MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC OFFICE

AS PORTRAYED IN THE QUR'AN

by

J. CHRISTY WILSON, JR.

A THESIS PRESENTED TO

THE FACULTY OF DIVINITY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

MAY 1949
TO MY FATHER

who in his love for the followers of Muhammad has given the best years of his life as their servant and friend, in order to point them to the Light of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ
THE ANGEL GABRIEL AND MOHAMMAD

An illustration from Rashid al-Din's "Jami' al-Tawarikh". The MS. dated from 1306 A.D. and is in the Col. Brailie collection. Courtesy of the Edinburgh University Library.
The purpose of this thesis will be to examine what according to the Qur'ān is meant by Muhammad's prophetic office. The treatment of the subject will be limited to the sacred book of Islam, even though there is a vast development of the idea of his prophethood in subsequent thought. The latter would be a fruitful field of research in itself. Originally when this work was begun, there was the intention of including the prophetic office of Jesus Christ as well. But the undertaking was too vast, and therefore the field with no little regret had to be narrowed down. In fact the subject of Muhammad's mission itself in the Qur'ān is so extensive that this work can only seek to sift and synthesize the most pertinent passages.

Besides viewing the evidence as it is set forth in the original source, certain brief conclusions have also been noted. If some of the judgments appear too harsh or on the other hand too lenient, it must be said that an attempt has been made to be as fair as possible. There has been the recognition that error must be recognized and not condoned, since truth itself is intolerant. But at the same time there has been a real desire for tolerance, understanding and love toward the followers of the Prophet.
Since this thesis will be dealing primarily with the content of the Qur'an, problems of textual and historical criticism usually will not be treated, although the writer is not unaware of their presence. On the other hand, many interpretations of the content must of necessity be formulated only after due consideration of the findings in the field of such criticism. In quoting the text, Dr. Bell's translation (The Qur'an, Edinburgh, 1927) has been used exclusively. A uniformity in the spelling of Arabic words has been sought through usually adopting Professor Hitti's system of transliteration.

Sincere acknowledgements are due the Rev. Dr. W.M. Watt for his ever ready assistance in this work, the Rev. Dr. Richard Bell for his kind advice, and Professors Arberry, Hitti, Porteous and Zwemer for their suggestions and encouragement.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD............................................................... 1
TABLE OF CONTENTS...................................................... 3

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION........................................ 9
   I. THE PROPHET'S PORTRAIT IN THE QUR'\AN...................... 10
   II. THE OUTLINE OF THE THESIS DEVIATIONS....................... 10
   III. THE QUR'\AN AS A VALID SOURCE.............................. 11
   IV. THE NEED OF RESEARCH IN THE SUBJECT........................ 12
   V. THE BACKGROUND OF MUHAMMAD'S "PROPHET" CONCEPT.............. 13
      A. The Prophet Elkasai........................................ 13
      B. The Etymology of the Term Rasul.......................... 13
      C. The Etymology of the Term Nebi............................ 14
      D. The Synthesis of Hebrew, Christian, and Arab Influence. 16
   VI. THE PROPHET'S BIOGRAPHY IN BRIEF............................ 17

CHAPTER TWO - MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC OFFICE.................. 22
   I. THE CALL AND COMMISSION...................................... 23
      A. The Opening Passage of Surah 96.......................... 23
      B. The Traditional Account of the Call....................... 24
      C. The Opening Passage of Surah 74........................... 24
      D. The Supernatural Vision of Surah 53:6-10 and Surah 81:19-23....... 26
      E. The Prophet "Sent" of God.................................. 26
      F. The Prophet Pledged and Instructed by God............... 27
      G. The Commissioning of a Definite Vision................... 28
      H. The Various Probable Impulses.............................. 29
      I. The Main Motive Religious.................................. 30
   II. THE SCOPE OF HIS MINISTRY.................................. 31
      A. To His Own Relatives...................................... 31
      B. To the Makkans............................................ 31
      C. To the Jews............................................... 32
      D. To the Christians.......................................... 33
      E. To the Arabs............................................... 33
         1. The "religion of Abraham"................................ 34
         2. The "Muhifs"............................................. 34
         3. The "Ummah".............................................. 34
      F. To the World................................................. 34
III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS PERSON

A. A Fallible Human Being
B. A Believer Himself
C. A Sufferer of Persecution
D. A Witness, Warner and Messenger
E. A Brilliant Diplomat
F. A Military Genius
G. A Spiritual Leader
H. A Judicial Arbitrator
I. A Priestly Intercessor
J. A Character Appraisal

IV. THE PURPOSE OF HIS OFFICE

A. To Preach God's Message
B. To Vindicate God's Righteousness
C. To Give the Arabs a Book
D. To Be a Blessing to Believers
E. To Serve When There Were No Other Prophets
F. To Establish Islam's Predominence

CHAPTER THREE - MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC INSPIRATION

I. THE SUPERNATURAL ELEMENT

A. In the Association with the Unseen
   1. Through visions
   2. Through suggestions
   3. Through special knowledge
   4. Through the prophetic Spirit
   5. Through Gabriel
   6. Through oracular in dreams
   7. Through the Night Journey
   8. Through the Night of Power
B. In the Diction of the Qur'an
   1. Through the introductory formula
   2. Through the royal "We"
   3. Through the speech of angels
   4. Through the divine imperative
   5. Through the word "Say"
   6. Through the reiteration of divine origin

II. THE HUMAN ELEMENT

A. In the Matter of Composition
B. In the Matter of Style
C. In the Matter of Sources
D. In the Matter of Development
III. THE CONCEPT BEHIND THE QUR'AN 
A. The "Qur'an" 
B. The "Nur'an" 
C. The "Mother of the Book" 
D. The "Book" 
   1. Its special authority 
   2. Its expressed purpose 

IV. THE ENIGMAS OF QUR'ANIC INSPIRATION 
A. The Problem of Alterations 
   1. Satan's suggestions 
   2. Divine deletions and substitutions 
B. The Problem of Sources 
   1. Rabbinic materials 
   2. Biblical stories 
C. The Problem of Revelations for Special Occasions 
   1. Changing the Qiblah 
   2. Explaining the reverse of Umud 
   3. Justifying the marriage to Zaynab 
   4. Forbidding the rumours about Ummishah 
   5. Freeing himself from oaths 
   6. Solving family troubles 
D. The Problem of Muhammad's Sincerity 
   1. Noldeke's view 
   2. Muir's view 
   3. Bell's view 

CHAPTER FOUR - MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC MESSAGE 
I. THE CONTENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF HIS MESSAGE 
A. Its Centredness in God 
   1. The generosity of God 
   2. The oneness and attributes of God 
B. Its Condemnation of Vice 
   1. The niggardliness of man 
   2. The ingratitude and presumption of man 
C. Its Commendation of Virtue 
   1. Gratitude expressed in generosity 
D. Its Doctrine of Future Judgment 
   1. A necessary corrective 
   2. A fairly early teaching 
   3. A punishment in this world and the next 
E. Its Character of Invitation 
   1. The call to the faith 
   2. The duties of the faith 
F. Its Amplification at Medinah 
   1. In the realm of legislation 
   2. In the realm of belief 
   3. In the realm of war
II. THE STYLE AND PREACHING OF HIS MESSAGE ..................... 88
   A. The Originality of Qur’anic Prose ....................... 88
   B. The Progressive Deterioration of the Style ............ 88
   C. The Form of the Message .................................. 89
       1. The use of rhyme .................................. 89
       2. The use of repetition .............................. 89
       3. The use of parallelism ............................... 90
       4. The use of contrast .................................. 90
       5. The use of rhetorical schemes ...................... 91
       6. The use of parables .................................. 91
   D. The Heights of the Preaching ............................... 92
       1. The inciters concerning God and man ................. 92
       2. The declamations against unbelievers ............... 93
       3. The awareness of judicial blindness ................. 93

CHAPTER FIVE - MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC AUTHENTICATION -
                  NOT BY FORETELLING NOR BY MIRACLES ........... 96

I. PAST PROPHETIC AUTHENTICATION ............................... 97
   A. By Predicting Events Which Occurred .................... 97
   B. By Manifesting Evidential Circles ....................... 98

II. MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC AUTHENTICATION ....................... 99
   A. Did Muhammad Predict Events? ............................ 100
       1. The spread of Islam (Surah 41:55) .................. 100
       2. The return to Makkah (Surah 28:85) ................. 101
       3. The Byzantine victory (Surah 30:1-3) ............... 102
       4. The denial of being able to predict .................. 103
       5. The desire of being able to predict .................. 103
   B. Did Muhammad Perform Miracles? ......................... 104
       1. The view of the Qur’En ............................... 104
       2. The view of tradition .................................. 104
       3. The contemporary expectation of signs ............... 105

CHAPTER SIX - MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC AUTHENTICATION -
                BY INGENIOUS ARGUMENTS ......................... 107

