the beginning of his prophethood with his public teaching of Qurʾānic revelation to the Meccans, just as the *ḥadīths* which claim that Muḥammad became a prophet at the age of forty allege Muḥammad to have done so three years later. According to one *ḥadīth*, Muḥammad was associated with Isrāʾīl for three years before receiving any revelation, after

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 232-233.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 237.

which Gabriel came to him with Qurʾānic revelation.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps the *ḥadīths* which place Muḥammad's age at forty-three years old at the time of his call indicate that Muḥammad was called to prophethood without receiving Qurʾānic revelation at the age of forty, and began to receive revelation three years later. In this case, still, it is supposed that Muḥammad had a non-Qurʾānic religious experience at the age of forty.

What can be discerned from the traditional dating of Muḥammad's call not possesses little historical value. The *ḥadīths*' rendering of the date, day, month and Muḥammad's age at his call is a theological and religious reflection largely based on an exegetical reading of the Qurʾānic verses. The only possible way for us to date Muḥammad's call would be to consider that it happened some time before his *hijrah*, conventionally dated as 622.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/I, 151 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1249.

<sup>40</sup> Chinese chronicles throw some doubt on this traditional dating, accepted by both Muslim and Western scholars. According to *Chiu T'ang-shu* and *Hsin T'ang-shu*, in 651, a delegation sent by the Arabs to the Royal court of Tang dynasty is reported to have said that their country had been being ruled for 34 years by three kings. If the Arabs were Muslims, which seems likely, ʿUthmān probably sent the delegation. If we consider three kings to include him, they are Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿUthmān and the statement may indicate that the death of Muḥammad took place in 617 (counting in solar years) or in 618 (counting in lunar years), which places the death of Muḥammad at least 15 years earlier than the conventional dating of 632. If we consider the three kings not to include ʿUthmān, they are Muḥammad, Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. Then, we can consider of two possibilities in interpreting the term 34 years. It might have been calculated from Muḥammad's initial call to prophethood when Islam was about to be conceived, or from his migration to Medina when the Islamic *ummah* began with Muḥammad as its leader. It seems that the latter is more probable of the two, for he is said to have become a ruler there. Then, the statement may imply that the *hijrah* took place in 617 (counting in solar years) or in 618 (counting in lunar years). For the Chinese texts, see *Erh shih wu shih* (Taipei: Yee Wen Publishing, 1956), vol. 24 (*Chiu T'ang-shu* 198:29), p. 2659 b ; vol. 27 (*Hsin T'ang-shu* 221b:19), p. 2558 a. Interestingly enough, Armenian sources somewhat support the Chinese chronicle. According to *History of Lewond*, Muḥammad died after a reign of twenty years and was succeeded by three Amīr al-Muʾminin, i.e., Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿUthman, for thirty-eight years. Conventionally, the reign of the three caliphs is calculated to have lasted 24 years (632-656). Then, the period of 38 years indicates that Muḥammad died prior to the year 618. See Zaven Arzoumanian, trans., *History of Lewond: the Eminent Vardapet of the Armenians* (Philadelphia: St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Church, 1982) 48 ; 152, n. 5. A Greek source does not seem to agree with the above Chinese and Armenian chronicles concerning the death of Muḥammad. According to *Doctrina Iacobi*, Muḥammad is said to have been still alive in the year of 634. See Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 3-4. According to Cook, an Armenian chronicle implies that Muḥammad's community was founded several years after 622, which means that Muḥammad did not die in 617 or 618 as some Chinese and Armenian sources attest. See his *Muhammad*, 75.



## B. Muḥammad's Call

The information available in *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call is vague and indeterminate. The *ḥadīths* can be divided into five main areas of information: true vision, *taḥannuth*, an angelic agent of the first Qurʾānic revelation, Muḥammad's vision on the horizon, and the roles of Khadijah and Waraqah. All share the same lack of coherent narrative and presence of contradictory details that prevent us from establishing the historical circumstances of Muḥammad's call. These facts have been ignored by the Islamicists who have examined these *ḥadīths* and arbitrarily chosen to support one or the other.

According to Muslim traditions, the beginning of revelation for Muḥammad was in the form of true vision (*al-ruʾyā al-ṣādiqah*), which came to him like the break of dawn (*falaq al-ṣubḥ*). The *ḥadīths* disagree, however, as to whether Muḥammad had the vision in his sleep or not. Nevertheless, based on the *ḥadīth* from al-Zuhri in al-Ṭabarī in which Muḥammad had the vision while awake, Watt argues that there are no good grounds for doubting that Muḥammad's prophetic experience began with true vision:<sup>41</sup> this visionary experience is "quite distinct from dreams" and confirms Muḥammad's visionary experience in *Sūrah* 53, where he is said to have had the visionary experience of a heavenly being on the horizon.<sup>42</sup>

Did Muḥammad experience the vision while he was asleep or awake? There is no reconciling the difference. Nor can we possibly reconstruct the visionary experience without explaining the discrepancy which Watt ignores. It is true that in the Qurʾān, both *manām*<sup>43</sup> and *ruʾyā*<sup>44</sup> are modes of Muḥammad's prophetic experiences, often interchangeably used<sup>45</sup>;

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>42</sup> Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca*, 42.

<sup>43</sup> Qurʾān 8:43 (45) ; 30:23 (22) ; 37:102 (101) ; 39:42 (43).

<sup>44</sup> Qurʾān 12:5 ; 12:43 ; 12:100 (101) ; 17:60 (62) ; 37:105 ; 48:27.

one may be tempted, therefore, to regard the differences as insignificant. One may be, however, sceptical of the *ḥadīth* reports on true vision, since it is also true that nowhere in the Qurʾān is *ruʾyā* said to have come to Muḥammad like the break of dawn, nor does the Qurʾān mention true vision as the beginning of revelation for Muḥammad. What can be possibly known from the inconsistent traditional accounts of true vision is that there was a Muslim effort to understand the visionary experience in light of the Qurʾānic evidence. Thus we find in al-Bukhārī that Ibn ʿAbbās explained "the break of dawn (*falaq al-ṣubḥ*)," the form of Muḥammad's true vision, by the Qurʾānic term *al-fāliq al-iṣbāḥ* in 6:96 and described it as the "sunlight during the day and moonlight at night."<sup>46</sup>

Muslim traditions hold that Muḥammad was called to prophethood while practicing *taḥannuth*.<sup>47</sup> But they do not agree as to the nature of the practice, nor why Muḥammad was engaged in it. According to some *ḥadīths*,<sup>48</sup> it was a Quraysh custom performed on Mount Ḥirāʾ for a month every year, and consisting of performing charitable deeds for the poor and the circumambulation of the Kaʿba before returning home. Muḥammad is said to have practiced it according to custom; he went to mount Ḥirāʾ for *taḥannuth* with his family. According to other sources,<sup>49</sup> it was not a Quraysh custom. It is especially significant that even though Ibn Saʿd claims that Muḥammad followed the Quraysh customs,<sup>50</sup> he does not specify *taḥannuth* as one of them, unlike Ibn Ishāq. Nor does he mention any charitable deeds, the veneration of the Kaʿbah or the duration of the practice. Furthermore, in al-

<sup>45</sup> Welch, "Muhammad's Understanding of Himself," 32, n. 50.

<sup>46</sup> Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā*, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 347:4.

<sup>47</sup> This is mentioned seven times in the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call: (1) Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:15; (2) Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129:16; (3) Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna badʾ al-waḥy*, no. 3, p. 4:14; (4) Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2; (5) Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā*, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 347:4; (6) Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5; (7) Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1.

<sup>48</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:16; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5.

<sup>49</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129:16; Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna badʾ al-waḥy*, no. 3, p. 4:14; III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2; IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā*, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 347:4; Al-Ṭabarī, I, 1147:1.

<sup>50</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 126:20.

Bukhārī and al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad is said to have gone to Ḥirāʾ alone and practiced *taḥannuth* specifically in a cave, whereas the *ḥadīths* of Ibn Ishāq and al-Ṭabarī simply say that Muḥammad performed it on Mount Ḥirāʾ.

Modern Islamicists have endeavored to explain *taḥannuth*, but remain unsuccessful in clarifying its origin and meaning.<sup>51</sup> The word *taḥannuth* is not mentioned in the Qurʾān. Nor is it possible to reconstruct the practice through an examination of the Qurʾān.<sup>52</sup> Due to the lack of Qurʾānic evidence for the term, Richard Bell argues that later Muslims fabricated the story based on Christian ascetic practices.<sup>53</sup> Although he does not accept the Muslim fabrication theory, Andrae implies that *taḥannuth* in the cave of Mount Ḥirāʾ is connected to the ascetic practices of Syrian Christianity.<sup>54</sup> Whether a Christian asceticism influenced later Muslim perceptions of *taḥannuth*, or whether it was actually linked to the practice, we cannot know for certain. What is certain is that the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call do not present any ascetic notes: no signs of fasting nor of sexual abstention. A *ḥadīth*

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<sup>51</sup> For more detailed research on this matter, see M. J. Kister, "Al-taḥannuth: An Inquiry into the meaning of a Term," *BSOAS* 31 (1968): 223-236.

<sup>52</sup> John C. Archer contends that Muḥammad as a mystic practiced *taḥannuth* in imitation of a Christian monkish exercise: Regarding the practice as the archetype of prayer, Archer seems to link it to the Qurʾānic verses on prayer (*duʿā*). See Archer, *Mystical Elements in Mohammed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1924) 71 ff.

<sup>53</sup> Richard Bell, "Mohammed's Call," *MW* 24 (1934): 16: "... because of the character of the Meccans as depicted in the Qurʾān, the absence of any record of such a practice in pre-Islamic Arabia, and the fact that the Qurʾān makes no reference to any such practice. In fact, the ascetic note in such a practice was entirely alien to Muḥammad's nature and the accompanying fasts ..... have no support whatever in the early parts of the Qurʾān. Fasting was not introduced until the Medinan period, and then as an imitation of Jewish practice."

<sup>54</sup> Andrae, *Mohammed*. 42-43: "The call of the invisible draws man into silence and solitude. Even the savage seers and prophets love to sojourn in the forest, or upon the mountains, and there await the call of the spirit. But the solitary devotions in the cave of Mount Ḥirāʾ remind us rather of the ascetic practices of Syrian Christianity. Syrian piety was dominated by the ideal of monastic religion. Even the pious laymen loved to retire into solitude at times, in order to live, at least for a while, the perfect life of the hermit. Examples are not lacking to show that pagans also adopted the same practice. It is said of Bishop Habel of Arbela that while he was still a pagan he often deserted the sheep which he tended and 'Sat down in a cave and became absorbed in reflections upon the vanity and nothingness of this world.'" In a similar fashion, Wagtendonk considers it very probable that Muḥammad devoted himself to "ascetic exercises in solitude; perhaps he performed nocturnal ṣalāts. Possibly he fasted during the day and kept the vigil after the custom of the Syrian ascetics (and the ḥanīfs?)." See Wagtendonk, *Fasting in the Koran*, 34.

in al-Bukhārī indicates that Muḥammad carried food when he set out to practice *taḥannuth*.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, according to a *ḥadīth* in Ibn Ishāq, Muḥammad went to Hīrā<sup>3</sup> with his family, which seems to exclude the likelihood of sexual abstention.<sup>56</sup>

Some scholars stress Jewish religious influences on Muslim *taḥannuth*, suggesting that the latter is derived from the Hebrew *teḥinnōt* or *teḥinnōth*, meaning prayers for God's favor.<sup>57</sup> This assumption cannot be sustained, however, for the Hebrew word was used in that technical sense only much later.<sup>58</sup> Noting in the *ḥadīth* on *taḥannuth* in Ibn Ishāq that Muḥammad ended the practice by circumambulating the Ka'bah seven times and that the word *taḥannuth* is "coupled with, or tacitly replaced by the word *jīwār*,"<sup>59</sup> K. Wagtendonk states that *taḥannuth* was not a later Muslim practice, but could "very well have been founded on a pagan rite."<sup>60</sup> According to other *ḥadīths*, however, Muḥammad is not said to have circumambulated the Ka'bah at the end of the *taḥannuth*<sup>61</sup>; nor is *taḥannuth* connected with *jīwār*.<sup>62</sup> In Ibn Sa'd, it is linked rather to *khalwah*.<sup>63</sup> Some *ḥadīths* say that Muḥammad performed *jīwār*, but they do not mention *taḥannuth* at all.<sup>64</sup>

Placing his trust in the *isnāds* and content of the *ḥadīths*, M. J. Kister scrutinizes

<sup>55</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna bad' al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; Kister, "Al-taḥannuth," 230.

<sup>56</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:16 ; Kister, "Al-taḥannuth: An Inquiry into the Meaning of a Term," 230.

<sup>57</sup> H. Hirschfeld, *New Researches into the Composition and Exegesis of the Qoran* (London, 1902) 19 ; J. Lyall, "The Words 'Ḥanīf' and 'Muslim'," *JRAS* (1903): 780 ; Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca*, 44 ; *EP*, v. s. v. 3, "Ḥanīf," by Watt.

<sup>58</sup> S. D. Goitein, *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966) 93, n. 2.

<sup>59</sup> Wagtendonk, *Fasting in the Koran*, 34-35.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>61</sup> Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 129:16 ; Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna bad' al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, Sūrah 96, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; IV, 91 *Ta'bir al-Ru'yā, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 347:4 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1.

<sup>62</sup> Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 129:16 ; Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna bad' al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, Sūrah 96, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; IV, 91 *Ta'bir al-Ru'yā, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 347:4 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1.

<sup>63</sup> Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 129:16. For the meaning of the term, see *EP*, vol. 4, s. v. "*Khalwa*," by H. Landoldt.

<sup>64</sup> Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, Sūrah 74, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 365:4 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, Sūrah 74, bāb 3*, no. 1, p. 365:15 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1153:3 ; Al-Ṭabarī, I, 1153:15.