I. THROUGH THE USE OF OATHS .................................. 109
II. THROUGH THE EXAMPLE OF FORMER PROPHETS AND
    PEOPLES .................................................. 110
III. THROUGH THE DESCRIPTION OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCES ...... 112
IV. THROUGH THE WONDERS OF CREATION ......................... 114
V. THROUGH THE MIRACLE OF THE QUR’AN ........................ 117
VI. THROUGH THE USE OF CONJECTURE......................120
VII. THROUGH THE FUTURE PROOF OF PUNISHMENT...........123
VIII. THROUGH THE TESTIMONY OF GOD.....................124
IX. THROUGH THE TESTIMONY OF JINN, ANGELS AND APOSTLES......................................................125
X. THROUGH THE CONFIRMATION OF PAST PROPHETS AND SCRIPTURES..................................................126
XI. THROUGH THE NOTE OF AUTHORITY........................127
XII. THROUGH THE EXPLANATIONS OF UNBELIEF..............129
XIII. THROUGH THE CHALLENGING OF OPPONENTS............131
XIV. THROUGH THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATION.................133
XV. THROUGH THE PRESENCE AND EXAMPLE OF MUHAMMAD...135
XVI. THROUGH THE SUCCESS OF ISLAM.......................137
XVII. OBSERVATIONS UPON THESE AUTHENTICATIONS.........140

A. The Value of a Systematic Study.........................140
B. The Absence of Direct External Evidence..............141
   1. One man's testimony and interpretation...............142
   2. Reasons for doubting his trustworthiness..............143
C. The Substitution of Quantity for Quality..............143
   1. Indications of an inferiority complex..............143

CHAPTER SEVEN - MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC PREDECESSORS...145
I. THE MODELS FOR MUHAMMAD'S OFFICE.....................149

A. Their Prophetic Office..................................149
   1. The commission.....................................149
   2. The fallible nature..................................149
   3. The intercessory function............................150
   4. The policy in war....................................150
   5. The purpose of office................................151
B. Their Prophetic Inspiration................................151
   1. The messenger's book................................151
   2. The word "say"........................................151
C. Their Prophetic Message................................151
   1. Advocates of one God................................151
   2. Awareness of judicial blindness......................152
D. Their Prophetic Authentication..........................152
   1. Instances of prediction............................152
   2. Instances of miracles................................152
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Few figures in the course of history have been as well known and yet remained as unknown as has the Prophet Muhammad. But a solution in part at least for this problem is possible because a true portrait of the Great Arabian is still extant. It lies hidden amongst the collection of his utterances which goes to make up the Qur'ān. Therefore this document per se has been the subject of new interest and research. Much is being done to arrange the material into a better working order and through this to discover a more authentic picture of the Prophet, one that is free from the colourful fictions of later tradition. In like manner, through the following pages we shall seek to get a fresh view of Muhammad's prophetic office as it is portrayed in this original source.

The subject may conveniently be considered in six main divisions. We shall first of all view the Prophet's office; looking at his call, the scope of his ministry, the development of his person, and the purposes of his mission. Secondly, we shall inquire into his inspiration with the resulting enigma between its supernatural claims and its human elements. This section will also include a consideration of the growth of the "book" concept.

Thirdly, we shall study the content, development and style of his message. We shall then in the fourth place explore
the question of whether Muhammad foretold the future or performed any miracles. Fifthly, we shall look at groupings of ingenious arguments used to authenticate his mission. And lastly, we shall see from the accounts of former messengers how the Apostle's concept of their prophetic office served as a model for his own, and how he also conversely read himself and his contemporary scene into their stories.

Before proceeding to the main body of the thesis, let us briefly examine the Qur'ān as a valid source for obtaining a true picture of Muhammad's office, and inquire into the background of the "prophet" idea. Western scholars regard the Qur'ān as a highly reliable and fruitful source for investigating the mind of its author. It is true that critical studies of the text are still in their infancy. But nevertheless in spite of variant readings and the largely fictitious character of the orthodox Muslim view, the scientific approach already indicates how remarkably pure and authentic the book really is.

As to its being a productive as well as a trustworthy commentary on the Apostle's character, it may not be out of order to cite the testimony of several authorities.

"To speak of the Qur'ān", says Margoliouth, "is practically the same as speaking of Muhammad, and in trying to appraise the religious value of the book one is at the same time

attempting to form an opinion of the Prophet himself. It would indeed be difficult to find another case in which there is such a complete identity between the literary work and the mind of the man who produced it." Or an earlier opinion is that of Muir when he says, "By this standard of his own making we may safely judge his life and actions, for it must represent either what he actually thought, or that which he affected to think." And again St. Clair Tisdall states, "The Qur'ān is a faithful mirror of the life and character of its author."

But when it is conceded that the record is trustworthy, the question then arises as to whether its field of research has not already been exhausted. Of this Hirschfeld says, "It is full of points not yet used for the study of its author, and of problems as yet undiscussed." And Tor Andrae's opinion is not dissimilar when he observes: "It is quite remarkable that Western scholarship has been so reluctant to exploit adequately the sacred book of Islam as a first-hand source for the inner life of the Prophet." In fact it need only be mentioned that the course of this study has revealed to the writer how vast the stretches of territory are which remain still to be explored.

attempting to form an opinion of the Prophet himself. It would indeed be difficult to find another case in which there is such a complete identity between the literary work and the mind of the man who produced it.\(^1\) Or an earlier opinion is that of Muir when he says, "By this standard of his own making we may safely judge his life and actions, for it must represent either what he actually thought, or that which he affected to think."\(^2\) And again St. Clair Tisdall states, "The Qur\(\text{ān}\) is a faithful mirror of the life and character of its author.\(^3\)

But when it is conceded that the record is trustworthy, the question then arises as to whether its field of research has not already been exhausted. Of this Hirschfeld says, "It is full of points not yet used for the study of its author, and of problems as yet undiscussed."\(^4\) And Tor Andrae's opinion is not dissimilar when he observes: "It is quite remarkable that Western scholarship has been so reluctant to exploit adequately the sacred book of Islam as a first-hand source for the inner life of the Prophet."\(^5\) In fact it need only be mentioned that the course of this study has revealed to the writer how vast the stretches of territory are which remain still to be explored.

---

3. St. Clair Tisdall, The Original Sources of the Qur\(\text{ān}\), (London, 1905), p.27.
5. Tor Andrae, Mohammed, The Man and His Faith, (London, 1936), p.152
"Islam", as Christopher Dawson states in his 1947 Gifford Lectures, "is the religion of the Prophet par excellence." Therefore an inquiry into this particular aspect of the Qur'ān should be especially rewarding. But what was the background of the prophetic concept as Muhammad came to know it? Without doubt the idea originated from Jewish and Christian sources, and yet it had probably already found its way into the milieu of Arab thought long before the beginning of the seventh century A.D. As early as the reign of Trajan, the prophet Elkasai had appeared in Arabia. His followers believed in one God, the Last Judgment, and a book which they held had been revealed to him from heaven. Furthermore, in prayer they turned towards Jerusalem; and Elkasai's watchword is said to have been, "I am a witness over you on the Day of Judgment."

In spite of the close similarity between this prophet and Muhammad, it is doubtful whether there was any direct influence. The time lapse is too great. However, some have supposed that the Ǧābiʿīn of the Qur'ān were a remnant of the Elkasaites, in which case they could have exerted an effect upon the Apostle.

Greater certainty concerning the source of the Qur'ānic idea of prophethood is evinced by the use of the words (رسول) rasūl or "apostle" and (نبي) nabi or "prophet". The former of these two is found in Arabic literature with the profane meaning of "envoy" or "messenger".

"Islam", as Christopher Dawson states in his 1947 Gifford Lectures, "is the religion of the Prophet par excellence." Therefore an inquiry into this particular aspect of the Qur'an should be especially rewarding. But what was the background of the prophetic concept as Muhammad came to know it? Without doubt the idea originated from Jewish and Christian sources, and yet it had probably already found its way into the milieu of Arab thought long before the beginning of the seventh century A.D. As early as the reign of Trajan, the prophet Elkasai had appeared in Arabia. His followers believed in one God, the Last Judgment, and a book which they held had been revealed to him from heaven. Furthermore, in prayer they turned towards Jerusalem; and Elkasai's watchword is said to have been, "I am a witness over you on the Day of Judgment." In spite of the close similarity between this prophet and Muhammad, it is doubtful whether there was any direct influence. The time lapse is too great. However, some have supposed that the Ṣebi'In of the Qur'an were a remnant of the Elkasaites, in which case they could have exerted an effect upon the Apostle.

Greater certainty concerning the source of the Qur'anic idea of prophethood is evinced by the use of the words (رسول) rasūl or "apostle" and (نبي) nabi or "prophet". The former of these two is found in Arabic literature with the profane meaning of "envoy" or "messenger".

Hence there is no need to suspect that Muhammad had to learn it from outside. When he referred to himself as a Rasūl, it probably signified one who was sent to convey a message from another. But it is very possible that the specialized idea of a man who was deputed by God, originally came from the Greek equivalent (ἄποστολος) containing the Christian meaning of "apostle"; and yet as can be seen from the stories of such "messengers" as Hūd and Sālih, this sense was probably already current in pre-Islamic Arabia.

The use of the word nabī as a title for Muhammad is almost certainly completely Madinan, and is noteworthy in that it indicates Judaistic influence. For the purpose of this study, it is unnecessary to delve into the implications of Semitic prophecy with its cults and associations, since the concept in the minds of the Apostle's Jewish contemporaries was undoubtedly limited. But a brief consideration of the etymology of nabī, which has been a matter of dispute for a long time, may not be inappropriate.

Nöldeke and Guillaume for example trace the word back to the Hebrew (נביא), and the latter defines it

1. Some trace the roots of the concept back to the Old Testament. Stanton in *The Teaching of the Qur'ān*, p.43 connects it with "messenger" in Malachi 3:1, and Wensinck (op. cit.) links it with the "sending" of Moses, Isaiah and Jeremiah (Exodus 3:13 sq.; Isaiah 6:8; Jeremiah 1:7).


philologically as one who is in the state of announcing a message which has been given him. Others see its derivation from a possible Aramaic source. But Halder pursues it back through the Hebrew to the Accadian nabū, and interprets it to mean "speaker". Albright's view, which seems to have the best basis, derives the word from the same root as does Halder, but his exegesis differs. He says, "The current explanation of the word nabī, 'prophet', as 'speaker, announcer', is almost certainly false. The correct etymological meaning of the word is rather 'one who is called (by God)', as appears from the fact that this is almost always the sense which the verb nabū, 'to call', has in Accadian, from the middle of the third millennium to the middle of the first." From the above observation, Professor Albright defines the Hebrew term nabī as follows, "The prophet was a man who felt himself called by God for a special mission, in which his will was subordinated to the will of God, which was communicated to him by direct inspiration." This interpretation as will be seen in the following chapters coincides remarkably with the
Qur'\'anic view of Muhammad's office, especially during the early Mad\'inah period.

But besides the Hebrew-Christian influence upon his mission, a not insignificant source was the old belief of his people, since no reformer can wholly break loose from the ideas in which he has been brought up. The connection was so close that the new religion merely overlaid itself on the primitive faith of Arabia like a palimpsest. Herein lay the Prophet's great genius. He was a master at assimilation, gathering materials from various thought systems, synthesizing them, and applying them practically in his own ministry. Nöldeke sees in this ability justification for the claim of real prophethood. "The way in which Muhammad appropriated these (Jewish and Christian sources) to himself spiritually, and in which he took

1. Wensinck has held that a difference is made in the Qur'\'an between "apostle" and "prophet", in so far as the former is representative of an ummah or community. According to this view, every rasul as such is also a nabi, but not every nabi is the same time a rasul (Wensinck, The Muslim Creed, (Cambridge, 1932), pp.203,204). But Horovitz has pointed out that the Ahd and Khalil are spoken of in the Qur'\'an as "sent" but are not called "prophets" or nabi (Horovitz, "Nabi", Encyclopaedia of Islam, (London, 1936), vol. III, p.807f.) It therefore does not seem possible to draw a definite conclusion as to the different specialized designations of the two words, because the Qur'\'anic doctrine on the matter is not always clear. Also such development in terminology as the adoption of the title nabi at Makka, indicates that during the Makkan period at least, such a distinction was not held. (Cp. Sweetman, Islam and Christian Theology, (London, 1947), vol. II, p.137).


them for a revelation from God, which he must preach to men, makes him a true prophet." Thus it is that the Arab Apostle not unskilfully wove from these diverse strands the mantle of his office, which we are about to consider in more detail.

It is not within the compass of this study to go into a full description of the external facts of Muhammad's life. Scholarly biographies are easily accessible. But a brief sketch of the main events may be helpful as a background for his prophetic mission. He was born into the Quraysh tribe at Makkah in approximately 570 A.D. Having probably been left an orphan at an early age, he was cared for by his uncle. But upon attaining manhood, he entered the employ of Khadijah, a prosperous Mekkan widow, and in her behalf made a mercantile journey to Syria. After his return, he and this enterprising lady were happily married. Some years later, in about A.D. 610, he started to work as a prophet in his native town. To begin with he made a few converts and several years later some of his followers, said to have numbered over 100, were forced probably because of persecution to emigrate to Abyssinia. His mission at Makkah however was comparatively unsuccessful. He may


2. Because of the obscurity surrounding the historical facts of Muhammad's life at Makkah, this date is not at all certain. G. Buhl, "Muhammad", Encyclopaedia of Islam, (London, 1936), vol.III.
also have made a preaching visit to the neighbouring city of Ta'ift, but this too proved fruitless. A glimmer of encouragement on the other hand came from a Madīnān pilgrim party who in March of A.D. 620 heard and believed in the Prophet. There followed two pledges from these adherents during the next two pilgrimages, and thus the way was prepared for a safe reception in their town should the need arise. The situation at Makkah continued to deteriorate more and more. And therefore in A.D. 622 the Hijrah began, and around 150 Muslims followed by Muhammad and Abu-Bakr emigrated to Madīnāh.

Upon his arrival, he made overtures to the Jews; but when these were rejected, he entered upon a policy as his power increased of banishing most of them and putting some cruelly to the sword. Nor did he fail to take advantage of vulnerable Makkān trade. He soon sent out raiding parties, and one captured a Quraysh caravan during the sacred month of Rajab. In the second year of the Hijrah, Muhammad with about 500 followers set out to seize an unusually rich prize on its return from Syria. The caravan eluded its would-be captors. But by that time the alarm had reached Makkah and an angered force of over 200 had set out to punish their troublesome foe, thus precipitating the battle of Badr. The Muslims however won a resounding victory, and this more than ever strengthened the Prophet's position as lord of Madīnāh. But his enemies smarting from their setback raised an army of 3,000, and the following year defeated Muhammad's forces at the
MUHAMMAD AND ABU-BAKR RESTING ON THEIR FLIGHT TO MADINAH

An old woman milks a goat for the refreshment of the weary fugitives. Another illustration from Rashid al-Din's "Jami' al-Tawarikh" A.D. 1306, courtesy of the Edinburgh University Library.
battle of Uhud. Nevertheless, they failed to follow up their victory. Two years later therefore, they again had to try to crush the growing power of their sinister rival, and enlisting the aid of allied tribes they drew up an array against Medineh estimated at 10,000 strong. But this time the Muslims rather than risking another engagement in the open, resorted to the novel device of a trench, and thus were able to hold out until the enemy finally retired in disgust.

The next year, A.H. VI, the Prophet with a large following attempted to make the lesser pilgrimage, but the Makkans obstructed their entrance to the town. However a treaty was drawn up which gave them the right to visit the Ka'bah the following year. This in due course was done while the inhabitants evacuated the city for three days. In the meantime, predatory expeditions had by no means been unprofitable for the Muslims, and these along with Muhammad's astute diplomacy extended the influence of Islam through many parts of the Arabian peninsula. But along with this advancing power, the moral life of the Prophet declined, and a special privilege was assumed by his marrying more than the four wives allowed to an ordinary believer.

About this time other prophets began to appear in Arabia, and obtained considerable followings. Some of these in fact were not put down until after the Apostle's death. Their rise is significant in that it indicates
the time in Arabia was ripe for such movements, even though these individuals were almost certainly inspired by Muhammad's example.

The extension of the new politico-religious system was not accomplished without certain military reverses. In the year VIII, an expedition northwards met defeat at the hands of a Byzantine army in southern Syria. Soon however the Muslim prestige had not only been regained in the north, but even Makkah itself had fallen into Muhammad's possession. The *casus belli* came when one of the tribes allied to him was attacked by a tribe in league with the *Curaysh*, and thus the Prophet, less than eight years after his flight from the sacred city, reentered it as conqueror with hardly a struggle. He then cleansed the *Kābah* of its idolatry, and made it the pilgrimage centre of the new faith. Two years later, with only Muslims allowed to approach Makkah, Muhammad performed what was to be his last visit to the holy precincts. He died a few months later at Madinah in A.D. 632, while organizing a third expedition for the Syrian frontier.
CHAPTER II

MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC OFFICE
CHAPTER II

MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC OFFICE

"The only reliable source," says Sir William Muir, "to trace the growth of the idea of inspiration and of a mission from the Deity in the mind of Muhammad...(is) the revelations of the Prophet himself." Thus in this chapter we shall consider the Qur'ān per se in order to ascertain what light it sheds upon the Prophet's call and commission, the scope of his ministry, the development of his person, and the purposes of his office.

I. THE CALL AND COMMISSION

Most Western scholars have accepted along with the majority of Muslim traditionalists the opening passage of Surah 96 as the earliest portion of the Qur'ān, and as such it would definitely constitute Muhammad's call to the prophetic ministry which he undertook.

"Recite in the name of thy Lord who created,
Created man from clotted blood.
Recite, for thy Lord is the most generous,
Who taught by the pen, 2
Taught man what he did not know."

Speaking of these verses, Dr. Bell says, "If Muhammad was commissioned to produce a Qur'ān (recitation), then the command iqra' (recite) would naturally come first."