*ḥadīths* on *taḥannuth* in order to derive a certain historical truth from them, and concludes that *taḥannuth* was a pre-Islamic custom "which consisted of the veneration of the Ka'ba and of doing charitable deeds towards one's fellow men on Mount Ḥirā'," and that Muḥammad received his initial prophetic call while practicing it.<sup>65</sup> This is no more than an echo of the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's practice of *taḥannuth* in Ibn Ishāq and al-Ṭabarī. It does not fully explain differing *ḥadīths* in Ibn Sa'd, al-Bukhārī, and al-Ṭabarī. Kister quotes a *ḥadīth* that asserts that a leader of al-Ḥārith b. 'Abd Manāt of Kināna came to Mecca and every clan of Quraysh was eager to ally themselves to him.<sup>66</sup> Before making any decision, he went to Ḥirā' and practiced *ta'abbud* three nights on the top of the mountain. Then he made an alliance with the first man whom he met on his way down from the mountain. They went together to the Ka'bah where the alliance was accomplished. Kister seems to think that the *ta'abbud* in this anecdote is the pre-Islamic custom of *taḥannuth*; he links it to Muḥammad's practice of *taḥannuth* in the *ḥadīths* of Muḥammad's call on two premises: in the latter, *taḥannuth* is glossed as *ta'abbud* and is related to the Ka'bah.<sup>67</sup> But only the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call in al-Bukhārī gloss *taḥannuth* as *ta'abbud*,<sup>68</sup> and their description of the practice is entirely different from the *ḥadīth* on the leader of al-Ḥārith b. 'Abd Manāt of Kināna; nor do they mention the circumambulation of the Ka'bah. The motives for performing *ta'abbud* are not compatible: the leader of al-Ḥārith b. 'Abd Manāt of Kināna performed it in preparation for the making of an important decision, while the *ḥadīths* in al-Bukhārī indicate that Muḥammad performed it in search of seclusion, since true vision

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<sup>65</sup> Kister, "Al-taḥannuth," 236. For a similar result, Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam*, 128-130. See also his *The Hajj: The Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Holy Places* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994) 39-40.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 231-232.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>68</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna bad' al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, Sūrah 96, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; IV, 91 *Ta'bir al-Ru'yā, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 347:4.

had made him love solitude.<sup>69</sup>

In fact, two *ḥadīths* in Ibn Ishāq and al-Ṭabarī on Muḥammad's practice of *taḥannuth* at the time of his call<sup>70</sup> seem to indicate that *taḥannuth* is related to the Kaʿbah, as does the *taʿabbud* of a leader of al-Ḥārith b. ʿAbd Manāt of Kināna, although there it is glossed as *tabarrur*, not *taʿabbud*. Kister seems to think that *taḥannuth* included both *taʿabbud* and *tabarrur*.<sup>71</sup> Even if this was the case, it is still difficult to reconcile the differences among the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's practice of *taḥannuth*: according to some *ḥadīths*, Muḥammad engaged in it as a result of the love of solitude that arose in him after his experience of true vision<sup>72</sup> whereas according to others, he performed it because it was a Quraysh custom.<sup>73</sup> Kister prefers the latter explanation, stating: Muḥammad followed "an old custom of his predecessors and sojourned at Ḥirāʾ performing some ritual practices and deeds of charity towards the needy and the poor. That was the *taḥannuth* of the Jāhiliyya, and the Prophet practiced it before he received his Call to Prophecy."<sup>74</sup>

It seems impossible to extract a consistent explanation from the irreconcilable *ḥadīths* about Muḥammad's practice of *taḥannuth* and the attempts to extract certain historical truth from them have failed. Nor can we simply ignore the incongruities in the *ḥadīths*, accept their general outline, and conveniently say that "there is no improbability in Muḥammad's going to Ḥirāʾ, a hill a little way from Mecca, with or without his family,"<sup>75</sup> in an attempt to

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<sup>69</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna badʾ al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah 96, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 347:4.

<sup>70</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:16 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5.

<sup>71</sup> Kister, "Al-taḥannuth," 231-236.

<sup>72</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129:16 ; Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna badʾ al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah 96, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 347:4 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1.

<sup>73</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:16 ; Al-Ṭabarī, I, 1149:5.

<sup>74</sup> Kister, "Al-taḥannuth," 236.

<sup>75</sup> Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca*, 44.

construct "a general picture in which we have a fair degree of confidence."<sup>76</sup> The nature and meaning of *taḥannuth* must remain uncertain, for it is not feasible to discern a kernel of truth from the irreconcilable reports on the topic.

According to the earliest extant *ḥadīth* on Muḥammad's call in Ibn Ishāq,<sup>77</sup> which is also preserved by al-Ṭabarī in a fuller form,<sup>78</sup> Muḥammad's initial prophetic experience was contained in two episodes: the first revelation of *Sūrah* 96 through Gabriel and Muḥammad's vision on the horizon (*al-uḥuq*).<sup>79</sup> But, as Andrae suggests, they cannot both constitute the event of Muḥammad's call, for they are

of quite different character. One of them is a nocturnal vision occurring in a dark cave, while the other is a vision which the Prophet received in clear daylight, out on the open mountain.<sup>80</sup>

This *ḥadīth* claims that the nocturnal vision did not happen in the cave but rather on Mount Ḥirā'. Nevertheless, Andrae's observation is to the point; the two narratives have, indeed, different time settings which means they could not have occurred in sequence as the two *ḥadīths* claim. Other sources separate the two narratives: they compete for the description of Muḥammad's call. Thus according to some *ḥadīths*, Muḥammad's call contains only the revelation of *Sūrah* 96 through Gabriel or an angel,<sup>81</sup> while according to others, the event is composed of Muḥammad's vision on the horizon,<sup>82</sup> often associated with the revelation of *Sūrah* 74.<sup>83</sup> In any case, Muslim traditions hold that Gabriel or another angel was associated with the beginning of Muḥammad's call as the agent of the first Qur'ānic

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>77</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:16.

<sup>78</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5.

<sup>79</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:16.

<sup>80</sup> Andrae, *Mohammed*, 45.

<sup>81</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna bad' al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, *Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; IV, 91 *Ta'bir al-Ru'yā*, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 347:4 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1148:11.

<sup>82</sup> Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 129:22.

<sup>83</sup> Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, *Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 365:4 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, *Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 3, no. 1, p. 365:15 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1153:3 ; Al-Ṭabarī, I, 1153:15.

revelation or the object of Muḥammad's vision on the horizon. Neither narrative can be deemed as reliable in the face of the Qur'ānic evidence. Although the Qur'ān is silent about the beginning of Muḥammad's call, it does at least offer evidence that the introduction of the angelic messenger for the Qur'ānic revelation or for Muḥammad's vision on the horizon cannot be ascribed to the beginning of Muḥammad's revelatory experience; rather, the *ḥadīths* involving either Gabriel or the angel from the very beginning of Muḥammad's religious experience seem to be nothing but an expanded exegesis of the Qur'ānic allusions to Muḥammad's religious experiences.

In general, many *ḥadīths* seem to agree that Muḥammad had a vision on the horizon at the time of his call, although not without some differences as to both the object of his vision and the time that it occurred: in the former case, Gabriel, or "he (*huwa*)," or "something (*shay'an*)" is mentioned; in the latter, it is claimed to have taken place as the first prophetic experience in Ibn Sa'd<sup>84</sup> (often connected with the revelation of *Sūrah* 74 in al-Bukhārī and al-Ṭabarī<sup>85</sup>) or after the first revelatory experience of *Sūrah* 96.<sup>86</sup> Other *ḥadīths* claim, however, that it took place not at the time of Muḥammad's call, but at *fatrat al-wahy*: therein, Muḥammad is said to have seen an angel (*al-malak*)<sup>87</sup>, or Gabriel.<sup>88</sup>

The Qur'ān contains parallel references to this visionary experience on the horizon in *Sūrahs* 53:1-12 and 81:15-23 and does not back up the object of Muḥammad's vision in the *ḥadīths*. In these verses, Muḥammad had a vision of a certain divine being. *Sūrah* 53:1-12 reads:

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<sup>84</sup> Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 129:16.

<sup>85</sup> Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, *Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 365:4 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, *Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 3, no. 1, p. 365:15 ; Al-Ṭabarī, I, 1153:5 ; Al-Ṭabarī, I, 1153:17.

<sup>86</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:16 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5.

<sup>87</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna bad' al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 6:1 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, *Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 4, no. 1, p. 366:4 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, *Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 5, no. 1, p. 366:11 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, *Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 381:5 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 59 *Kitāb Bad' al-Khalq*, *bāb* 7, no. 15, p. 313:10 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1155:6 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1155:16.

<sup>88</sup> Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 131:7.



- 1 By the star when it plunges
- 2 your comrade is not astray, neither errs,
- 3 nor speaks he out of caprice.
- 4 This is naught but a revelation revealed,
- 5 taught him by one terrible in power
- 6 very strong; He/he stood poised,
- 7 being on the higher horizon,
- 8 then drew near and suspended hung,
- 9 two bows-length away, or nearer
- 10 then revealed to His servant what he revealed,
- 11 His heart lies not of what he saw;
- 12 what, will you dispute with him what he sees?<sup>89</sup>

*Sūrah* 81: 15-23 also reads:

- 15 No! I swear by the slinkers,
- 16 the runners, the slinkers,
- 17 by the night swarming,
- 18 by the dawn sighing,
- 19 truly this is the speech of a noble Messenger
- 20 having power with the Lord of the Throne secure,
- 21 obeyed, moreover trusty.
- 22 Your companion is not possessed:
- 23 he truly saw Him/him on the clear horizon.<sup>90</sup>

It is by no means certain whether or not the two visions are the same, nor is it clear when they took place. What seems to be certain is that Muḥammad defended the truthfulness of his revelation by claiming as its proof his visionary experience of a divine being on the horizon. Nevertheless, considering that these verses refer to the beginning of Muḥammad's call<sup>1</sup> Andrae analyzes them as follows:

"The call-vision which was decisive for Mohammed was thus a vision which he saw out in the open. A being appeared to him whose majesty and glory so filled him with trembling awe as to assure him for all time that the voice which spoke to him did not come from a being of the jinn species. The heavenly messenger flew down, and when he had come very near he gave the future prophet a message, whose content was indeed kept reverently secret, but which probably constituted the direct

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<sup>89</sup> I follow Welch's translation. See Alford T. Welch, "Muhammad's Understanding of Himself: The Koranic Data," in *Islam's Understanding of Itself: Eighth Giorgio Levi Della Vida Biennial Conference*, ed. R. G. Hovannisian and S. Vryonis (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1983): 30-31.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31.

commission to become Allah's prophet and messenger."<sup>91</sup>

Then he affirms confidently that "the legend of the call which Ibn Sa'd accepted<sup>92</sup> reproduces most faithfully the actual event" of Muḥammad's call,<sup>93</sup> for its contents are in accordance with his interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses: the heavenly being on the horizon was an angel and Muḥammad's visionary experience took place out in the open. Two flaws should be pointed out in Andrae's judgement of the reliability of Ibn Sa'd's *ḥadīth*. Firstly, according to Andrae, the Qur'ānic verses on Muḥammad's vision belong to the beginning of Muḥammad's prophetic experience. But, as already mentioned, it is not possible to determine exactly when it happened, as the Qur'ān does not offer any reference. Second, careful reading of the verses concerned does not sustain Andrae's interpretation that the object of Muḥammad's vision was an angel.

In that case, whom did Muḥammad see in the above-quoted *sūrah*s? The object of Muḥammad's vision in 81:19 is obscure and hard to determine. It depends on whom "the noble messenger (*rasūl karīm*)" in 81:19 refers to and whether or not it is the object of the vision in 81:23. What is certain is that the expression "the noble messenger" is consistently used in the Qur'ān for a prophet.<sup>94</sup> In light of this evidence, the noble messenger in 81:19 must refer to Muḥammad; therefore, it cannot be the object of the vision in 81:23, which means that the "*hu*" of "*ra-ʾāhu*" there must remain unidentified. Textual evidence in 51:1-12 shows that the object of Muḥammad's vision is God, however, for the term "his servant (*ʿabd*)" in 53:10 is appropriate to the relationship between God and Muḥammad. The pronoun *his* of his servant must be referring to God, which indicates that God Himself is the object of Muḥammad's vision on the horizon. This is quite contrary to the *ḥadīth* in Ibn

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<sup>91</sup> Andrae, *Mohammed*, 46-47.

<sup>92</sup> Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 129:22-130:8.

<sup>93</sup> Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 47.

<sup>94</sup> It refers to Moses in 44:17 (16) and to Muḥammad in 69:40. See Welch, "Muhammad's Understanding of Himself," 26.

Saʿd regarded as the most reliable by Andrae, which asserts that Muḥammad saw Gabriel on the horizon. If Gabriel or an angel, as some *ḥadīths* claim, is the object of Muḥammad's vision, then the Qurʾānic verses should be interpreted to mean that Muḥammad becomes the servant of Gabriel or an angel, which is absurd. On the basis of the Qurʾānic evidence that Muḥammad's vision must have been God, Watt seems to consider that the phrase in a *ḥadīth* of al-Ṭabarī that "the Truth (*al-ḥaqq*) came to him (Muḥammad)"<sup>95</sup> reflects Muḥammad's earliest religious experience, for *al-ḥaqq* is a way of referring to God.<sup>96</sup> But the phrase does not guarantee that Muḥammad saw God, since in the Qurʾān, it refers not only to a divine attribute, but also to "that which is right sent down from God."<sup>97</sup> The traditional claim that Muḥammad saw Gabriel, or an angel on the horizon seems to have been derived from later exegetical efforts to avoid interpreting the object of the vision in the Qurʾānic verses as God. This exegetical tendency becomes quite apparent in the following tradition, transmitted on the authority of ʿĀʾishah and preserved in al-Bukhārī's *al-Sahīḥ*. According to this tradition, she asserts that Muḥammad saw Gabriel, not God:

Whoever maintains that Muḥammad saw his Lord (*rabbahu*) exaggerates (*aʿwzama*), for he saw Gabriel in his image (*ṣūratihī*) and nature (*khalqihī*) covering the horizon (*mā bayna al-uṣuqī*).<sup>98</sup>

Interestingly enough, al-Bukhārī has ʿĀʾishah say a similar *ḥadīth* again in the exegesis of Muḥammad's vision on the horizon in *Sūrah* 53.<sup>99</sup> According to this tradition, ʿĀʾishah was asked whether Muḥammad had seen God. She denied it and said that Muḥammad had seen "Gabriel in his image (*ṣūratihī*),"<sup>100</sup> quoting two Qurʾānic verses<sup>101</sup>:

<sup>95</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1.