The traditional account pictures the Prophet's call in no less colourful terms than than of Moses at Sinai or of Isaiah in the Temple. It relates that after he had received a preliminary vision in sleep, he used to seek solitude in a cave of Mt. Ḥira just outside of Makkah. Gabriel there appeared to him with a scroll and commanded him to recite. The Prophet refused thrice, and each time was seized and squeezed until he was in distress; after which the Angel commissioned him in the words of Surah 96:1-5. He then returned to Khadijah with his heart in a flutter, asking to be wrapped up until the fright had passed. Although this story has a reliable core in the Qur'anic passage just cited, the full traditional version is very likely the invention of a later age probably founded on Christian ascetic practice. "The first part of the story", says Dr. Bell, "is perhaps based on 'Ā'ishah's statement about a true vision in sleep, and the part as to Gabriel's appearance with a scroll may be based on Muhammad's own later account of how his revelation came."

Another interesting tradition as to the call of the Prophet holds that Surah 74:1-7 was the earliest passage to be revealed.

2. Ibid. p.16.
3. Ibid. p.16 from Bukhari, bab 65, on Surah 74.
"O thou clothed in the dathar,
Rise and warn,
Thy Lord magnify,
Thy garments purify,
The Wrath flee,
Bestow not favour to gain many,
For thy Lord wait patiently."

Although this opinion is less prevalent, it nevertheless has certain marks which tend to substantiate its claim. For example, the vision associated with this tradition implies that Muhammad thought he saw God Himself on a throne as well as hearing His voice. Surah 53:10 where the Prophet is called "his servant" in the description of the vision also bears out this possibility since it is hardly likely that he would have called himself the "\\\'Abd\" of a lesser being.

Whichever of these two passages is accepted as the earlier revelation, they both point to a definite call as occasioning the commencement of Muhammad's prophetic career. "It is certain," states Muir, "that the conception of a divine commission soon took entire and undivided possession of his soul; and, however coloured by the events and inducements of the day, or mingled with apparently incongruous motives and desires, retained a paramount influence until the hour of his death," and yet there was also a development of this prophetic consciousness. "In beginning his work at Makkah," says Dr. Bell, "I do not believe that Muhammad had anything like the exalted conception of prophetic office he afterwards came to hold."

That this call took the form of a supernatural vision is further indicated by Surah 53 where Muhammad says,

"...He stood straight,
Upon the high horizon,
Then he drew near, and let himself down,
Till he was two bow-lengths off or nearer,
And suggested to his servant what he suggested."

A passage in Surah 81 also refers to this same supernatural visitation, but with a not insignificant Madinan reinterpretation. Here it is made clear that the vision was not of God Himself, but rather of an angel. "It is verily the speech of a noble messenger, powerful, beside Him of the Throne established, obeyed there and trustworthy. Your comrade is not mad, he saw him on the clear horizon." A possible explanation for this later revision may be that closer contact with the People of the Book convinced the great Arabian that it was over-presumptuous to claim to have seen the Almighty Himself. Even the term Rasul which occurs so often in the Qur'an coming from the root أرسال meaning "to send" carries with it the connotation that Muhammad has been sent of God. This implicit meaning is clearly made explicit when the Prophet shortly after the reverse at the Battle of Uhud is encouraged by the assuring words,

or "We have sent thee as a messenger to the people."

2. Surah 81:19-23.
Muhammad's sense of the divine origin of his mission is also displayed in such statements as, "I come from Him to you", "Verily I am to you from Him a warner and a bringer of good tidings" and "Allah chooseth messengers."

The Qur'an not only describes the Prophet as being sent by God, but there is also an allusion to the Almighty's assuring his faithfulness by a pledge on the basis of which Muhammad will be held accountable for the truthfulness of his message.

"We took from the prophets their pledge—and from thee...
That He might ask the speakers of the truth as to their truthfulness."4

Furthermore the possibility of his ceasing to be a channel of God's messages should he be unfaithful in declaring the truth is mentioned in a Madīnan passage where it states, "If Allah pleaseth, He will put a seal upon thy heart, and Allah will wipe out the vain and make good the true by His words."5 Thus, as in the commissioning of the Hebrew prophets, Muhammad held that he was called of God to Whom he was also answerable for the purity of his message.

1. Surah 51:50,51 bis.
But this evidence from the Qur'ān at once raises several questions. Did Muhammad have a definite experience of a commissioning vision, or was it simply a later invention on his part to establish his prophetic office upon a firmer foundation? Did the call come to him as a "bolt out of the blue" without any human impulse or mind preparation, or was it rather motivated by certain circumstances which forced themselves upon his nature? If he was impelled by existing conditions and currents of thought, what were they? All of these problems are made more difficult by the veil of obscurity which conceals the historical facts of the Makkah period. And yet with the Qur'ān as a touchstone, it is possible to make certain observations, which although not absolutely sure, are none-the-less highly probable.

As to the question of whether Muhammad really had an initial supernatural experience, Buhl's opinion is probably correct when he says that "only an overwhelming spiritual happening could give him the unshatterable conviction of his call." And yet it is very unreasonable to imagine that such an event took place completely de novo without any previous mental reflection and heart preparation. The Prophet's bearing at Madīnah reveals him to have been a man unusually keen in his observation and foresight. Therefore it is not unlikely that the prevailing Arab polytheism, the selfish materialism of the nouveau riche Makkans, and the

spirit of ingratitude for the Divine blessings weighed heavily upon him. It was then that he saw in the Hebrew-Christian idea of prophet a means for effecting a religious reformation which would result in thankful worship of the one true God.

It is true that other motives to explain Muhammad's assumption of the prophetic office have been suggested on the basis of psychology, sociology, economics and politics. For example, Byzantine authors early attributed his experience to epilepsy, and in more recent times Professor Macdonald has argued that he was a "pathological case." Although such psychological phenomena might explain the visions by which he was commissioned, yet they fall far short in accounting for his success in originating and establishing the great politico-religious system of Islam. The clearer light of Madinan history fails to disclose instances where he lost control of his mental faculties. Therefore, as Tor Andrae says, "it is rash to draw psychological conclusions concerning the inspiration of the Prophet from the statements that have come down to us."

Another theory that Muhammad was motivated by an urge for economic and social reform was put forward by Grimme,

1. Ibid.
but received a severe blow from Hurgronje's critical review. Nor does the hypothesis that the Prophet's primary aim from the start was a political one, with the view to uniting all of the Arabs, explain or agree with the activities of his early period in Makkah. The fundamental impulse appears to have been religious. This motive is predominant throughout the Qur'ān. It cannot be denied that psychological, social, economic and political elements do in part play an important role in Muhammad's mission. And yet a basically religious interpretation would comprehend these and arrange them in a clear perspective. That the materialistic injustices which accompanied Makkah's metamorphosis into a commercial settlement were of no little concern to the Prophet is evident from his early teaching, but this concern is continually seen in its Godward relation. Also from the religious standpoint it is not impossible to conceive that he really experienced the introductory visions. Circumstances could have rendered his mind receptive to establishing this contact with the supernatural world. Furthermore the unquestionable sincerity of his early ministry argues strongly for the fact that he himself was convinced of the holy nature of his spiritual visitant. But from the fruits of his mission,

2. cf. Chapter IV on Muhammad's prophetic message.
especially at Madīnah, may one not rightly suspect the 
bona fide character of this "angel of light"? It also is
fairly evident from the Qur'ān that the establishment of
monotheism was the main aim of Muhammad's politics. The
affairs of state occupied a most vital share in the mould-
ing of Islam, and yet this was the obvious and necessary
result of the basic religious impulse.

II. THE SCOPE OF HIS MINISTRY

To begin with, the sphere of Muhammad's ministry
seems to have been limited to his own relatives for the
directive comes to "warn thy clan, the nearer ones." But then his mission spread to all the people of Makkah.
In a late Makkan verse we find a reference made to the
unbelievers who "wonder that there has come to them a
warner from among themselves." And again even wider
horizons are envisioned in Surah 42:5 where the purpose of
his office is to "warn the mother of the towns and those
around it."

From the Qur'ān it is quite clear that Muhammad at
first expected the monotheists of Madīnah upon his arrival
there to believe and accept him as the Messenger of God.
He therefore entered upon friendly terms with the Jews

1. Surah 26:214. Rodwell says, "Some biographers refer to
this passage...as the first call to preach."

2. Surah 50:2.

Bell, "Usually interpreted as Makkah, but more probably
Madinah."
especially. Besides drawing up a treaty of mutual accord with them, he even incorporated certain Jewish practices into Islam such as the fast of the Atonement and the acceptance of Jerusalem of the qiblah for prayer. Early Madīnan verses such as the following record this appeal for Jewish adherence: "O Children of Israel,.. believe in what I have sent down in confirmation of what is with you," and, "Verily this Qur'ān recounts to the Children of Israel most of that in regard to which they differ."

That Muhammad at this time desired to win over the Christians as well as the Jews is evidenced by the following even though such appeals are rather rare,

"O People of the Book, come to a word (which is) fair between us and you, (to wit) that we serve no one but Allah, that we associate nothing with Him, and that we do not take one the other as Lords apart from Allah," or

"O People of the Book...The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only the messenger of Allah...so believe in Allah and His messengers."

It soon however became evident to Muhammad that the majority of the monotheists at Madīnah would not accept him. Furthermore, the Jewish ridicule of his claims not only aroused his personal antagonism but threatened to harm the advancement of his cause among the other inhabitants of the city and its environs. After only a year and a half

2. Surah 27:78.
at Madīnah, he therefore severed his religious bond with the Jews, and in order to vindicate his former claims that their Scriptures were in harmony with Islam he now held that the differences were the result of deliberate corruption on their part.

Of this change in Muhammad's mind which is so graphically evident in the first part of Surah two, Dr. Bell says, "We can almost watch the transformation of the man who thought he was preaching to the Arabs the religion which had been revealed to other peoples, into the independent prophet of a renewed, parallel, and finally paramount, religion... It was in the stress of finding a new foothold that he fell back upon Islam, surrender to God and obedience to His revealed word, as the basal element in all religion." It is in connection with this reorientation toward a purified form of Arab religion that Muhammad's genius adopted the opportune conceptions of the "Religion of Abraham," "the Hanīfs" and "the ummah." In order to see the significance of this change, we shall consider these three aspects more in detail.

In respect to the "Religion of Abraham", Snouck Hurgronje has ably argued that the stories connecting Abraham and Ishmael with the Ka'bah are not ancient Arab legends, but rather occur first in the Madīnah period of the Qur'ān as a product of Muhammad's creative mind.

When the Jews of Madinah would not accept him, he proclaimed the independence of Islam against Judaism and Christianity as the millat İbrāhîm. The qiblah was changed from Jerusalem to the Ka'bah at Makkah, and the fast of Ramadān superseded that of the Jewish Atonement.

The choice of Abraham as the model prophet of the new Arab religion was very à propos for several reasons. Here was a man who could be called neither a Jew nor a Christian, but who was venerated by both as a true man of God. Also Muhammad's work of blazing a trail for a new faith was not dissimilar to that of the Old Testament Patriarch. Both left their native cities and were champions of monotheism in the face of idolatry. "By the stepping stone of Abraham", says Dr. Bell, "Muhammad became himself an independent prophet;" or as the argument is put in the Qur'ān, "Abraham was not a Jew, nor was he a Christian, but he was a Hanîf, a Moslem, and he was not one of the Polytheists."

In line with Dr. Jeffery's suggestion as to the derivation of the word خَيْرٌ حَلَفْ, Dr. Bell shows that even though it probably came from the Syriac word for "heathen", it nevertheless was adopted by Muhammad as the term for "the followers of the ideal original of Arab religion;" namely, the "religion of Abraham". This would again testify

2. Surah 3:60.
When the Jews of Madinah would not accept him, he proclaimed the independence of Islam against Judaism and Christianity as the millat Ibrāhīm. The qiblah was changed from Jerusalem to the Ka'bah at Makkah, and the fast of Ramadān superseded that of the Jewish Atonement.

The choice of Abraham as the model prophet of the new Arab religion was very à propos for several reasons. Here was a man who could be called neither a Jew nor a Christian, but who was venerated by both as a true man of God. Also Muhammad's work of blazing a trail for a new faith was not dissimilar to that of the Old Testament Patriarch. Both left their native cities and were champions of monotheism in the face of idolatry. "By the stepping stone of Abraham", says Dr. Bell, "Muhammad became himself an independent prophet;" or as the argument is put in the Qur'ān, "Abraham was not a Jew, nor was he a Christian, but he was a Hanif, a Moslem, and he was not one of the Polytheists."

In line with Dr. Jeffery's suggestion as to the derivation of the word hanif, Dr. Bell shows that even though it probably came from the Syriac word for "heathen", it nevertheless was adopted by Muhammad as the term for "the followers of the ideal original of Arab religion;" namely, the "religion of Abraham". This would again testify

2. Surah 3:60.
to the Prophet's genius in adapting existing materials to
the particular needs of the hour.

Concerning the concept in the Qur'an of the \textit{ummah}, Wensinck says, "Just as the Apostles were sent to
their ummah's, so he, as the Arabian Prophet, was sent
to Arabia...Ummah conveys the meaning of 'people'. When
the term is used in a religious sense it means community;
in a profane sense it is εὐσσος, "or nation. Here again
Muhammad at Madīnah seems to have given a specially coined
meaning to this term also, for it comes to refer to the
community of Arab believers which was being formed as a kind
of political entity with the Prophet at its head.

The word \textit{ummah} stems from the Hebrew עמה
\textit{ummah}. Of its seventy-two occurrences in the Qur'an
according to Dr. Bell's dating only three references are
clearly Makkan, whereas thirty-six are definitely Madīnah.
The uses of the word seem to fall into four general cate­
gories. First of all there are the references to various
national and religious groups such as the ummah's of Ab­
raham, Moses, the Makkans, and of the Jews and Christians.

2. T.P. Hughes, \textit{A Dictionary of Islam}, (London, 1896), ch. 10 under "Umma". Faret in The Encyclopaedia of Islam also views
it as a loanword from the Hebrew or perhaps Aramaic.
In this wide sense, the term is even employed for communities of beasts, birds and jinn. Furthermore, the Qur'ān states that originally there was but one religion or community in the world, and that had God so willed He could have made the people of Muhammad's day one ummah. The second connection with which the word occurs in the Qur'ān are the references characterizing the religious aspects of these communities. For example, each ummah has had a messenger whom it has counted false and on whom it has desired to lay violent hold. Then again every community has been given the pious rite of calling God's name over beasts. And also each ummah has its determined and unalterable term.

Thirdly, the expression occurs occasionally in connection with Qur'ānic eschatology. For instance at the Final Judgment, every community will be kneeling and will be called to its Book. A witness probably its messenger,

7. Surah 40:5.
10. Surah 45:27.
will then be brought against each ummah. And the infidels from the different groups will be rounded up, and communities of jinn and men will enter the Fire.

Finally, the term applies to what might be called the Muslim super-tribe as it was conceived and established by Muhammad. It is very significant to note that all of the direct references to this specialized sense are from the early Madīnan period. There is however one verse applying to communities in general which is probably Makkan and which might indicate that the intention of forming such a political, religious and social organism was in the Prophet's mind even before his migration to Madīnah. The passage reads, "Each (يبة) community has a messenger, and when their messenger comes, judgment is given between them with justice, and they are not wronged." This in other words may be a preview of the position Muhammad was to occupy in the new economy as the chief judge and arbitrator.

In Surah 3:100 we have what might be called a command to form (or perhaps justification of having already formed) the new Muslim ummah - "Let there be (formed) of you a community inviting to good, urging what is reputable and restraining from what is disreputable." This was the best

4. According to the dates given in Bell, The Qur'ān (Edinburgh, 1926)
ummah ever produced and it was "a community in the middle" with its people serving as witnesses. A connection between Abraham and this Muslim group concept is established through portraying him as praying, "Lord, make...
of our posterity a community submissive to Thee." There are also several references to those who are probably the Arabs as "belonging to the community."

As to the scope of Muhammad's office reaching to Arab tribes beyond Madīnah, it has been suggested that Surah 62:3 was added for this purpose where his claims are extended to "others of them, who have not yet adhered to them."

But Western scholars are divided on the question as to whether the Prophet's ministry ever was intended to include peoples outside of the Arabian peninsula. For example, Buhl says, "It is very doubtful if Muhammad ever thought at all of his religion as a universal religion of the world." And Hurgronje, Lammens, and Wensinck also tend to support


2. The exact meaning of this verse, Surah 2:137, is in doubt. Bell in The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment, p.144 holds that it refers to the community's avoiding following either Jews or Christians in points where they differ.


8. Lammens, Etude sur le Régne du Calife Ma'āwiyah, I p.422.

this limited view. On the other hand, Nöldeke, Muir, Goldziher, Stanton, and T.W. Arnold favour the universal conception, or as one of them expresses it, "Success made the sphere of Islam to expand before him; and that which was primarily intended first for Makkah only, and then for Arabia, soon embraced, in the ever-widening circle of its call, the whole human race."

To the present writer, the correct conclusion seems to incorporate part of both of these views. His message was a universal one, while he himself in his dealings was limited to Arabia. Wensinck rightly argues that the word (ناس) is employed in a limited sense for a specific group of "people", and yet this use does not necessarily exclude the message from having a wider application as well. Being a pre-Copernican, Muhammad's world view was obviously limited. But such expressions as that found in Surah 81:27 where he says, (يَسِيرُ إِلَى الْيَوْمِ الْيَمِينِ "It is nothing less than a Reminder to the worlds," would seem to imply the universal character of his message.


4. Stanton, The Teaching of the Qur'ān, p.50


6. Op. cit. Wensinck also cites an example from Arabic outside of the Qur'ān where this term is so used in Muslim, ِِِِْمَٰٓنَٰ, Trad. 32. For the use of this word in the Qur'ān cp. Surah 14:52; 2:181,183.

7. For the other uses of (عالمي) in the Makkah period cp. Surah 12:104; and 38:87. For the Madinan uses cp. Surah 6:90; 21:107; and 68:52.
III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS PERSON

It is not within the compass of this thesis to consider Muhammad's personal life in detail. This has already been the subject of many able biographers. But a few observations upon the development of his person as it relates to his office may be in order. It will be seen that even though "the Prophet of Makkah" became "the Prince of Madinah", he nevertheless retained the elements of prophethood as he had come to know them.