<sup>96</sup> Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca*, 42.

<sup>97</sup> Qurʾān 2:147 (142) ; 2:149 (144) ; 11:17 (20) ; 13:19 ; 25:33 (35) ; 28:48 ; 28:53, etc, to quote a few.

<sup>98</sup> Al-Bukhārī, II, 59 *Kitāb Badʿ al-Khalq*, bāb 7, no. 11, p. 312:19: "man zaʿama anna Muḥammadan raʾā rabbahu fa-qad aʿwzama wa lākin qad raʾā jibrīla fī ṣūratihī wa khalqihī sāddan mā bayna al-uṣuqī."

<sup>99</sup> Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb al-Tafsīr*, *Sūrah* 53, bāb 1, no. 1, p. 339:18.

<sup>100</sup> Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb al-Tafsīr*, *Sūrah* 53, bāb 1, no. 1, p. 340:4.

<sup>101</sup> Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb al-Tafsīr*, *Sūrah* 53, bāb 1, no. 1, p. 340:1-2.

6:103 The eyes attain Him not, but He attains the eyes.

42:51 It belongs not to any mortal that God should speak to him, except by revelation, or from behind a veil.

These traditions warn against any possible interpretation that Muḥammad saw God on the horizon. There are also other *ḥadīths* that regard the object of Muḥammad's visionary experience on the horizon as either "something (*shayʿān*)," or "he (*huwa*)."<sup>102</sup> All of them are ascribed, as the *ḥadīths* that claim the visionary object as the angel, to the mouth of the Prophet through the authority of Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh in both al-Bukhārī and al-Ṭabarī. Although these *ḥadīths* do not interpret the object of Muḥammad's vision as Gabriel, or as the angel, they seem to be merely an exegetical reading of the Qurʾānic reference to the object of Muḥammad's vision. The *ḥadīth* describing what Muḥammad saw as "*huwa*" is obviously deduced from a reading of "*hu*" of "*raʿāhu*" in Sūrah 81:23. It seems that the *ḥadīths* which identify *huwa* or *shayʿān* as the object of Muḥammad's visionary experience came into existence before orthodox tradition had established that Muḥammad saw Gabriel or the angel.<sup>102</sup> All the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's vision at the time of his call or at *fatrat al-wahy* were probably founded on the Qurʾānic references to his vision that do not in turn offer any clue to the event of the call. As can be seen from the *isnāds*, especially the *ḥadīths* alleged to have been transmitted through Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh, Muslim traditionists seem to have utilized early authorities to support the authenticity of their exegetical claim over the visionary object of Muḥammad's vision on the horizon.

Many *ḥadīths* claim that an angel functioned as the agent of the Qurʾānic revelation at the very beginning of Muḥammad's call; when Muḥammad practiced *tahannuth* on Mount Hirāʾ (or in the cave on it), Gabriel, or an unnamed angel came, pressed him with (or without) a coverlet of brocade and commanded him to recite Sūrah 96. Nowhere in the Qurʾān is there the slightest reference to this incident, except the agent of revelation.

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<sup>102</sup> Bell, "Mohammed's Call," 18. See also "Muhammad's Visions," *MW* 24 (1934): 149.

According to some Qurʾānic verses, revelation is mediated through an angelic messenger, but not specifically at the event of Muḥammad's call: angels are collectively the bearers of the revelation:

16:2 He sends down the angels with the Spirit of His command upon whomsoever He will among His servants, saying: Give you warning that there is no God but I; so fear you Me!

97:3-4 The Night of Power is better than a thousands months; in it the angels and the Spirit descend, by the leave of their Lord, upon every command.

Or Gabriel is specified as the bearer of the revelation.

2:97 Say: "Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel --- he it was that brought it down upon thy heart by the leave of God, confirming what was before it, and for a guidance and good tidings to the believers."<sup>103</sup>

Muslim traditionists seem to have deduced from the verses, which in themselves do not refer to Muḥammad's call, that Gabriel, or an unnamed angel functioned as the agent of revelation at the event of the call. It should be, however, pointed out that according to other *sūrah*s, Muḥammad was criticized for the fact that God had not sent any angel. *Sūrah*s 15 and 41 say:

15: 6-7 They say: "Thou upon whom the Remembrance is sent down, thou art assuredly possessed! Why dost thou not bring the angels unto us, if thou speakest truly?"

41:14 They said: "Had our Lord willed, surely He would have sent down angels; so we disbelieve in the Message you were sent with."

Against these criticisms, the Qurʾān indicates that the revelation was not mediated through an angelic messenger, but directly from God:

15: 8-9 We send not down the angels, save with truth; then, they would not be respited. It is We who have sent down the Remembrance, and We watch over it.

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<sup>103</sup> This verse is commonly dated to have been revealed in the Medinan period by the Western Islamicists, which means that Gabriel cannot be the object of Muḥammad's vision at an earlier stage of his prophetic life: "Gabriel does not appear in the Qurʾān as the agent of revelation until the Medinan period --- Surah ii, 97." (Bell, "Mohammed's Call," 15). See also Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam*, 143.

16:43 We sent not any before thee, except men to whom We revealed: "Question the people of the Remembrance, if it should be that you do not know."

16:44 We have sent down to thee the Remembrance that thou mayest make clear to mankind what was sent down to them; so haply they will reflect.

Other verses also seem to agree that Muḥammad received the revelation directly from God.<sup>104</sup>

73:5 Behold, We shall cast upon thee a weighty word.

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

Moreover, as already discussed above, the Qurʾānic reference to Muḥammad's visionary experience in *Sūrah* 53 states that God showed Himself to Muḥammad and then revealed to him "what He revealed (53:10)." Muslim traditionists entirely neglect this Qurʾānic mode of revelation; rather, they chose the Qurʾānic verses in which Gabriel or other angels are the agent of revelation. Indeed, the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call in which Gabriel or an angel played an important role are based on a later exegetical reading of the Qurʾānic allusions to Muḥammad's religious experience; the angel or Gabriel was projected into the story about Muḥammad's call as both the object of his visionary experience and the heavenly agent of the Qurʾānic revelation, although we do not know whether Muḥammad saw God at his call as Watt argues.<sup>105</sup> Thus, a *ḥadīth* in al-Ṭabarī even identifies *al-nāmūs*<sup>106</sup> as

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<sup>104</sup> For research on the development of Muḥammad's Lord (*rabb*), see Welch, "Allah and Other Supernatural Beings: The Emergence of the Qurʾānic Doctrine of *Tawḥīd*," *JAAR* 47/4 Thematic Issue S (December, 1980): 733-758. According to him, Muḥammad's Lord (*rabb*) at first was "not named, then was identified with the Arabian High God 'Allāh,' apparently after a brief period during which the name ar-Rahmān (the Merciful) was preferred, and finally was acknowledged as the God of the Jews and Christians." (*Ibid.*, 733).

<sup>105</sup> Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca*, 42. See also his *Muḥammad*, 15, where he considers Muḥammad's visionary experiences in *Sūrah*s 53 and 81 to have taken place at the event of the call: "To begin with he thought that the glorious Being was God Himself. later he may have thought that it was a superior kind of angel called the Spirit. Finally he identified it with the angel Gabriel. The change of interpretation is probably due to Muḥammad's having become aware of the Jewish teaching that God cannot be seen."

<sup>106</sup> It is generally agreed that the term *nāmūs* is a loanword from the Greek *nomos* meaning divine law, or revealed writing (scripture). For the detailed discussion of the term, see further below.

Gabriel. Nor can we give any credit to some *ḥadīths* in which *huwa* or *shayʿan* is identified as the object of Muḥammad's vision. In both cases, the *ḥadīths* seem to have applied information deduced from exegetical readings of the Qurʾānic references to the mode of Muḥammad's revelatory experiences. This being the case, it is difficult to extract any historical information from the *ḥadīths* in which Gabriel, or an unnamed angel, is employed as the heavenly messenger for the first Qurʾānic revelation, or as the object of Muḥammad's vision.<sup>107</sup>

According to some Muslim traditions, after his initial prophetic call, Muḥammad is said to have told his wife Khadījah about his experience, and she consoled and encouraged him;<sup>108</sup> furthermore, she went, alone or together with Muḥammad, to consult Waraqah about the nature of Muḥammad's religious experience.<sup>109</sup> These narrative elements, the role of Khadījah and Waraqah in Muḥammad's call, do not yield solid historical information, for the *ḥadīths* differ not only as to the remarks by Khadījah and Waraqah, but also as to the nature of the event experienced by Muḥammad to which Khadījah and Waraqah responded. Let us first examine the *ḥadīths* on Khadījah's role.

To sum up all the various remarks attributed to Khadījah from Ibn Saʿd to al-Ṭabarī, her consoling words may have been:

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<sup>107</sup> For a study of Muḥammad's religiosity within a broader perspective of the Near Eastern religious traditions, see Andrae, *Mohammed*, 94-113 (Chapter IV: Mohammed's Doctrine of Revelation). For a comparative study between Muḥammad's call and that of Mani, see Geo Widengren, *Muhammad, The Apostle of God, and His Ascension: Vol. V of King and Saviour* (Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift 1955, no. 1. Uppsala: A.-B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1955) 124-129.

<sup>108</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:16; Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129:22; Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 130:8; Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 130:12; Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna badʾ al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 4:14; III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah 96, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 380:2; Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʿyā, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 347:4; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1148:11.

<sup>109</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:16; Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129:22; Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 130:8; Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna badʾ al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 4:14; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah 96, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 380:2; Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʿyā, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 347:4; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1148:11.

(1) Allāh will not disgrace you<sup>110</sup> (or Allāh will not do this to you)<sup>111</sup>; (2) for you (Muḥammad) treat your kinsfolk well<sup>112</sup>; (3) speak the truth<sup>113</sup>; (4) deliver what is entrusted to you<sup>114</sup>; (5) endure fatigue<sup>115</sup>; (6) offer hospitality to the guest<sup>116</sup>; (7) aid people in misfortune<sup>117</sup>; (8) never committed a wicked act<sup>118</sup>; (9) have noble character<sup>119</sup> and (10) bestow alms on the poor.<sup>120</sup>

In Ibn Ishāq, Khadijah said none of the above; rather, having listened to Muḥammad's religious experience, the revelation of *Sūrah* 96 through Gabriel and his vision of Gabriel on the horizon, she expressed her hope that Muḥammad would be a prophet.<sup>121</sup> According to a *ḥadīth* in al-Ṭabarī which is a fuller version of the *ḥadīth* in Ibn Ishāq, even before Muḥammad described his religious experience, Khadijah consoled him by saying (1), (2), (3), (4), and (9); only after listening to his prophetic experience did she express her hope that

<sup>110</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna badʿ al-waḥy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā, bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 347:4 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1.

<sup>111</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129:22 ; Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 130:8 ; Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 130:12 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5 ; Al-Ṭabarī, I, 1148:11.

<sup>112</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129:22 ; Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 130:8 ; Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna badʿ al-waḥy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā, bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 347:4 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1.

<sup>113</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129:22 ; Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 130:8 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā, bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 347:4 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1.

<sup>114</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129:22 ; Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 130:8 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1.

<sup>115</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna badʿ al-waḥy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā, bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 347:4 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1.

<sup>116</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna badʿ al-waḥy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā, bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 347:4 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1.

<sup>117</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna badʿ al-waḥy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā, bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 347:4 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1.

<sup>118</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1148:11.

<sup>119</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129:22 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5.

<sup>120</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna badʿ al-waḥy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2.

<sup>121</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:16. Bell regards Khadijah's use of the term "prophet" at the time of Muḥammad's call as evidence for the unreliability of the *ḥadīth*, as the word is not used in the Qurʾān until a fairly late period. See Bell, "Mohammed's Call," 15.



Muḥammad would become a prophet.<sup>122</sup> According to other *ḥadīths* in al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad's experience is the revelation of *Sūrah* 96 from Gabriel and there Khadījah consoled Muḥammad by saying (1) and (8),<sup>123</sup> or from (1) to (7).<sup>124</sup> In al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad received *Sūrah* 96 not from Gabriel, but from an unidentified angel, and Khadījah comforted him by saying (1), (2), (4) and (10).<sup>125</sup> In Ibn Saʿd, Muḥammad's prophetic experience does not include the Qurʾānic revelation: according to one *ḥadīth*, Muḥammad told Khadījah about his vision of Gabriel on the horizon, and she calmed him by saying (1), (2), (3), (4) and (9),<sup>126</sup> while according to another *ḥadīth*, Muḥammad experienced light and sound, and Khadījah is said to have comforted him by saying either (2), (3), and (4),<sup>127</sup> or simply (1).<sup>128</sup>

Neglecting the differences in the *ḥadīths* concerning both Muḥammad's experience as Khadījah heard it from Muḥammad and Khadījah's own remarks, Watt tries to extract a kernel of truth from them. Relying heavily on *ḥadīths* alleged to have been transmitted from al-Zuhri, he says:

there is no reason for rejecting the account of how Khadījah reassured Muḥammad. It is evidence that Muḥammad was lacking in self-confidence at this stage, and the general picture would hardly have been invented, though details may have been added from inference and imagination.<sup>129</sup>

Of course, if Muḥammad had experienced any prophetic call, he would have told his wife Khadījah about it, and, in turn, she would have given her support and encouragement unless

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<sup>122</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5.

<sup>123</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1148:11.

<sup>124</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1.

<sup>125</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna badʿ al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, *Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā*, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 347:4.

<sup>126</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129:22.

<sup>127</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 130:8.

<sup>128</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 130:12.

<sup>129</sup> Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca*, 50.

their marriage had been in trouble. However, is there any reason other than this terribly hypothetical common sense for accepting Khadijah's encouragement? Furthermore, the role of Khadijah is not always employed in the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call. It is absent in the *ḥadīths* claiming that Muḥammad's prophetic call started with the revelation of *Sūrah* 74,<sup>130</sup> and Watt does not take these into account.