To begin with, just as former prophets had been natives of their own people, so Muhammad was the "comrade" (صاحب) of the Makkans, or one of themselves. Furthermore he was merely a human being. And as such, he remains prone to sin throughout the Qur'ān. The conception of him as the ideal man and prototype of humanity belongs to a later age.

The Prophet himself also followed the faith which he preached. He was enjoined to magnify his Lord, to purify his garments, and to flee the Wrath (or idolatry). As the

2. Surah 41:5; 17:95; 18:110. Also Muir, Life of Mahomet, p.344.
5. Surah 74:3-5.
first Muslim, he had faith in what had been sent down to him from his Lord. "It is hardly believable," says Tor Andrae, "that a man could have won such absolute confidence, or could have made such an impression upon his surroundings, had he not possessed an overwhelming and convincing faith in his own message."

Like his prophetic predecessors, Muhammad also suffered persecution. He was accused of being mad, and his efforts to win converts at first were discouragingly fruitless. In his times of depression therefore he received revelations encouraging him to endure patiently and not to be tempted from his purpose or faith. Nor is he to let their unbelief grieve him.

But when it became evident to Muhammad that his mission merely as a witness, warner, and messenger would not meet with success, and when he was probably forced out of Makkah as a persona non grata, he adopted supplementary means for

7. Surah 73:15.
effecting his religious reform. Therefore at Madinah we see him donning the garb of a brilliant diplomat and military leader. His goal resolved itself, as has already been seen, into the organisation of an (أممان) ummah on a purely religious basis, but at first he had to keep this somewhat in the background for political reasons.

Light may be shed upon his relation to this community through the use of the word (عمي) ummi. It has usually been interpreted to mean one who can neither read nor write, or one who is ignorant of the Scriptures. Dr. Bell translates the two instances where the term occurs in the Qur'an as "the native prophet" (أمة الأنبى), and explains this in a note as meaning "belonging to the community" as well as probably implying the lack of Scripture. This would agree with Muhammad's position as the spiritual leader of this new order, as it is revealed in Surah 62:2:

"He it is Who hath raised up among the common folks (أمة النبي) a messenger, one of themselves, to recite to them His signs, and purify them (by almsgiving), and teach them the Book and the Wisdom."

That the Apostle is to be the witness against his community on the Last Day is also indicated in Surahs 4:45 and 16:91, and bears out the basically religious nature of his mission. But at Madinah he furthermore assumed the office of a Judge (Surah 24:47,50; 4:68) as well.

2. Surah 7:156,158.
Along with this increasing power and dignity of the Prophet, one can trace in the Qur'ān a greater reverence and submission which is exacted from his followers. His name becomes linked with that of the Almighty. For example, there are commands calling for response, faithfulness and obedience to God and the Messenger. In fact it reaches the point where obedience to Muhammad is identical with compliance to the Divine will. Absolute authority is ascribed to decisions which are made, and whoever resists God and His Apostle is consigned to the Fire. The Prophet furthermore assumes a greater dignity, and insults against him are forbidden.

According to Professor Welch, the function of the prophet in old Israel was to enunciate great religious convictions, and the office of the priest was to put them into practice. In this sense it cannot be denied that Muhammad performed a priestly function as well, for he not

4. Surah 64:12.
5. Surah 4:82.
only proclaimed the message but also established and led the worship. There are also instances in the Qurʾān where he is portrayed as an intercessor. For example, in Surah 4:67 it is stated that if the Hypocrites would come and repent "and the messenger were to ask pardon for them, they would find Allah relentant and compassionate." Also when new women adherents came to him, he was to "ask Allah to forgive them." And again, his prayers in behalf of the Bedouin would serve as a means of access to God.

During the latter years of his life, the gradual declension of his moral character cannot easily be justified or excused, even when the relatively low ethical standard of seventh century Arabia is taken into consideration. It is not surprising that his open sensuality and special matrimonial privileges such as that of marrying the wife of Zayd, his adopted son, even shocked his desert contemporaries, and therefore required special revelations as explanations. Nor is it right to condone his acts of unnecessary cruelty, or such deeds as ordering the date palms to be cut down. But at Madīnah his personal life was chequered with light as well as with shade, for even there "modesty and kindliness, patience, self-denial, and

1. Also cp. another instance in Surah 63:5.
2. Surah 60:12.
generosity pervaded his conduct and riveted the affections of all around him." The consciousness of his prophetic mission and responsibility furthermore stayed with him, or as he expressed it, "There has come to you a messenger from among yourselves upon whom your distresses press heavily, who is watchful over you, and who is with the believers, gentle and compassionate."

IV. THE PURPOSE OF HIS OFFICE

Various purposes for Muhammad's prophetic office are clearly expressed in the Qur'an. Although as has already been mentioned the character of his task underwent a progressive development, nevertheless, the following functions once they are introduced are kept throughout the different stages of the Makkan and Madīnan periods.

a. Preaching played a very important part in the Prophet's ministry. The early exhortation to him was to "rise and warn." And this commission was reiterated in that he was to warn a people, whose fathers had not been warned and to whom no previous warner had come, of the day of sighing. Tradition holds in connection with Surah 15:94, where the

2. Surah 9:129.
4. Surah 36:5.
5. Surah 32:2; 34:43.
6. Surah 19:40
Prophet is ordered to "burst forth" with what he has been commanded, that he in the fourth year of his mission hazarded the step of mounting the Safa, a slight eminence in one of the streets of Makkah, and publicly preached to the Quraysh. Although it is not certain how much weight can be ascribed to this account, it nevertheless is true that proclamation was clearly prescribed for him. It was this that made him a prophet in the sense of a "forth-teller". Besides calling his hearers to belief in their Lord, he was to give those who responded "good tidings of forgiveness and a noble reward", and those who refused to believe "good tidings of a punishment painful." Nor was he himself to be responsible if people did not obey. His function was that of mediating God's message to men, or as it is stated in Surah 42:52, "Thus We have suggested to thee a spirit belonging to Our affair...and verily thou wilt guide to a straight path." He was to bridge the gap between the human and the Divine. Having received the prophetic spirit from the Almighty, he was, in turn, to direct men through it to the right way.

2. Surah 16:37,84; 24:53.
Another reason for Muhammad's message and his very presence among his generation was to vindicate God's righteousness by making them without excuse.

"If We were to destroy them by a punishment before it, they would say: 'O our Lord, why didst Thou not send us a messenger so that we might have followed Thy signs before we were humiliated and confounded?'

But the fact that the Messenger had come would make it possible for him to be a witness against his community at the Last Day when the infidels would be justly condemned by the question, "Did there not come to you a warner?", and the confession would be elicited from them, "Yes! there came to us a warner, but we counted (him) false." Or as it put elsewhere:

"We shall assuredly question those to whom a messenger has been sent, and We shall question those who have been sent."

A duty which probably developed along with his wider ministry at Madīnah was that of giving the Arabs Scriptures in a Book form like those of the Jews and Christians lest they should complain "The Book has only been sent down to two parties before us." Instruction in this revelation was also a part of his work, for as it says in Surah 2:146:

4. Surah 7:5.
"We have sent among you a messenger, one of yourselves, to recite to you Our signs,...to teach you the Book and the Wisdom, and to teach you what ye did not used to know." 1

Besides, he came to clear up much of what the People of the Book had been concealing of the Scriptures.

d. Blessings resulting from his ministry are also mentioned as reasons for his mission. For instance, he is commissioned to "remind, for the reminder will benefit the believers," to "purify" them by alms-giving and to "bring the people forth from the darkness to the light." In fact of the Apostle himself it is stated, "We have not sent thee but as a mercy to the worlds."

e. He also was to serve as a prophet at a time when there were no others, or "at an interval amongst the messengers." This relation to previous divine emissaries may be the meaning of an earlier Makkan verse which states that "he came with truth, and corroborated the envoys (وصدّق الذين أرسلتم)."

1. Surah 2:146.
4. Surah 2:146.
5. Surah 14:1; 65:11.
7. Surah 5:22.
Finally, the establishing Islam's predominance is another expressed purpose, although this appears comparatively late in his prophetic career. It is first mentioned after Hudaybiyah at the close of year VI and then is repeated in preparation for the Expedition to the North during the year IX.

"He it is who hath sent His messenger with the guidance and the religion of the truth that He may exalt it above all other religion." 1.

Such was the development in Muhammad's purposes, his person, and the scope of his office during the twenty-three years following his initial call and commission. In conclusion, let it be said that from the foregoing evidence it is quite clear that the Apostle retained his fundamental concept of being a spiritual prophet even though the further qualities of a brilliant temporal leader were added to this main function. It is true that the results of his reform were political and social, and yet the primary impulse in all probability was religious.


CHAPTER III

MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC INSPIRATION
CHAPTER III

MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC INSPIRATION

According to the view of orthodox Islam, the Qur'ān was sent down from the preserved table, entire and in one volume, to the lowest heaven, from whence Gabriel revealed it to Muhammad by parcels, as occasion required. Western scholarship on the other hand has not accepted this view. By use of the critical or scientific method, it has rather explained the Prophet's inspiration on natural grounds by tracing the sources of the Qur'ān, by studying the environmental climate of Arabia before and during Muhammad's time, and by bringing out the human element. Nevertheless a study of the Qur'ānic view of inspiration shows that certain parts lay definite claim to a divine origin. Was this deliberate fraud, or how are we to explain it? Before reaching a conclusion, let us first examine the teaching of the original source at our disposal as to its supernatural claims, its human elements, the growth of the doctrine of "the Book", and the resulting enigmas of inspiration.