The same applies to the anecdote about the role of Waraqah, who is described as having relieved Muḥammad by confirming the latter's experience as the beginning of his prophethood.<sup>131</sup> Focusing especially on Waraqah's use of the term *nāmūs*<sup>132</sup> about Muḥammad's experience, some Islamicists argue in favor of the authenticity of the story of Waraqah. Thus Andrae maintains that although there is a similarity between Waraqah's remarks on *nāmūs* and the Clementine writings which speak of the eternal *nomos* that came to Moses and to the other prophets, the story of Waraqah was not invented "in order to produce from the mysterious wisdom of the People of the Book a proof of Mohammed's divine mission."<sup>133</sup> If it was fabricated, Andrae continues, a priest or a monk would have appeared in the story instead of Waraqah.<sup>134</sup> Therefore, according to him, the story of Waraqah "conceals an actual reminiscence of a connection between the new religion and the seekers for monotheism in the last years of heathenism."<sup>135</sup> He even assumes that Khadijah had talked to Muḥammad about *nāmūs* before the call.<sup>136</sup>

In a similar fashion, Watt assumes that Muḥammad "had frequent communication

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<sup>130</sup> Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 365:4 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, Sūrah* 74, *bāb* 3, no. 1, p. 365:15 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1153:3 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1153:15.

<sup>131</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:16 ; Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 129:22 ; Ibn Sa'd, I/1, 130:12 ; Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna bad' al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Ta'bīr al-Ru'yā, bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 347:4 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1149:5 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1 ; Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1148:11.

<sup>132</sup> For its meaning, see *EF*, vol. 7, s. v. "Nāmūs," by F. Viré.

<sup>133</sup> Andrae, *Mohammed*, 112.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

with Waraqah at an earlier date, and learnt much of a general character" of biblical monotheism.<sup>137</sup> Upon Waraqah's remark, i.e. "This is the *nāmūs* which was sent down to Mūsā b. 'Imrān," Watt argues:

The word *nāmūs* is usually taken to be derived from the Greek *nomos*, and thus to mean law or revealed scriptures; this fits in well with mention of Moses. Waraqah's remark would thus be made to Muḥammad after he had started to receive revelations, and would mean that what had come to Muḥammad was to be identified or at least classed with the Jewish and Christian scriptures. The suggestion may also have been present that Muḥammad should be the founder or legislator of a community. If, as seems likely, Muḥammad was of a hesitant nature, this encouragement to him to put the highest construction on his experiences must have been of great importance in his interior development.<sup>138</sup>

Both Andrae and Watt entirely neglect the fact that the role of Waraqah is never mentioned in the *ḥadīths* claiming that Muḥammad's initial prophetic experience started with the Qur'ānic revelation of *Sūrah* 74. Even though the narrative element of the role of Waraqah is included in some *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call, neither Waraqah's remarks, nor the content of Muḥammad's prophetic experience on which Waraqah gives his opinion is at all uniform, let alone the question of who Waraqah talked to. In Ibn Ishāq, Khadijah went alone to Waraqah for advice on Muḥammad's experience, i.e. the revelation of *Sūrah* 96 through Gabriel and his vision of Gabriel on the horizon, and Waraqah told her that what descended to Muḥammad was *al-nāmūs al-akbar* that had come to Moses.<sup>139</sup> According to a *ḥadīth* in al-Ṭabarī, Waraqah is said to have made the same remarks not to Khadijah alone, but to both her and Muḥammad, and there Muḥammad's religious experience includes only the revelation of *Sūrah* 96 through Gabriel, excluding his vision of Gabriel on the horizon.<sup>140</sup> According to another *ḥadīth* in al-Ṭabarī, Khadijah went alone to consult Waraqah about Muḥammad's prophetic experience of the revelation of *Sūrah* 96 through

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<sup>137</sup> Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca*, 51

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>139</sup> Ibn Ishāq, I/1, 151:16.

<sup>140</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1147:1.

Gabriel, but this time Waraqah said nothing about *al-nāmūs*,<sup>141</sup> while in al-Bukhārī, in regard to the same experience Waraqah told both Khadījah and Muḥammad that what came to Muḥammad is *al-nāmūs* that was sent to Moses.<sup>142</sup> According to a *ḥadīth* in Ibn Saʿd, Waraqah made the same remark only to Khadījah regarding a different experience of Muḥammad's, in which he heard sounds and saw light.<sup>143</sup> Another *ḥadīth* in Ibn Saʿd has Khadījah alone again consulting Waraqah, but this time Muḥammad's prophetic experience includes only his vision of Gabriel on the horizon, without the revelation of *Sūrah* 96; in this case, Waraqah simply says that "*al-nāmūs al-akbār* visits Muḥammad" without associating *al-nāmūs* with Moses.<sup>144</sup> Andrae and Watt do not account for these significant variations, and extract historical conclusions by simply limiting their analyses to one *ḥadīth* or by combining different *ḥadīths*. In fact, even if the anecdotes are genuine, the extraction of any historical information from them does not seem feasible, since, as discussed above, the *ḥadīths* are too inconsistent to be reconciled.

In order to evaluate the anecdotes about the roles played by Khadījah and Waraqah, we must analyze them in the larger context of the *ḥadīths* in which they are placed. Most of the *ḥadīths* which include these narrative elements agree that Muḥammad's initial prophetic call is connected with Gabriel, either as an agent of the revelation of *Sūrah* 96, or as an object of Muḥammad's vision on the horizon, or as both. But these *ḥadīths*, of which the narratives on the role of Khadījah and Waraqah are an indispensable part, are largely founded on the later exegetical reading of the Qurʾānic allusions to Muḥammad's religious experiences. Thus, we cannot be justified in reconstructing any general picture concerning the roles of Khadījah and Waraqah.

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<sup>141</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, III, 1148:11.

<sup>142</sup> Al-Bukhārī, I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna badʾ al-waḥy*, no. 3, p. 4:14 ; Al-Bukhārī, III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah* 96, *bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 380:2 ; Al-Bukhārī, IV, 91 *Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā, bāb* 1, no. 1, p. 347:4.

<sup>143</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 130:12.

<sup>144</sup> Ibn Saʿd, I/1, 129:22.

## CONCLUSION

Drawing on the works of four Muslim traditionists, namely Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Saʿd, al-Bukhārī and al-Ṭabarī, this thesis has attempted to examine first how early Muslims described and understood Muḥammad's initial prophetic call and secondly, the different approaches representative modern Islamicists have taken to the Muslim traditions regarding Muḥammad's call. Although the event of Muḥammad's call is one of the most important incidents in the history of the Islamic religious tradition, textual evidence shows that the early Muslim traditionists were by no means certain about what had really happened to Muḥammad during the event. The *ḥadīth* do not agree on the chronology of the event, nor on its narrative details. The only consensus reached is that Muḥammad had a certain religious experience. *Ḥadīth* narratives evolved to such a great extent that the study of their *isnāds* could not detect the original shape of the narratives, nor trace the trajectories of the *ḥadīths* back to their common origin, at least in the case of Muḥammad's call.<sup>1</sup>

By and large, modern Islamicists have attempted to reconstruct the event by singling out one *ḥadīth* as reliable, or harmonizing the different *ḥadīths* at the expense of sound historical criticism. Indeed, they failed to consider that Muslim traditionists presented the *ḥadīths* on the event of the call according to their own editorial principles. Moreover, in light of the Qurʾānic references to Muḥammad's religious experiences, they try to make some historical sense of *ḥadīths* in which they can, in fact, have little confidence.<sup>2</sup> For example, Andrae singles out a *ḥadīth* in Ibn Saʿd as reliable, as its description of Muḥammad's vision

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<sup>1</sup> Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 6: "For over a century the landscape of the Muslim past was thus exposed to a withering so violent that its shapes were reduced to dust and rubble and deposited in secondary patterns, mixed with foreign debris and shifting with the wind."

<sup>2</sup> Rodinson, *Mohammed*, xi.

out in the open fits well with the Qurʾānic verse in which Muḥammad had a vision of a heavenly being on the horizon. Watt reconstructs the event by combining the *ḥadīth* on Muḥammad's practice of *taḥannuth* with the Qurʾānic verses on Muḥammad's visionary experiences (Qurʾān 53:1-8; 81:15-25); thus, according to him, Muḥammad had the vision of a heavenly being while engaged in *taḥannuth*.

Contrary to what might be expected, the Qurʾānic verses do not, however, yield any solid historical information about the beginning of Muḥammad's prophetic vocation: they merely allude to Muḥammad's various religious experiences, not to the specific event. Furthermore, although it is not entirely certain that Muslim accounts of Muḥammad's call are later inventions *in toto* as Bell argues<sup>3</sup>, the *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call seem to be religiously understood and tendentiously formulated around the exegesis of the allusive Qurʾānic verses on Muḥammad's religious experiences.<sup>4</sup> Thus from the Qurʾānic term "*ʿumr*" Muḥammad's age at his call was calculated as forty and other chronological information, such as the date and month of the event, was also retrieved from the Qurʾānic verses. Despite the Qurʾānic evidence that Muḥammad saw God in *Sūrah* 53 and that revelation was sent directly from Him, Muslims tried to avoid this interpretation for theological reasons; rather they explained the object of Muḥammad's vision as the angel or Gabriel or something or "he," possibly under the influence of the other Qurʾānic verses that the bearer of the revelation are angels (or more specifically Gabriel). These interpretations were carried back to Muḥammad's initial prophetic call, even though the Qurʾān by no means offers any clue as to whether this visionary experience of Muḥammad belonged to his initial prophetic call.

Indeed, we cannot possibly see the Qurʾānic confirmation of the traditional reports on Muḥammad's call, but only the exegetical lines left by the trajectories of *ḥadīth* reports

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<sup>3</sup> Bell, "Mohammed's Call," 13-19 ; "Muhammad's Visions," 145-154.

<sup>4</sup> For a study of the Muslim understanding of revelation in early Islam, see William A. Graham, *Divine Word and Prophetic Word in Early Islam* (Hague: Mouton, 1977) 1-48.

on the photographic plate of the Qur'ānic verses referring to the various modes of Muḥammad's religious experiences. The force behind the *ḥadīth* reports on Muḥammad's call is the Muslim effort to make exegetical sense of the Qur'ānic references to Muḥammad's religious experience, not to record the bare facts. Considering that the beginning of Muḥammad's prophetic call was inherently connected with the Qur'ānic revelation, early Muslims were drawn into the debate on the first Qur'ānic revelation, *Sūrah* 74 or *Sūrah* 96. The textual evidence that irreconcilable *ḥadīths* were attributed to the same early authorities is the best proof that the *ḥadīths* were transmitted with exegetical tendencies designed to back up each rival claim.<sup>5</sup>

Of course, we cannot mindlessly reject all the traditional information on Muḥammad's call as an exegetical response to the Qur'ānic allusions to Muḥammad's religious experiences. There are certainly some reports that do not seem to be related to the Qur'ānic exegesis. Chronological information on the day of Muḥammad's call, true vision, *taḥannuth* and the role of Khadijāh and Waraqah would be good examples. But it is difficult to use them in the historical reconstruction of Muḥammad's call for, they are either based on popular beliefs, or too inconsistent to be reconciled. As to the day of the event, Muslims embellished it with a popular Monday belief: Muḥammad is said to have been conceived, born and called to prophethood on Monday; he is also said to have migrated to Medina and even died on Monday. Monday was certainly a propitious or sacred day for early Muslims, although we have no indication of the reason for this. In the case of true vision, it is by no means agreed as to whether Muḥammad had the vision while he was asleep or not. Nor is it certain whether it was linked to Muḥammad's practice of *taḥannuth*. What is certain is that

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<sup>5</sup> Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 10: "Whether one approaches Islamic historiography from the angle of the religious or the tribal tradition, its overall character thus remains the same: the bulk of it is debris of an obliterated past ... Had historical works composed before the subsidence of the tempestuous weathers come down to us, we might very well have had the excitement of seeing early Islamic history through independent minds; but because the tradition has been shattered, all the later historians could do was to collect its remains."

Muslim traditionists tried to interpret the visionary experience in light of the Qur'ān. Thus we can find that Ibn ʿAbbās connected *falaq al-ṣubḥ* with the Qur'ānic term *al-fāliq al-iṣbāḥ* and that Ibn Hishām conserved the report on the experience probably because it conformed to the Qur'ānic modes of Muḥammad's religious experiences. Traditional reports on Muḥammad's practice of *taḥannuth* do not allow us to define its nature; it is not clear whether Muḥammad practiced it in connection with his experience of true vision or as a Quraysh custom. This question must remain unanswered. Discrepancies in the narratives on the role of Khadijah and Waraqah: not only the contents and circumstances of their remarks, but also biographical information on Waraqah is impossible to reconcile. Moreover, since an indispensable part of *ḥadīths* of the narratives on the role of Khadijah and Waraqah are formulated around Qur'ānic exegesis, the integrity of the narratives is undermined. Thus we may not use them as reliable sources for the historical reconstruction of Muḥammad's call.

It is the contention of this thesis that some modern Islamicists approach the event without serious consideration for the exegetical value of the *ḥadīth* literature on Muḥammad's call, nor its inadmissibility as a reliable particle for the historical reconstruction of the event. Indeed, using different *ḥadīths* one may construct a narrative of Muḥammad's call that is completely different from that developed by some modern Islamicists. One might be tempted to think that a kernel of truth is hidden somewhere in the various contradictory *ḥadīths* on Muḥammad's call. The hazy memories of early Muslims do not, however, allow us to discern it. Even though the "tendential shaping" of the *ḥadīths*<sup>6</sup> on the event is admitted, Muslim narratives on the event evolved in such a complicated manner that we cannot retrieve lost information on the event at the expense of sound source criticism. Nor can we possibly attempt to reconstruct the event by accepting general outline

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<sup>6</sup> Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca*, xiii.



of the narratives, ignoring the textual discrepancies.