A. THE SUPERNATURAL ELEMENT

As was seen in the last chapter, the call to office

seemed to come not only through the impulse of the contemporary religious needs, but also as a result of supernatural visions. It is significant to note the assertions that inspiration was closely bound up with these visitations, and that Muhammad does not speak of his own inclination.

"Your comrade has not gone astray, nor has he erred; Nor does he speak of (his own) inclination. It is nothing but a suggestion suggested, Taught (him) by One strong in power, Forceful;......................... And (he) suggested to his servant what he suggested." 2

In fact, the Qur'an seems to distinguish between two types of inspiration when it says in what is probably a later Makkan passage:

"It belonged not to any human being that Allah should speak to him except by suggestion (وُصِيَّة) or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger (an angel) to suggest (پُرِجَي) by His permission what He pleaseth." 3

In other words, there are the direct suggestions from God Himself, or secondly, suggestions mediated by an angelic messenger. In justification of his translation of (وُصِيَّة) as "suggestion", Dr. Bell says, "The later developed Muslim dogmatic takes wahy to be the highest form of inspiration, and to consist in the communication of the actual words of the revelation to the prophet by an angel

1. Surah 53:6-10,13-18
2. Surah 53:2-6,10.
intermediary. But as used in the Qur'ān itself, the words *wabā*, *awhā* by no means always or even generally have that sense. Usually, some such word as 'suggest', 'prompt', 'put into the heart of' is a better translation than 'reveal.'"

That Muhammad has a special knowledge of the unseen is further indicated at the end of Sūrah 72 where it states:

"He who knoweth the unseen, and discloseth not His unseen to any one; but only to such messenger as He may be satisfied with; then He maketh to go before him and behind him, prying ones; that He may know whether they have delivered the messages of their Lord." 2

The reference here to the guard of angels is also noteworthy in that they not only appear to be intermediaries, but also have the function of seeking to insure the Prophet's faithful proclamation.

The "Spirit" as well is mentioned several times in connection with the inspiration of God's messengers. The Lord casts "the Spirit belonging to His affair (i.e. the prophetic spirit in connection with God's whole plan of intervention) upon whomsoever He willeth of His servants." 4 Elsewhere He is called the "Spirit of Holiness," or the "Faithful Spirit" as in Sūrah 26:

---

5. Sūrah 16:104
"Verily it is the revelation of the Lord of the Worlds,
With which hath come down the Faithful Spirit
Upon thy heart, that thou mayest be of those who
warn." ¹

In spite of the traditional view and the popular conception that the Angel Gabriel alone was the agent of revelation, he is only mentioned in the Qur'ān three times and all of these references are Madīnān. "There is no doubt," says Dr. Bell, "that in Madīnān Muhammad let it be understood that it was Gabriel who conveyed the revelations to him. But we are hardly justified in reading that back into the early Makkān period." ³

In the Qur'ān there are also two references to premonitions which came to the Prophet through dreams, although it seems that both had to be reinterpreted in the light of subsequent events. For instance after the victory at Badr in the year II, Muhammad says that in a dream before the battle, God caused him to see the Makkans as but few in number in order to boost the morale of the Muslims, for had he seen the full number of the enemy which in reality was three times the size of his own force of approximately 300, his men would have been faint-hearted and vied with one another in their withdrawal. The

¹. Surah 26:192-194.

². Surah 2:91,92; 66:4, and of these 2:91 may be a later substitute for 2:92.


⁴. Surah 8:45.
Prophet is supposed to have had the other dream at Madīnah before setting out on the Expedition to Hudeybiyah in the year VI. In this vision he received assurance of the success of the pilgrimage they were to make in the following words, "Ye shall certainly enter the sacred mosque, if Allah will, in security, your heads shaven, your hair cut short, fearing nothing." His followers apparently expected its fulfilment within the year, but the Treaty of Hudeybiyah frustrated their hopes. Therefore in order to pacify them, Muhammad reiterates the promise he received in the dream as referring to a definite future date, assures them of rich spoils soon to be had, and hails the Truce as a resounding victory.

Another nocturnal episode which is linked with the Prophet's prerogative for special revelation is the night journey referred to in Surah 17:1:

"Glory be to Him who journeyed by night with His servant from the Sacred Mosque (the Ka'bah) to the Furthest Mosque (probably the Temple at Jerusalem) around which We have bestowed blessing, that We might show him some of Our signs."

Although traditions have unduly elaborated upon this reference glorifying it into a celestial journey through the seven heavens to the throne of God, borne by the winged horse Burāq which had a woman's face and a peacock's tail, and accompanied by Gabriel, nevertheless it is

---

Note the complete turā'ī in the illustration, reflecting the traditional view of the revelation into to the Prophet. This is also from Rashid al-Din's "Jami' al-Tawarikh" A.D. 1306, courtesy of the Edinburgh University Library.
significant that the Qur'ān mentions that the purpose for this strange affair was to show Muhammad some of God's signs, or perhaps verses (آيات). In all probability, this experience was also a vision or dream.

"The Night of Power" or "Decree" (ليلة القدر) is also given much importance in connection with the orthodox Muslim view of revelation. The traditions are mainly based on Surah 97:1-5 where it is stated:

"Lo, We have sent it down on the Night of Power. What has let thee know what is the Night of Power? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months; in it the angels and the spirit let themselves down, by the permission of their Lord, with regard to every affair. It is peace until the rising of the dawn."

Commentators say that on this night not only was the complete Qur'ān sent down from the preserved table to the lowest heaven, but that it was then also that Muhammad received his first revelations from Gabriel. Even though the description admittedly reads too much into the text, the Prophet nevertheless seems to refer to a specific night when he was unusually inspired. Surah 44 may allude to the same incident when it says, "Verily We sent it down on a blessed night," as may also another Madīnan verse which states that it was in the month of Ramadān that "the Qur'ān was sent down as guidance for the

1. The meaning of "verses" here is quite doubtful since the passage recounting this is probably Makkān, and since the concept of (آيات) as "verses" is almost certainly Madīnan.

2. Rodwell, op. cit. p.164 n.3.

people, and as Evidences of the guidance and Furqān.\textsuperscript{1}

The supernatural element is not only claimed through these allusions as to how the inspiration came, but the actual diction of the Qur'ān itself is cast in a mold designed to convey the assumption of divine inspiration. With every Surah except one beginning with the formula \(\text{بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم} \) "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate," an initial chord of authority as from the Deity Himself is repeatedly struck.

Throughout most of the Qur'ān the royal or divine "We" (and occasionally the singular "I") is used which also conveys the impression that it is God's ipsissima verba which are being quoted. As evidence that this device was not adopted by the Prophet at the start of his


2. Tradition, probably taking its cue from the Qur'ānic emphasis upon the supernatural in revelation, adds accounts such as the following in order to describe the manner in which inspiration came upon the Prophet. 'A'ishah is quoted as saying: "Then Allah's Apostle had his customary attack, so that even though it was a very cold day, beads of perspiration rolled from his face." (Tor Andrae, Mohammed, The Man and His Faith, London, 1936, p.67). Ibn Sa'd records testimony concerning another incident. "I saw how the revelation came upon the Apostle of Allah as he was riding upon a camel. The animal groaned, and its legs slipped sideways, so that I expected it to collapse under the weight of the revelation. Soon it fell upon its knees, then tried to arise by planting its feet upon the ground." (Ibid. pp.68,69).

3. Although Surah 9 is not prefixed by the usual heading, it nevertheless also begins by announcing a proclamation from God.

ministry, Dr. Bell cites the recurring Qur'anic formulas which speak of God in the third person such as, "Allah it is who..." and "He it is who...". "Muhammad began simply as the advocate of Allah," he continues, "speaking not as the mouthpiece of Allah at all, but in his own person setting out the benefits which Allah had conferred upon men; and urging that He was the God men ought to worship; and that, later, he worked these passages into the Surahs of the Qur'an, without transposing them into the first person plural, as his later claim to be delivering messages in Allah's name required." It is also interesting to note that there are verses which all both in the East and West acknowledge to have been spoken by angels. For example: "We come not down except with the affair or (by command of) thy Lord; to Him belongeth what is before us and what is behind us, and what is between that; nor is thy Lord forgetful."

Imperative commands in the early Surahs such as "Recite in the name of thy Lord," "Rise and warn" and "Discourse (of the goodness of thy Lord)" indicate an

2. Ibid. p.7.
5. Surah 74: 2.
inspirational impulse. Whether this urge was born from Muhammad's reflective intuition or whether it was from some supernatural origin, it is not easy to determine.