It would be a mistake to conceive that without any deep religious experience, Muḥammad could form such an enduring religious community as Islam. It should, however, remain unanswered when he was called and what really happened to him at his call.<sup>7</sup> What can be possibly known about the event from the various *ḥadīths* seems to be that early Muslims understood the beginning of Muḥammad's prophethood in complex ways suited to their religio-theological interpretations of the Qur'ānic allusions to Muḥammad's religious experiences.<sup>8</sup> It would probably be more fruitful to interpret the *ḥadīths* in the larger context of the works in which they are placed rather than attempting to make some historical sense of the inconsistent *ḥadīths*: in the four earliest available Muslim sources, the event of Muḥammad's call was theologically interpreted as the proof that Muḥammad was the divinely selected vehicle of revelation, who fulfilled true monotheism, called Islam.

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<sup>7</sup> This thesis deals mainly with *Sunni* Muslim tradition. *Shī'ī* Muslim tradition contains different reports regarding Muḥammad's call from those of *Sunni*. See Rahnamaei, *A Comparative Study of Two Modern Muslim Biographies of the Prophet* (M. A. thesis, McGill University, 1995) 61-75 (Chapter III: The Prophet's Spiritual State at the Time of His Mission).

<sup>8</sup> For a study of the Qur'ānic religious experiences, see Denny, "Varieties of Religious Experience in the Quran," in *Quest for Understanding: Arabic and Islamic Studies in Memory of Malcolm H. Kerr*, ed. S. Seikaly et al (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1991) 185-202.

## APPENDIX

## ARABIC TEXTS FOR MUḤAMMAD'S CALL

A. Ibn Ishāq. *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*.

① I/1, 150:8-17 ; for translation, see p. 10, n. 10.

قال ابن اسحاق فلما بلغ محمد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم اربعين سنة بعثه الله رجلاً للعالمين وكافة للناس وكان الله قد اخذ له الميثاق على كل نبي بعثه قبله بالابحان به والتصديق له والنصر له على من خالفه واخذ عليهم ان يؤثروا ذلك الى كل من آمن بهم وصدقهم نادوا من ذلك ما كان عليهم الخف فيه يقول الله لمحمد صلى الله عليه وسلم واذا اخذ الله ميثاق النبيين لما اتيتمكم من كتاب وحكمة ثم جاءكم رسول مصدق لما معكم لتؤمنن به ولتنصرنه قال اقررتم واخذتم على ذلكم اصري ابي ثقل ما حملتكم من عهدي قالوا اقررنا قال فاشهدوا وانا معكم من الشاهدين فاحدث الله ميثاق النبيين جميعاً بالتصديق له والنصر له على من خالفه وادوا ذلك الى من آمن بهم وصدقهم من اهل هذين الكتابين ①

② I/1, 151:2-5 ; for translation, see p. 11, n. 12.

قال ابن اسحاق فذكر الزهري عن عروة بن الزبير عن عائشة انها حدثت ان اول ما ابتدئ به رسول الله صلعم من النبوة حين اراد الله كرامته ورجة العباد به الرأي الصادقة لا يرى رسول الله صلعم ربياً في منامه الا جاءت كلف الصبح قالت وحبيب الله اليه الخلوة فلم يك شي احب اليه من ان يخلو وحده ②

③ I/1, 151:7-14 ; for translation, see p. 11, n. 13.

قال ابن اسحاق حدثني عبد الملك بن عبد الله بن أبي سفيان بن العلاء بن جارية الثقفية وكان واعية عن بعض أهل العلم أن رسول الله صلعم حين أراد الله بكرامته وأبتدأه بالنبوة كان إذا خرج لحاجته أبعد حتى تحسّر عنه البهوت ويغضي إلى شعاب مكة ويظنون أوديتها فلا يهرّ رسول الله صلعم بجحجر ولا شجر إلا قال السلام عليك يا رسول الله قال فبليتفت رسول الله صلعم حوله عن يمينه وعن شماله وخلفه فلا يري إلا الشجر والحجارة فمكث رسول الله صلعم كذلك يري ويسمع ما شاء الله أن يسمك ثم جاءه جبريل بما جاءه من كرامة الله وهو بحراء في شهر رمضان ٥

④ I/1, 151:16-154:5 ; for translation, see p. 12, n. 14.

قال ابن اسحاق وحدثني وهب بن كيسان مولى آل الزبير قال سمعت عبد الله ابن الزبير وهو يقول لعبيد بن عمير بن قنادة اللبني حدثنا يا عبيد كيف كان بدء ما ابتدي به رسول الله صلعم من النبوة حين جاءه جبريل قال فقال عبيد وأنا حاضر يحدث عبد الله بن الزبير ومن عنده من الناس كان رسول الله صلعم يجاور في حراء من كل سنة شهراً وكان ذلك مما تحنث به قريش في الجاهلية والحنث القبر ٥ قال ابن اسحاق وقال أبو طالب

وثوي ومن أرسى ثيماً مكانه رواق لبرقي في حراء ونازل

قال ابن هشام تقول العرب التحنث والحنث يريدون الحنيفة فيبدلون الفاء من التاء كما قالوا جدث وجدف يريدون القبر قال ربيعة بن العجاج

لو كان أحباري مع الأجدان \* يريد الأجدان وهذا البيت في أرجوزة له وبيت أبي طالب في قصيدة له ساذكرها إن شاء الله في موضعها قال ابن هشام وحدثني أبو عبيدة أن العرب تقول قم في موضع ثم فيبدلون الفاء من التاء ٥ قال ابن اسحاق حدثني وهب بن كيسان قال قال لي عبيد فكان رسول الله صلعم يجاور ذلك الشهر من كل سنة يطعم من جاءه من المساكين فإذا قضى رسول الله صلعم جواره من شهره ذلك كان أول ما يبدأ به إذا انصرف من جواره الكعبة

قبل ان يدخل بيتهم فيطوفون بها سبعاً او ما شاء الله من ذلك ثم يرجع الي  
بيتهم حتي اذا كان الشهر الذي اراد الله به فيه ما اراد من كرامته من السنة  
التي بعثه فيها وذلك الشهر شهر رمضان خرج رسول الله صلعم الي حراء كما كان  
يخرج لجوارره ومعه اهله حتي اذا كازت الليلة التي اكرمهم الله فيها برسالته  
ورحم العباد بها جاءه جبريل بأمر الله قال رسول الله صلعم لجاهني وانا نائم بنمط  
من ديباج فيه كتاب فقال اقرأ قال قلت ما اقرأ قال فغتنني به حتي ظننت انه  
الموت ثم ارسلني فقال اقرأ قال قلت ما اقرأ قال فغتنني به حتي ظننت انه الموت  
ثم ارسلني فقال اقرأ قال قلت ما اقرأ قال فغتنني به حتي ظننت انه الموت ثم  
ارسلني فقال اقرأ قال قلت ما ذا اقرأ ما اقول ذلك الا اقتداه منه ان يعود لي

بمثل ما صنع لي فقال اقرأ بأمر ربك الذي خلف خلف الانسان من علم  
اقرأ ربك الاكرم الذي علم بالقلم علم الانسان ما لم يعلم \* قال فقرأتها ثم  
انتهيت فاذصرف عني وهببت من نومي فكأما كتبت في قلبي كتاباً قال فخرجت  
حتي اذا كنت في وسط من الجبل سمعت صوتاً من السماء يقول يا محمد انت  
رسول الله وانا جبريل قال فرفعت راسي الي السماء انظر اذا جبريل في صورة  
رجل صاني قدميه في أفق السماء يقول يا محمد انت رسول الله وانا جبريل  
فوقفت انظر اليه فما اتقدم وما اتأخر وجعلت أصرف وجهي عنه في اتق السماء  
فلا انظر في ناحية منها الا رايتها كذلك فما رلت واقفاً ما اتقدم امامي وما  
ارجع وراءي حتي بعثت خديجة رسلها في طلبي فبلغوا اعلي مكة ورجعوا اليها  
وانا واقف في مكاني ذلك ثم انصرف عني وانصرف عنه راجعاً الي اهلي حتي اتيت  
خديجة فجلست الي فخذيها مضيقاً اليها فقالت يا ابا القاسم اين كنت فوالله  
قد بعثت رسلني في طلبك حتي بلغوا اعلي مكة ورجعوا الي ثم حدثتها بالذي  
رايت فقالت ابشربلين قم واثبت فوالذي نفس خديجة بيده اني لا رجو ان تكون  
نبي هذه الأمة ثم قامت فجمعت عليها ثيابها ثم انطلقت الي ورقة بن نوفل  
ابن اسد بن عبد العزي بن قصي وهو ابن عمها وكان ورقة قد تنصروا الكلب  
وسمع من اهل التوراة والانجيل ناخبرته بما اخبرها رسول الله صلعم انه راي

وسمع فقال ورقة قُدُّوسٌ قُدُّوسٌ والذي نفس ورقة بيده لئن كُنت صدقني يا  
 خديجة لقد جاء الناموس الأكبر الذي كان ياتي موسي وانه لنبي هذه الأمة  
 فقلولي له قَلَيْشَيْتٌ \* فوجعت خديجة الي رسول الله صلعم فاخبرته بقول ورقة فلما  
 قضى رسول الله صلعم جواره وانصرف صنع كما كان يصنع بدأ بالكعبة فطاف بها  
 فلقيه ورقة بن نوفل وهو يطوف بالكعبة فقال يا ابن ابي اخبرني بما رايت  
 وسمعت فاخبره رسول الله صلعم فقال له ورقة والذي نفسي بيده انك لنبي هذه  
 الأمة ولقد جاءك الناموس الأكبر الذي جاء موسي ولتكذبنه وتؤذينه  
 ولتخرجنه ولتقاتلنه ولئن انا ادركت ذلك اليوم لأنصرن الله نصرا يعلمه ثم  
 ادني راسه منه فقبل يافوخه ثم انصرف رسول الله صلعم الي منزله ⑤

⑤ I/1, 154:7-16 ; for translation, see p. 14, n. 21.

قال ابن اسحاق وحدثني اسماعيل بن ابي حكيم مولي آل الزبير انه حدث عن  
 خديجة انها قالت لرسول الله صلعم اي بن عم اتستطيع ان تخبرني بصاحبك  
 هذا الذي بانيك اذا جاءك قال نعم قالت فاذا جاءك فاخبرني به فجاءه جبريل  
 كما كان يصنع فقال رسول الله صلعم لخديجة يا خديجة هذا جبريل قد جاءني  
 قالت له قم يا ابن عم ناجلس على اخذي البصري فقام رسول الله صلعم لجلس  
 عليها قالت هل تراه قال نعم قالت فتحول فاقعد على اخذي الهني قال فتحول  
 رسول الله صلعم فاقعد على اخذها الهني فقالت هل تراه قال نعم قالت فتحول  
 فاجلس في حجري فتحول فجلس في حجرها ثم قالت هل تراه قال نعم قال  
 فتحسرت والقت جاراها ورسول الله صلعم جالس في حجرها ثم قالت هل تراه  
 قال لا قالت يا ابن عم اثبت وابشر فوالله انه لملك وما هذا بشيطان ⑥

© I/1, 154:16-20 ; for translation, see p. 15, n. 21.

قال

ابن ابي عمير وقد حَدَّثْتُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ حَسَنٍ هَذَا الْحَدِيثَ فَقَالَ قَدْ سَمِعْتُ أُمِّي  
فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتَ حَمَزٍ تَحَدَّثُ بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ عَنْ خَدِيجَةَ الْأُمِّيِّ سَمِعْتُهَا تَقُولُ  
ادْخَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ يَرْعِيهَا فَذَهَبَ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ جَبْرِيلُ فَقَالَتْ  
لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ هَذَا لَمَلَكٌ وَمَا هُوَ بِشَيْطَانٍ ۝

#### B. Ibn Saʿd. *Kūb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*.

① I/1, 129:15-129:16 ; for translation, see p. 19, n. 41.

أَخْبَرَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مُيَسَّرٍ أَبُو سَفْيَانَ الْعَبْدِيُّ عَنْ مَعْمَرٍ عَنْ قَتَادَةَ فِي قَوْلِهِ ۝  
وَأَيْدِيَهُ يَرْجُحُ الْفُلُوسَ قُلُومًا ۝ هُوَ جَبْرِيلُ ۝

② I/1, 129:16-129:22 ; for translation, see p. 20, n. 42.

أَخْبَرَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَمْرِو بْنِ حَرْثٍ حَدَّثَنِي  
مَعْمَرُ بْنُ رَاشِدٍ وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنْ الزُّعْرِيِّ عَنْ عُروَةَ عَنْ عَائِشَةَ  
قَالَتْ ۝ كُنَ أَوَّلَ مَا بُدِيَ بِهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنَ الرُّؤْيَا الصَّادِقَةِ فَكَانَ  
لَا يَرَى رُؤْيَا إِلَّا جَاءَتْهُ مِثْلَ فَلَقِ الصُّبْحِ قُلْتُ فَمَا كُنْتَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ مَا شَاءَ  
اللَّهُ وَشَتَّيْتُ إِلَيْهِ الْخُلُوفَ فَلَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْءٌ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْهَا وَكَانَ يَخْلُو بَغَارًا ۝  
جَاءَهُ يَتَحَنَّنُ فِيهِ اللَّيَالِي ذَوَاتِ الْعَدَدِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْجِعَ إِلَى أَمَانِهِ ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ  
إِلَى مَدِينَةِ فَيْتَزُودُ مُتَابِعًا حَتَّى تَهْجُمَهُ الْحُمَّى وَهُوَ فِي غَارِ حِرَاءٍ ۝

③ I/1, 129:22-130:8 ; for translation, see p. 20, n. 43.

#### أَخْبَرَنَا

محمد بن عمر قال حدثني ابراهيم بن اسماعيل بن ابي خبيبة عن داود  
ابن النخعي عن عكرمة عن ابن عباس قال - فبينما رسول الله صلعم على  
ذلك وهو بأبيبيد ان رأى مآكلا واضعا احدى رجليه على الأخرى في انفق<sup>٢</sup>  
السماء يصيح يا محمد اذا جبريل يا محمد اذا جبريل فذعر رسول الله صلعم  
من ذلك وجعل يبوء كلما رفع رأسه الى السماء فرجع سرورا الى خديجة  
فأخبرها خبره وقال يا خديجة والله ما ابغضت بغض هذه الأصنام شيئا  
فقل ولا الكتاب وإنى لأشقى ان اكون كاعنا قنت كذا يا ابن عم لا تفعل  
ذلك فإن الله لا يفعل ذلك بك ابدا اذك لتصل الرحم وتصل الحديث  
وتؤدى الأمانة وإن خلفك لكريم ثم انطلقت الى ورقة بن نوفل وفي اول مرة  
انتبه فأخبرته ما أخبرها به رسول الله صلعم فقل ورقة والله ان ابن عمك  
يصادق وإن هذا لبدء نبوة وإنه ليأتيه الناموس الأكبر ثم يبه ان لا يجعل  
في نفسه الا خيرا

④ I/1, 130:8-130:11 ; for translation, see p. 20, n. 43.

#### أَخْبَرَنَا عَفَّان بن مسلم نا حماد بن سلمة عن

عشام بن عروة عن عروة \* ان رسول الله صلعم قال يا خديجة انى ارى  
أضوء وأسمع صوتا لقد خشيت ان اكون كاعنا فقلت ان الله لا يفعل بك  
ذلك يا ابن عبد الله اذك تصدق الحديث وتؤدى الأمانة وتصل الرحم

⑤ I/1, 130:12-130:18 ; for translation, see p. 21, n. 43.

أَخْبَرَنَا يحيى بن عباد وعفان بن مسلم كلا نا حماد بن سلمة قال أخبرنا  
عمار بن ابي عمار قال يحيى بن عباد قال حماد بن سلمة احسبه عن  
ابن عباس \* ان النبى صلعم قال يا خديجة انى اسمع صوتا وأرى ضوء  
دا وإنى اخشى ان يكون فى جفن فقال لم يكن الله ليفعل بك ذلك يا  
ابن عبد الله ثم اتت ورقة بن نوفل فذكرت له ذلك فقال ان يك  
صادقا فيذا ناموس مثل ناموس موسى فإن يبعث وأنا حى فسأعززه وأنصره  
وأومن بدن

© I/1, 130:20-130:25 ; for translation, see p. 22, n. 49.

٢. أَخْبَرَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَمْرِو بْنِ حَدَّثَنِي مُعَمَّرُ بْنُ رَاشِدٍ عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ عَنْ  
مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عُبَادَةَ بْنِ جَعْفَرٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ بَعْضَ عُلَمَائِنَا يَقُولُ \* كَانَ أَوَّلُ مَا أُنْزِلَ  
عَلَى النَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ  
عَلَقٍ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ فَبُهِدَا  
مَذْرُوعًا الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَوْمَ جَرَاءٍ ثُمَّ نَزَلَ آخِرُهَا بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ  
بِمَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ

⑦ I/1, 130:25-130:27 ; for translation, see p. 22, n. 49.

لَخْبَرَنَا هَاشِمُ بْنُ الْقَاسِمِ الْكِنَانِيُّ نَا شُعْبَةَ عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ  
لُبَيْنَارٍ عَنْ عُيَيْدِ بْنِ عُمَيْرٍ قَالَ \* أَوَّلُ سُورَةٍ أُنْزِلَتْ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ  
اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

⑧ I/1, 130:27-131:9 ; for translation, see p. 23, n. 50.

أَخْبَرَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَمْرِو بْنِ حَدَّثَنِي إِبْرَاهِيمُ  
ابْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ بَنِي أَبِي مُوسَى عَنْ دَاوُدَ بْنِ الْفُحْمَيْنِ عَنْ أَبِي غَطَفَانَ بْنِ كَرْفٍ  
عَنْ أَبِي عُبَيْدٍ \* أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَمَّا نَزَلَ عَلَيْهِ الْوَحْيُ بِحَرَاءٍ مَكَثَ  
أَيَّامًا لَا يَرَى جِبْرِيلَ فَخَزَنَ خِزْنًا تَشْدِيدًا حَتَّى كُنَّ يَغْدُو إِلَى قَبِيرٍ مَرَّةً  
وَالْيَ حَرَاءَ مَرَّةً يَرْجِعُ أَنْ يُلْقَى نَفْسُهُ مِنْهُ فَبَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ  
عَامِدًا لِبَعْضِ تِلْكَ الْجِبَالِ إِلَى أَنْ سَمِعَ صَوْتًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَوَقَفَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ  
صَلَّيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ صَدْعًا لِلصَّوْتِ ثُمَّ رَفَعَ رَأْسَهُ فَإِذَا جِبْرِيلُ عَلَى كُرْسِيِّ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ  
وَالْأَرْضِ مُتَرَبِّعًا عَلَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَا مُحَمَّدُ أَنْتَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ حَقًّا وَأَنَا جِبْرِيلُ قُلْ  
فَانصَرَفَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَقَدْ اقْرَأَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَرَدَّ جَائِشَهُ ثُمَّ تَتَابَعَ الْوَحْيُ  
بَعْدَ وَجْهَيْنِ

© I/1, 131:9-131:12 ; for translation, see p. 23, n. 50.

أَخْبَرَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مُصَافٍ الْقُرْفَسَانِيُّ نَا أَبِي بَكْرٍ بْنُ عَبْدِ  
اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي مَرْيَمَ \* أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قُلْ قِيلَ لِي يَا مُحَمَّدُ لَتَنْتَمَّ عَيْنُكَ  
وَلَتَسْمَعَ أُنْسُكَ وَلَتَبْعَ قَلْبُكَ قُلْ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَنَامَتِ عَيْنِي وَوَعَى قَلْبِي  
وَسَمِعْتُ أُنْسِي



C. Al-Bukhārī. *Al-Jāmi' al-Saḥīḥ*.

① I, 1 *Bāb kaifa kāna bad' al-wahy*, no. 3, p. 4:14-6:1 ; for translation, see p. 28, n. 70.

٣ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ بُكَيْرٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا  
 اللَّيْثُ عَنْ عُقَيْلٍ عَنْ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ عَنْ عُرْوَةَ بْنِ الزُّبَيْرِ عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أُمِّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ  
 أَوَّلُ مَا بُدِئَ بِهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنَ الْوَحْيِ الرُّؤْيَا الصَّالِحَةُ فِي النَّوْمِ  
 فَكَانَ لَا يَرَى رُؤْيَا إِلَّا جَاءَتْهُ مِثْلَ فَلَقِ الصُّبْحِ ثُمَّ حُبِبَ إِلَيْهِ الْخَلَاءُ وَكَانَ يَخْلُو بِغَارِ  
 حِرَاءَ فَيَتَحَنَّنُ فِيهِ وَهُوَ التَّعَبُّدُ اللَّيَالِي ذَوَاتِ الْعَدَدِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَنْزِعَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ وَيَتَزَوَّدَ  
 لِذَلِكَ ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ إِلَى خَدِيجَةَ فَيَتَزَوَّدُ لِمِثْلِهَا حَتَّى جَاءَهُ الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ فِي غَارِ حِرَاءَ فَجَاءَهُ  
 الْمَلَكُ فَقَالَ اقْرَأْ قَالَ قُلْتُ لَهُ مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ قَالَ فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ  
 ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ اقْرَأْ فَقُلْتُ مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي الثَّانِيَةَ حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ  
 ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ اقْرَأْ فَقُلْتُ مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي الثَّالِثَةَ حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ  
 ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ  
 فَرَجَعَ بِهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَرْجِفُ فَوَادَّهُ فَدْخَلَ عَلَى خَدِيجَةَ بِنْتِ خُوَيْلِدٍ فَقَالَ  
 زَمِّلُونِي زَمِّلُونِي فَزَمِّلُوهُ حَتَّى ذَهَبَ عَنْهُ الرَّوْعُ فَقَالَ لَخَدِيجَةُ وَأَخْبِرُهَا الْخَبْرَ لَقَدْ  
 خَشِيتُ عَلَى نَفْسِي فَقَاتَتْ خَدِيجَةُ كَلًّا وَأَلَلَّهَ مَا يُخْرِجُكَ إِنَّهُ أَبَدًا إِنَّكَ لَتَنَصِلُ  
 الرِّجْمَ وَتَحْمِلُ الْكَلَّ وَتَكْسِبُ الْمَعْدُومَ وَتَقْرَى الشَّيْفَ وَتُعِينُ عَلَى نَوَاتِبِ الْحَقِ  
 فَانْطَلَقَتْ بِهِ خَدِيجَةُ حَتَّى اتَتْ بِهِ وَرَقَةَ بْنِ نَوْفَلٍ بْنِ أَسَدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْعَزْزِ ابْنَ  
 عَمِّ خَدِيجَةَ وَكَانَ أَمْرًا تَنْصُرُ فِي الْجَاعِلِيَّةِ وَكَانَ يَكْتُبُ الْكُتُبَ الْعِبْرَانِيَّةَ فَيَكْتُبُ  
 مِنَ الْأَنْجِيلِ بِالْعِبْرَانِيَّةِ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ وَكَانَ شَيْخًا كَبِيرًا قَدْ غَمِيَ  
 فَقَالَتْ لَهُ خَدِيجَةُ يَا ابْنَ عَمِّ أَسْمَعْ مِن ابْنِ أَخِيكَ فَقَالَ لَهُ وَرَقَةُ يَا ابْنَ أَخِي مَا  
 ذَا تَرَى فَأَخْبَرَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَبْرَ مَا رَأَى فَقَالَ لَهُ وَرَقَةُ هَذَا النَّامُوسُ  
 الَّذِي نَزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَى مُوسَى يَا لَيْتَنِي فِيهَا جَدْعًا يَا لَيْتَنِي أَكُونُ حَيًّا إِذْ يُخْرِجُكَ



④ III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsir al-Qur'ān, Sūrah 74, bāb 3*, no. 1, p. 365:15-366:4 ; for translation, see p. 30, n. 72.

حدثنا اسحق بن

منصور قال حدثنا عبد الحميد قال حدثنا حرب قال حدثنا يحيى قال سألت أبا سلمة  
أشقى القرآن أنزل أول فقال يا أيها المدثر فقلت أنبئت أنه اقرأ باسم ربك الذي خلق  
فقال أبو سلمة سألت جابر بن عبد الله أشقى القرآن أنزل أول فقال يا أيها المدثر فقلت  
أنبئت أنه اقرأ باسم ربك قال لا أخبرك إلا بما قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال رسول  
الله صلى الله عليه وسلم جاورت في جراء فلما قضيت جوارى هبطت فاستبذنت الوادي  
فندبت فنظرت أمامي وخلفي وعن يميني وعن شمالي فإذا هو جالس على العرش بين  
السماء والارض فأتيت خديجة فقلت ذكروني وضئوا على ماء باردًا وأنزل على يا أيها المدثر  
فم قائلًا وربك فكبر

⑤ III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsir al-Qur'ān, Sūrah 96, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 380:2-381:5 ; for translation, see p. 30, n. 72.

أ باب حدثنا يحيى قال حدثنا الليث عن عفي

عن ابن شهاب ح حدثني سعيد بن مروان قال حدثنا محمد بن عبد  
العزيز بن ابى رزمة قال اخبرنا ابو صالح سلمويه قال حدثني عبد الله عن  
يونس بن يزيد قال اخبرني ابن شهاب أن عروة بن الزبير اخبره أن عائشة زوج  
النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قالت كان أول ما بُدئ به رسول الله صلى الله عليه  
وسلم الرؤيا الصادقة في النوم فكان لا يرى رؤيا إلا جاءت مثل فلق الصبح ثم حُبب إليه  
الحلوة فكان يلحظ بغار جراء فيحتمل فيه قال والتحنن التعبد الليالي ذوات العدد قبل  
ان يرجع الى اهله ويتزود لذلك ثم يرجع الى خديجة فيتزود بها حتى فجئه الحق وهو  
في غار جراء فجاءه الملك فقال اقرأ فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ما أنا بقارئ قال  
فأخذني فغطتني حتى بلغ مني الجهد ثم أرسلني فقال اقرأ فقلت ما أنا بقارئ فأخذني

فَعَنَى الثَّانِيَةَ حَتَّى بَلَغَ مَتَى الْخَيْفَةِ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ آدِرْ بِأَسْمِ رَبِّكَ آتَدِي خَلْقَ خَلْقِ  
 الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ عَاقِبِ آدِرْ وَرَبِّكَ الْآنَ تَرَى آتَدِي عِلْمَ بِالْقَلَمِ الْآيَاتِ إِذْ قَوْلُهُ عِلْمَ الْإِنْسَانِ مَا تَمَّ  
 بَعْلَمَ فَرَجَعَ بَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَرَجُّفَ بَوَادِرِهِ حَتَّى دَخَلَ عَلَى خَدِيجَةَ فَقَالَ  
 زَمِّلُونِي زَمِّلُونِي فَزَمَّلُوهُ حَتَّى ذَهَبَ عَنْهُ السُّرُوحُ فَقَالَ لَخَدِيجَةَ أَيُّ خَدِيجَةَ مَا لِي لَقَدْ  
 خَشِيتُ عَلَى نَفْسِي فَأُخْبِرَ عَنِ الْخَبَرِ فَقَالَتْ خَدِيجَةُ كَلَّا أَبْشِرْ فَوَاللَّهِ لَا يُخْرِتُكَ اللَّهُ أَبَدًا  
 فَوَاللَّهِ إِنَّكَ تَصِلُ الرُّحْمَ وَتَصِلُ الْحَدِيثَ وَتَحْمِلُ الْكُدَّ وَتَكْسِبُ الْمَعْدُومَ وَتَقْبِي الضَّيْفَ  
 وَتُعِينُ عَلَى تَوَاتِبِ الْحَقِّ فَانْطَلَعَتْ بِهِ خَدِيجَةُ حَتَّى أَتَتْ بِهِ وَرَقَةَ بْنَ نَوْثَلٍ وَهُوَ ابْنُ عَمِّ  
 خَدِيجَةَ أَخِي أَبِيهَا وَدُنِ امْرَأُ تَنْصَرُ لِحَاغِلِيَةٍ وَكَانَ يَكْتُبُ الْكُتُبَ الْعَرَبِيَّةَ وَيَكْتُبُ مِنَ الْإِنجِيلِ  
 بِعَرَبِيَّةٍ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ وَكَانَ شَيْخًا كَبِيرًا قَدْ عَمِيَ فَقَالَتْ خَدِيجَةُ يَا عَمِّ اسْمَعْ  
 مِنْ ابْنِ أَحْبَبِكَ قَالَ وَرَقَةُ يَا ابْنَ أَخِي مَاذَا تَرَى فَأَخْبَرَهُ النُّبَى صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَبَرَ  
 مَا رَأَى فَقَالَ وَرَقَةُ هَذَا الدَّمَامُوسُ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى مُوسَى لِيَتَدَيَّ فِيهِ جَدُّهُ لِيَتَدَيَّ أَكُونَ  
 حَيًّا ذَكَرَ خَرَفًا قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَوْمَخِّرْجِي ثُمَّ قَالَ وَرَقَةُ نَعَمْ لَمْ يَأْتِ  
 رَجُلٌ بِمَا جِئْتُ بِهِ إِلَّا أُوذِيَ وَإِنْ يُدْرِكُنِي يَوْمُكَ حَيًّا أَنْصُرُكَ نَحْنُ مَوْرَزَا ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْشَبْ  
 وَرَقَةُ أَنْ تُلَاقَ وَفُتِرَ الْوَحْيُ قُتْرَةً حَتَّى حَزَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ؛

© III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah 74, bāb 4*, no. 1, p. 366:4-10 ; for translation, see p. 31, n. 73.

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ قَالَ

حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ عَنْ عُقَيْلٍ عَنْ ابْنِ شُبَّانٍ ح وَحَدَّثَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ  
 الرَّزَّاقِ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا مَعْرُوفٌ عَنْ الزُّهْرِيِّ فَأَخْبَرَنِي أَبُو سَلَمَةَ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ  
 اللَّهِ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ يَخْطُبُ عَنْ قُتْرَةِ الْوَحْيِ فَقَالَ فِي حَدِيثِهِ  
 فَبَيْنَا أَنَا أَمْشِي سَمِعْتُ صَوْتًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَرَفَعْتُ رَأْسِي فَإِذَا الْمَلَكُ الَّذِي جَاءَنِي بِحَرَاءِ  
 جَنَّتْ عَلَى كُرْسِيِّ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَجِئْتُ مِنْهُ رُغْبًا فَرَجَعْتُ فَقُلْتُ زَمِّلُونِي فَدَثَرُونِي  
 فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ انْزِلْ وَأَنْزَجَزْ فَأَعْجَزْ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُفْرِغَ الصُّلُوفَ وَبِى الْأَيْهَانُ،

⊙ III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah 74, bāb 5*, no. 1, p. 366:11-17 ; for translation, see p. 31, n. 73.

حدثنا عبد الله بن يوسف قال

حدثنا الليث عن عُقيل قال ابن شهاب سمعتُ أبا سلمة قال أخبرني جابر بن عبد الله أنه سمع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يحدث عن فترة الوحي فيينا أنا أمشي سمعتُ صوتاً من السماء فرفعتُ بصرى فبسل السماء فإذا الملكُ الذي جاءنى بحراءَ قاعدٌ على كُرسى بين السماء والأرض فجلستُ منه حتى صويتُ إلى الأرض فجلتُ أعلى فقلتُ زملونى زملونى فأنزل الله تعالى يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ انى قولهُ فَأَعْجِرْ قال أبو سلمة وَالرَّجَزُ الْأَوَّلُ ثُمَّ رَمَى الْوَحْيُ وَتَتَابَعُ،

⊙ III, 65 *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, Sūrah 96, bāb 1*, no. 1, p. 381:5-11 ; for translation, see p. 31, n. 73.

قال محمد بن

شهاب فأخبرني أبو سلمة أن جابر بن عبد الله الأنصاري قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وهو يحدث عن فترة الوحي قال في حديثه بينا أنا أمشي سمعتُ صوتاً من السماء فرفعتُ بصرى فإذا الملكُ الذي جاءنى بحراءَ جالسٌ على كُرسى بين السماء والأرض فرفعتُ منه فرجعتُ فقلتُ زملونى زملونى فدثروهُ فأنزل الله تعالى يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ دُمُ فَادْبُرْ وَرَبُّكَ فَكَبِّرْ وَثِيَابُكَ فَفُتِّرْ وَالرَّجَزُ قَاعٌ حَجَرٌ قال أبو سلمة وفي الأولانُ الله كان أحلُّ للجاهلية يعبدون قال ثم تتابع الوحي،

⊙ III, 59 *Kitāb Badʿ al-Khalq, bāb 7*, no. 15, p. 313:10-16 ; for translation, see p. 32, n. 74.

حدثنا

عبد الله بن يوسف قال حدثنا الليث قال حدثني عُقيل عن ابن شهاب قال سمعتُ أبا سلمة قال أخبرني جابر بن عبد الله أنه سمع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول ثم فترة

الْوَحْيُ عَنِّي فَتَمَرَّةٌ فَبَيْنَا أَنَا أَمْشِي سَمِعْتُ صَوْتًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَرَفَعْتُ بَعْضَ قَبْلِ السَّمَاءِ  
فَإِذَا الْمَلَكُ الَّذِي جَاءَنِي بِحِجَاءٍ قَاعِدٌ عَلَى كُرْسِيِّ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَجُثْتُ مِنْهُ حَتَّى عَوَيْتُ  
إِلَى الْأَرْضِ فَجُمْتُ أَعْلَى فَقُلْتُ زَمَلُونِي زَمَلُونِي فَأَنزَلَ إِلَهُ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَدْيَنِيُّ قُمْ فَأَنذِرْ إِلَى قَوْمِهِ  
وَالرَّجَزُ فَاتَّخَذَهُ قَالَ أَبُو سَلَمَةَ وَالرَّجَزُ الْوَتَانُ

④ IV, 91 *Ta'bir al-Ru'yā, bāb 1, no. 1, p. 347:4-348:11* ; for translation, see p. 32, n. 76.

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ حَدَّثَنَا الثَّيْبِيُّ عَنْ عُقَيْلٍ عَنْ ابْنِ شَيْبَانَ وَحَدَّثَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ  
مُحَمَّدٍ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّزَّاقِ حَدَّثَنَا مَعْمَرٌ قَالَ الرَّحْمَنِيُّ فَأَخْبَرَنِي عُرْوَةُ عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ  
عَنْهَا أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ أَوَّلَ مَا بَلَغَنِي بِهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنَ الْوَحْيِ الرَّؤْيَا الصَّادِقَةُ  
فِي النَّوْمِ فَكَانَ لَا يَبْرَى رُؤْيَا إِلَّا جَاءَتْهُ مِثْلَ فَلَقِ الصُّبْحِ فَكَانَ بِأَنِّي حِرَاءٌ فَيَحْتَثُّ فِيهِ  
وَهُوَ التَّعَبُّدُ اللَّيَالِي ذَوَاتِ الْعَدَدِ وَيَنْزُودُ لَذَلِكَ ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ إِلَى خَدِيجَةَ فَتَنْزُودُهُ لِمَثَلِهَا حَتَّى  
فَتَجِيئَهُ الْخُفُّ وَهُوَ فِي غَارِ حِرَاءٍ فَجَاءَهُ الْمَلَكُ فِيهِ فَقَالَ أَقْرَأْ فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ  
وَسَلَّمَ مَا أَنَا بِقَارِيٍّ فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهَنَّمَ ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ أَقْرَأْ فَقُلْتُ  
مَا أَنَا بِقَارِيٍّ فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي الثَّانِيَةَ حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهَنَّمَ ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ أَقْرَأْ فَقُلْتُ مَا  
أَنَا بِقَارِيٍّ فَغَطَّنِي الثَّلَاثَةَ حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهَنَّمَ ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي  
خَلَقَ حَتَّى بَلَغَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ فَرَجَعَ بِهَا تَرْجُفُ بَوَائِدِهِ حَتَّى دَخَلَ عَلَى خَدِيجَةَ فَقَالَ زَمَلُونِي  
زَمَلُونِي فَرَمَلُوهُ حَتَّى نَحَبَ عَنْهُ الرَّوْعُ فَقَالَ يَا خَدِيجَةُ مَا لِي وَأَخْبَرَهَا الْخَبْرَ وَقَالَ قَدْ خَشِيتُ  
عَلَى نَفْسِي فَقَالَتْ لَهُ كَلَّا أَبَشِّرُ فَوَاللَّهِ لَا يُخْزِيكَ اللَّهُ أَبَدًا إِنَّكَ لَتَتِمُّدُ الرَّحِمَ وَتَصِلُ  
لِلدَّيْتِ وَتَحْمِلُ الْكُلَّ وَتَقْرِي الضَّيْفَ وَتُعِينِ عَلَى نَوَائِبِ الْحَيَاةِ ثُمَّ انْطَلَقَتْ بِهِ خَدِيجَةُ  
حَتَّى أَتَتْ بِهِ وَرَقَةَ بْنَ نَوْفَلٍ بْنِ أَسَدٍ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْعُزَّى بْنِ قُصَيٍّ وَهُوَ ابْنُ عَمِّ خَدِيجَةَ  
أَخُو أَبِيهَا وَكَانَ أَمْرًا تَمْتَرُ فِي الْجَاعِلِيَّةِ وَكَانَ يَكْتُبُ الْكِتَابَ الْعَرَبِيَّ فَيَكْتُبُ بِالْعَرَبِيَّةِ مِنَ  
الْأَجْمِيلِ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ وَكَانَ شَيْخًا كَبِيرًا قَدْ عَمِيَ فَقَالَتْ لَهُ خَدِيجَةُ أَيُّ ابْنِ  
عَمِّ أَسْمَعَ مِنْ ابْنِ أَخِيكَ فَقَالَ لَهُ وَرَقَةُ ابْنُ أَخِي مَاذَا تَرَى فَأَخْبَرَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ  
وَسَلَّمَ مَا رَأَى فَقَالَ وَرَقَةُ هَذَا النَّامُوسُ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى مُوسَى يَا لَيْتَنِي فِيهَا جَدَعًا أَكُونُ

حَيًّا حِينَ يُخْرِجُكَ قَوْمُكَ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَوْخَرَجَنِي ثُمَّ فَقَالَ وَرَقَةُ  
نَعَمْ لَمْ يَأْتِ رَجُلٌ قَطُّ بِمَا جِئْتَ بِهِ إِلَّا عُودِي وَإِنْ يُدْرِكُنِي يَوْمُكَ أَنْصُرَكَ نَصْرًا مُؤَزَّرًا ثُمَّ  
لَمْ يَنْشَبْ وَرَقَةُ أَنْ تُتَوَقَّى وَفَتَرَ الْوَحْيُ فِتْرَةً حَتَّى حَزَنَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِيمَا  
بَلَّغْنَا حَرْثًا غَدًا مِنْهُ مَرَارًا ثُمَّ يَنْتَرِي مِنْ رُؤُوسِ شَوَاعِفِ الْجِبَالِ فَكَلَّمَا أُوفِيَ بِذِرْوَةِ جَبَلٍ  
نَلَى يُلْقَى مِنْهُ نَفْسُهُ تَبَدَّى لَهُ جِبْرِيلُ فَقَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ إِنَّكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ حَقًّا فَيَسْكُنُ لَدُنْكَ  
جَأْشُهُ وَتَقَرَّ نَفْسُهُ فَيَرْجِعُ فَإِذَا ضَالَّتْ عَلَيْهِ فِتْرَةُ الْوَحْيِ غَدًا مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ فَإِذَا أُوفِيَ بِذِرْوَةِ  
جَبَلٍ تَبَدَّى لَهُ جِبْرِيلُ فَقَالَ لَهُ مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ، قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ قَالِيفُ الْأَصْبَاحِ ضَوْءُ الشَّمْسِ  
بِالنِّيَّارِ وَضَوْءُ الْقَمَرِ بِاللَّيْلِ،

**D. Al-Ṭabarī. *Taʾrīkh al-Ṭabarī: Taʾrīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk.***

① III, 1147:1-1148:8 ; for translation, see p. 47, n. 109.

فَخَدَّثَنِي أَحْمَدُ بْنُ عَثْمَانَ  
الْمَعْرُوفُ بِأَبِي الْجَمُوزَاءِ قَالَ سَأَلَ وَهْبُ بْنُ جَرِيرٍ قَالَ سَأَلَ ابْنُ قُلْ  
سَمِعْتُ النَّعْمَانَ بْنَ رَاشِدٍ يَحْكُمُ عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ عَنْ عُرْوَةَ عَنْ  
عَلْقَمَةَ أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ كَانَ أَوَّلُ مَا أَبْعَدَنِي بِهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْ  
الْوَحْيِ السُّرُوبُ الصَّادِقَةُ كَانَتْ تَجِيءُ مِثْلَ فَلَقِ الصُّبْحِ ثُمَّ خُتِبَ  
أَتَيْهِ الْخَلَاءُ فَكَانَ بَغَارَ بَحْرَاءَ يَحْكُمُ فِيهِ اللَّيَالِي ذَوَاتِ الْعِدَدِ قَبْلَ  
أَنْ يَرْجِعَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ \* ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ فَيَنْتَرِذُ لِمِثْلِهَا حَتَّى لِحْجَةِ  
الْحَقِّ فَاتَاهُ فَقَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ أَنْتَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ \* اللَّهُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ  
فَجَثَوْتُ لِرُكْبَتِي وَالْأَقَائِمُ ثُمَّ رَخَّعْتُ تَرْجَفُ بَوَادِرِي ثُمَّ دَخَلْتُ  
عَلَى خَدِيجَةَ فَكَلَّمْتُ زَمْلَوِي زَمْلَوِي حَتَّى لَعَسَ عَنِي السُّرُوعُ ثُمَّ  
أَتَانِي فَقَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ أَنْتَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ قَالَ فَلَقَدْ هَمَمْتُ أَنْ أَطْرَحَ  
نَفْسِي مِنْ حَالَفٍ مِنْ جَبَلٍ فَتَبَدَّى لِي حِينَ هَمَمْتُ بِذَلِكَ فَقَالَ  
يَا مُحَمَّدُ أَنَا جِبْرِيلُ وَأَنْتَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ أَقْرَأْ قُلْتُ مَا أَقْرَأُ  
قَالَ فَاخْذِنِي فَفَتَنَنِي ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ ثُمَّ قَالَ أَقْرَأْ  
بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَفَرَأْتُ فَانْبَيْتُ خَدِيجَةَ فَكَلَّمْتُ لَقَدْ  
اشْفَعْتُ عَلَى نَفْسِي فَاخْبَرْتُهَا خَبْرِي فَقُلْتُ ابْشُرْ فَوَاللَّهِ لَا يُخْرِجُكَ

الله ابداً ووالله انك لتتصل الرحم وتصلق الحديث وتؤدى الامانة  
وتحمل الكد وتقرى الصيف وتعين على نوائب الحق ثم انطلقت  
الى ورفة بن نوفل بن أسد كانت اسمع من ابن اخيك فسألتني  
فخبرته خبري فقال هذا الناموس الذي أنزل على موسى بن  
عمران ليتني فيها جذع ليتني اكون حياً حين يخرجك قومك  
قلت امخرجني ؟ قل نعم انه لم يجهي رجل قط بما جئت به  
الا عوفي ونثن ادركي يومك انصرك نعماً مؤزراً ثم كان اول ما  
ونزل على من القرآن بعد اقرأ ن وانقلم وما يضطرون ما أنت  
بنعمة ربك بماجنون وإن لك لأجراً غير ممنون وإنك تعلم  
خلق عظيم فتستبصر وتبصرون وما آتينا المدثر قم فأنذر  
والضحى والليل اذا سجى .

② III, 1148:8-11 ; for translation, see p. 48, n. 109.

حدثني يونس بن عبد  
الاعلى قال نا ابن وهب قال اخبرني يونس عن ابن شهاب قال  
حدثني عروة ان عائشة اخبرته ثم ذكر نحوه غير انه لم يقل ثم  
كان من اول ما أنزل على من القرآن الى آخره .

③ III, 1148:11-1149:5 ; for translation, see p. 48, n. 109.

نما محمد  
ابن عبد الملك بن ابي الشوارب قال نا عبد الواحد بن زياد  
قال نا سليمان الشيباني قال نا عبد الله بن شداد قال نا  
جبريل محمدا صلعم فقال يا محمد اقرأ فقال ما اقرأ قل فغمه ثم  
قال يا محمد اقرأ قل ما اقرأ قل \* فغمه ثم قل يا محمد اقرأ قل  
وما اقرأ قل اقرأ باسم ربك الذي خلق خلق الانسان من  
علق حتى بلغ علم الانسان ما لم يعلم قل فجاء الى خديجة  
فقال يا خديجة ما اراي الا قد فرض لي قنت كلا والله ما كان  
ربك بفعل ذلك بك ما اتيت فاحشة قط قل فأتت خديجة



ورقة بن نوفل فاخبرته الخبر فقال لئن كنت صادقة ان زوجك  
لنبي وليلقين من أمته شدة وثمن ادركنه لاؤمنن به قل ثم  
ابننا عليه جبريل فكانت له خديجة ما ارى ربك الا قد فلاه  
قل فانزل الله عز وجل والضحى والنيل اذا ساجى ما وثعك  
ربك وما قلنى،

④ III, 1149:5-1152:5 ; for translation, see p. 45, n. 107.

سأ ابن حميد قل دنا سلمة عن محمد بن  
احماتى قل حدثنى وهب بن كيسان مولى آل الزبير قل سمعت  
عبد الله بن الزبير وهو يقول نعيبد بن عمير بن قتادة الليثي  
خلفنا يا عبيد كيف كان بدو ما ابتدئ به رسول الله صلعم  
من النبوة \* حين جله جبريل عم فقل عبيد وانا حاضر  
يحديث عبد الله بن الزبير ومن عنده من الناس كان رسول الله  
صلعم يجاور في حراء من كل سنة شهرا وكان ذلك مما تحت  
به قيش في الجاهلية والتحنت التبرر وقل ابو ظائب  
ورابي ليرقى في حراء وقل

فكان رسول الله صلعم يجاور ذلك الشهر من كل سنة يطعم  
من جاءه من المساكين فاذا قضى رسول الله صلعم جواره من  
شهره ذلك كان اول ما يبدأ به اذا انصرف من جواره اللعنة  
قبل ان يدخل بيته فيطوف بها سبعا او ما شاء الله من ذلك  
ثم يرجع الى بيته حتى اذا كان الشهر انذى اراد الله عز وجل  
فيه ما اراد من امراته من السنة التي بعثه فيها وذلك في شهر  
رمضان خرج رسول الله صلعم الى حراء لما كان يخرج لجواره معه

اهله حتى اذا كانت الليلة التي اكرمه الله فيها برسالته ورحم  
العباد بها جاءه جبريل بامر الله فقال رسول الله صلعم فجاءنى  
وانا للثم بنمط من ديباج فيه كتاب فقال اقرأ فقلت ما اقرأ  
فغثنى حتى ظننت انه الموت ثم ارسلنى فقال اقرأ فقلت ما  
ذا اقرأ وما اقول ذلك الا افتداه منه ان يعود الى بمثل ما صنع  
في قل اقرأ باسم ربك انذى خلق الى قوله علم الانسان ما لم  
يعلم قل فقرأته قل ثم انتهى ثم انصرف عني \* وهببت من

نسمى<sup>ه</sup> وذلكما كتب<sup>و</sup> في قلبي كتاباً كل ولم يكن من خلف الله احد ابغض اليّ من شئ أو يحبون كنت لا اتيق ان انظر اليهما كل قلت ان الأبعد يعني نفسه لشاعر أو محبون<sup>١٠</sup> نحدث بها عني قريش ابداً لاعدائهم الى حسانف من جليل فلافرحوا نفسي منه فلاقتليها فلاسترحن كل فخرجت اريد ذلك حتى اذا كنت في وسط من الجبل سمعت صوتاً من السماء يقول يا محمد انت رسول الله وأنا جبريل كل فرفعت رأسي الى السماء فلما جبريل في صورة رجل صافى قدميه في أفق اسماء يقول يا محمد عما اردت يا انقذ وما الأخر جعلت اعرف وجهي عندك في أفق السماء فلا انشر في ناحية منها الا رائدك كما انك يا زبنا وأفنا ما انقذتم امامي ولا ارجع ورائي حتى بعثت خديجة رسلياً في طلي حتى بلغنا مكة ورجعوا انبياء وأنا واقف في مكانك ثم اعرف عني وانصرفتم راجعاً الى اهل حتى اتيت خديجة فجلست الى لخذيها مصيفاً ففعلت يا ابا انقاسم اين كنت ثم والله للاد بعثت رسل في طلبك حتى باعوا بكهنة ورجعوا اليّ كل قلت بها ان الأبعد لشاعر أو محبون ففعلت أبعيدك بالله من ذلك يا انقاسم ما كن الله ليمنع ذلك بك منها اعلم منك هم محزون حديثك وعظم امتك وحسن خلقك وعلامة رجلك وما ذاك بلين عم لعلك رايت شيئاً كل فقلت لها نعم ثم حدثنيها بالذي رايت ففعلت ابشر بلين عم واثبت فوالذي نفس خديجة بيده اني لارجو ان تكون نبي هذه الامة ثم قدمت فجمعت عليها ثيابها ثم انطلقت الى ورقة بن نوفل بن اسد وهو ابن عمها وكان ورقة قد تنقر وقتراً للنب وسمع من اهل التنورية والاحجيل فاختبرته بما اخبرها به رسول الله صلعم أنه رأى ومع ظلال ورقة ففدوس ففدوس والذي نفس ورقة بيده لئن كنت مصغفني يا خديجة لقد جاءه الناموس الاكبر يعني بالناموس جبريل عم الذي كن بأنك موسى وأنه لنبي هذه الامة فقل لي له فليثبت فرجعت خديجة الى رسول الله صلعم فاختبرته بقول ورقة فسئل ذلك عليه بعض ما هو فيه من النب فلما قضى رسل الله صلعم جواراً وانعرف صبيح كما كن يصنع بدأ بالعبية ففانف

بها فلقبه ورقة بن نوفل وهو يطوف بالبيت فقال يا ابن اخي  
 اخبرني بما رايت او سمعت فاخبره رسول الله صلعم فقال له ورقة  
 والذي نفسي بيده انك لنبي هذه الامة ولقد جاءك الناموس  
 الاكبر الذي جاء الى موسى ولتكنبته ولتؤدبته ولتخرجته ولتقائلته  
 ولئن انا ادركت ذلك لانصرون الله نصرا يعلمه ثم اني رأته فقبل  
 بلقوحه ثم انصرف رسول الله صلعم الى منزله وقد زاده ذلك من  
 قول ورقة ثباتا وخفف عنه بعض ما كان فيه من الهم،

⑤ III, 1153:3-15 ; for translation, see p. 46, n. 108.

نما ابن

المثنى قال نما عثمان بن عمر بن فارس قال نما علي بن المبارك  
 عن يحيى يعني ابن ابي كثير قال سألت ابا سلمة ابي القرآن  
 أنزل أول فقال يا أيها المحدث فقلت يقولون اقرأ باسم ربك فقال  
 ابو سلمة سألت جابر بن عبد الله ابي القرآن أنزل ابي فقال يا  
 أيها المحدث فقلت اقرأ باسم ربك الذي خلق فقال لا أخبرك  
 إلا ما حدثنا النبي صلعم قال جاورت في جبراء فلما قضيت  
 جوارى عبطت فاستبطنت السواقي فنوديت فنظرت عن يميني  
 وعن شمالي وخلفي وقدامي فلم ار شيئا فنظرت فوق رأيت فاذا  
 عو جالس على عرش بين السماء والارض فخشيت منه قال ابن  
 المثنى هكذا قال عثمان بن عمر واتما عو فجئت منه فلقيت  
 خديجة فقلت ذقوني فذشروني وصبوا علي ماء وأنزل علي يا  
 أيها المحدث قم فأنذر،

⑥ III, 1153:15-1154:4 ; for translation, see p. 46, n. 108.

نما ابو كريب قال نما وكيع عن

علي بن المبارك عن يحيى بن ابي كثير قال سألت ابا سلمة عن  
 أول ما نزل من القرآن قال نزلت يا أيها المحدث أول قال قلت انهم  
 يقولون اقرأ باسم ربك الذي خلق فقال سألت جابر بن عبد  
 الله فقال لا أحدثك إلا ما حدثنا رسول الله صلعم قال جاورت  
 بجبراء فلما قضيت جوارى عبطت فسمعت صوتا فنظرت عن

يَمِينِي فَلَمْ أَرِ شَيْئًا وَعَنِ شِمَالِي فَلَمْ أَرِ هَيْبًا وَنَظَرْتُ أَمَامِي فَلَمْ أَرِ  
شَيْئًا وَنَظَرْتُ خَلْفِي فَلَمْ أَرِ شَيْئًا فَرَفَعْتُ رَأْسِي فَزَايْتُ شَيْئًا  
فَأَتَيْتُ خَدِيجَةَ فَقُلْتُ ذَبْرُونِي وَصَبُّوا عَلَيَّ مَاءً قَدْ فَدَشَرُونِي وَصَبُّوا  
عَلَيَّ مَاءً بَارِدًا فَغُرِلْتُ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدْتَشِرُ،

⑦ III, 1154:4-8 ; for translation, see p. 41, n. 98.

وَحَدَّثَنِي عَنْ عِشَامٍ

ابن محمد قال أتى جبريل رسول الله صلعم أول ما أتاه ليلة السبت  
وليلة الأحد ثم شبر له برسالة الله عز وجل يوم الاثنين فعلمه  
الوضوء وعلمه الصلاة وعلمه أقرأ باسم ربك الذي خلق وكان  
نرسول الله صلعم \* يوم الاثنين يوم أوحى إليه " أربعون سنة.

⑧ III, 1155:6-15 ; for translation, see p. 47, n. 108.

سأ محمد بن عبد الأعلى قال

سأ ابن ثور عن معمر بن الزهري قال فتر الوحى من رسول الله  
صلعم فترة فحزن حزنا شديدا جعل يغدو الى رؤوس شواطئ  
البحال ليتردى منها فكلمها أوفى بذروة جبل تبعدى له جبريل  
فيقول أنك نبي الله فيسكن لذلك جليته وترجع اليه نفسه  
فكان النبي صلعم يحدث من ذلك قال فبينما أنا امشى يوما  
ان رايت الملك الذي كان بأثيني بجرا على كرسي بين السماء  
والارض فجلست منه رعبا فرجعت الى خديجة فقلت زملني  
فرملناه الى دثرناه فانزل الله عز وجل يا أيها المدثر قم فأنذر  
وربك فكثير وثيابك فطهر

⑨ III, 1155:15-16 ; for translation, see p. 43, n. 102.

قال الزهري فكان أول شيء أنزل عليه

أقرأ باسم ربك الذي خلق حتى بلغ ما لم يعلم ،

III, 1155:16-1156:5 ; for translation, see p. 47, n. 108.

### حدثني

يونس بن عبد الأعلى قال نا ابن وهب قال اخبرني يونس عن  
ابن شهاب قال اخبرني ابو سلمة بن عبد الرحمن ان جابر بن  
عبد الله الانصاري قال قال رسول الله صلعم وهو يحدث عن فترة  
الوحى بينا انا امشى سمعت صوتا من السماء فرفعت رأسي فاذا  
الملك انزى جلي جبراء جالس على كرسى بين السماء والارض  
قال رسول الله صلعم فجلتت منه فرقا رجئت فقلت زملموني  
زملموني فدثروني فانزل الله عز وجل يا أيها المدثر قم فأنذر وربك  
ذكّر الى قوله والرجز فاهجر قال ثم تتابع الوحى،

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