There are also approximately 250 passages in the Qur'ān which are introduced by the imperative (Ｊਸ) or "Say." "So scrupulous was he," says Sir William Muir of Muhammad, "lest there should be in this inspiration even the appearance of human influence, that every sentence of the Qur'ān is prefaced by the divine command, 'Speak!' or 'Say;' which, if not expressed must always be understood." Dr. Bell believes that these occurrences of (Ｊہ) were originally (a) formulae introducing statements designed for repetition and (b) captions leading to results which came from the Prophet's seeking guidance. However, the use of the word "Say" in the Qur'ān as Muhammad finally left it, seems unmistakably to betray an attempt to sound a note of authority similar to the "Thus saith the Lord" of the Old Testament prophets. It is not improbable therefore to presume that the Prophet in his later period employed this word as a means of furthering what consequent tradition came to hold as the verbal inspiration of the Muslim Scriptures.

It is expressly stated in the Qur'ān no less than 74 times that Muhammad's signs, message, Surahs and finally the Book were sent down from God. The assertion furthermore is made that "the Merciful taught the Qur'ān," and in a short passage which reminds one of Psalm 1, it is said that "Allah hath coined a parable."

1. The following are the references which claim the revelation to be Heaven-sent arranged according to Dr. Bell's chronology: (a) Makkan: 76:23; 24:34 (signs). (b) Late Makkan: 17:106,107. (c) Late Makkan or Early Madinese: 20:3; 15:9,87; 7:195; 13:36,37. (d) Uncertain: 40:1; 46:1. (e) Early Madinese: 18:1,28; 16:24,66; 28:87; 34:6; 6:92a (year II or III, a Book); 6:114b (a Book); 6:156a (year I or II, a Book); 2:3 (year III); 2:84,85,156,285a; 8:42 (year II); 47:10 (year II); 3:2 (year II or III, the Book); 3:78 (year II); 57:9,15; 4:50; 4:135 (year II, the Book); 4:139a,164; 4:174 (manifest light); 65:11; 24:1 (a Surah); 9:87 (a Surah); 9:125; 9:128 (a Surah); 5:22 (bus., year II); 5:54 (bis.); 5:86. (f) Madinese: 32:1; 45:1; 16:91; 11:17; 12:2; 39:1,2,42; 31:20; 42:16; 7:1 (a Book); 7:2; 13:1; 2:130; 2:171 (a Book); 47:2; 3:5 (the Book); 4:63,64,106; 4:113 (the Book); 4:160; 22:16 (it); 5:84,103. (g) Year VI: 2:231; 9:98. (h) Uncertain: 13:19; 5:17:72.


B. THE HUMAN ELEMENT

In spite of the insistence of Islamic tradition to the contrary, there are indications in the Qur'ān itself which reveal the human element in Muhammad's inspiration along with the more obvious divine claim. His person and natural powers seem to have exerted an influence upon his inspiration. He is advised that "the beginning of the night is strongest an impression, and most just in speech," or in other words that this is the time when impressions are clearest and the proper words are most readily formed. Nor was he to rush in his work of composition - "Move not thy tongue therein that thou mayest do it quickly." And in another place where it says, "Do not be in a hurry with the Qur'ān, before the suggestion of it to thee is finished," he is told not to hasten its completion. Believers are also discouraged from asking questions while the Qur'ān is being sent down, lest they inspire onerous revelations.

The poorer style of the Madīnan passages is not

3. Ibid. p.621 n.5.
completely due to their difference in subject matter. The increasing demands upon Muhammad's time during this period on the other hand denied him the leisure necessary for composing his former carefully worded and succinct verses. And consequently, the effect of this preoccupation with other duties has left a mark upon the later portions of the Qur'ān which cannot be easily explained apart from a recognition of the human element in the Prophet's inspiration. Surah 36:69 may unwittingly bear out the fact that composition for him was time consuming and laboured when it testifies that he had not been taught the art of poetry, nor did it beseem him.

It is significant to observe the vehemence with which Muhammad disclaims the charges of using old-world tales and informants to produce the Qur'ān. He answers the accusation that "it is only a human being who teaches him" by asserting that "this speech of him they hint at is foreign, but this is Arabic speech clear." Rodwell sees strong indications for the truth of these charges in the very frequency with which it was felt necessary to rebut them as well as in the weakness of the arguments contradicting

them. Another device to which Muhammad resorts in answering his critics is that of challenging them to bring ten Surahs like it of their own invention if they claim that the Qur'ān is merely of his devising, and then concludes, "Verily if men and jinn agree to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they will not produce the like of it though one to the other were backer." And yet the very fact that development and revision of subject matter can be traced through the Qur'ān reflects the growth of ideas and understanding in the human mind of its author, and precludes the claim for an entirely supernatural origin. Speaking of the fixed dogma which Muslims hold that every Surah, sentence and word emanates from God's direct communication, Muir shows that to attribute anything in it to a human source is considered blasphemy, and "hence they miss the clue...for tracing the course of Muhammad's mental and spiritual history."

2. Surah 11:16.
C. THE CONCEPT BEHIND THE QUR'ÂN

Although the repository of revelation as finally conceived was in the form of a "Book", it is very doubtful whether this view was in the Prophet's mind from the beginning of his mission. Since the Arabs were without a book to aid in their worship, he may have felt it his function at first to collect and reproduce monotheistic materials in the form of a "qur'ân" or "reading". Much is made of the fact that it was in Arabic. Then only later, probably during the Madīnan period, did the idea of giving his people or ummah a "Book" take final shape in his mind.

Dr. Bell connects this transition with the success which accompanied the battle of Badr and the reference to this occasion as (ۛۚۛ۝) "the day of the furqān". This word which occurs in the Qur'ān seven times is borrowed from the Syriac "pūrāna" meaning "salvation", and according to Nöldeke the sense has been influenced by the Arabic root (فَرَقَ), giving the idea of "separation" or "decision". Hence, furqān probably is "deliverance from judgment". The fact that the term is

2. Surah 26:195; 43:2; 44:58; 19:97; 20:112 etc.
3. Surah 8:42.
5. Ibid. p.119.
6. Ibid. 122.
C. THE CONCEPT BEHIND THE QUR'ĀN

Although the repository of revelation as finally conceived was in the form of a "Book", it is very doubtful whether this view was in the Prophet's mind from the beginning of his mission. Since the Arabs were without a book to aid in their worship, he may have felt it his function at first to collect and reproduce monotheistic materials in the form of a "qur'ān" or "reading". Much is made of the fact that it was in Arabic. Then only later, probably during the Madīnan period, did the idea of giving his people or ummah a "Book" take final shape in his mind.

Dr. Bell connects this transition with the success which accompanied the battle of Bādīr and the reference to this occasion as (\( \text{يَوْمُ الْقُرْآنِ} \)) "the day of the furqān". This word which occurs in the Qur'ān seven times is borrowed from the Syriac "pūrgēna" meaning "salvation", and according to Nöldeke the sense has been influenced by the Arabic root (\( \text{فَرَقُ} \)), giving the idea of "separation" or "decision". Hence, furqān probably is "deliverance from judgment". The fact that the term is

2. Surah 26:195; 43:2; 44:58; 19:97; 20:112 etc.
3. Surah 8:42.
5. Ibid. p.119.
6. Ibid. 122.
twice used in relation to Moses and the giving of the Torah to him would further indicate that in Muhammad's mind there may have been a connection between the revelation of the Book to Moses with the deliverance from Pharaoh and his armies. Thus the sending down of the Qur'ān as "the Book" and the deliverance from the Makkans at Badr are also associated with the furgān, and judging from the text, the assumption is not improbable that they both happened during the month of Ramadān. According to this therefore, the concept of the Prophet's revelation in the form of a Book was not finally promulgated and announced until the end of year II shortly after the break with the Jews.

The idea also begins to appear of an archetype of all revelation existing in the presence of God - "Lo, We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān, mayhap ye will understand, and lo, it is in the Mother of the Book in Our presence".

From this and other references, Sweetman concludes that in Islam, "revelation is conceived as a gradual impartation to men of portions of the heavenly book and...the process is considered to have been carried on by the Prophet Muhammad". But this is not to be confused with

2. Surah 2:181 and 8:42.
another "Book" mentioned in the Qur'ān, namely that which records man's deeds.

If as has been cited above it was not until early in the Madīnan period that Muhammad determined to produce a unique Arabic "Book", this would necessitate a re-editing of the earlier passages to conform to the new mold. And as Dr. Bell has shown in his translation of the Qur'ān and elsewhere, the evidence for such a process having taken place is considerable. But even in its present form according to Carlyle's opinion it is "written as badly as almost any book ever was." This also may be explained by the fact that amid his many responsibilities at Madīnah, Muhammad's work was interrupted by death before he could polish and leave his Book in its final form.

There seems to have been a distinction between the Qur'ānic and the other utterances of the Prophet which would elevate the former to a special position of authority. This is indicated by the question, "Why has not a Surah been sent down?", when in the year II the Muslims were considering the possibility of fighting the Makkans.

1. Surah 18:47.

2. Surah 39:24, 28:86; 29:50; 14:1; 21:10; 41:1,2. Excepting Surah 39:24 which may be late Makkan or early Madīnese, all of these references are listed as Madīnese.


The explanation then continues that when "a clearly formulated Surah is sent down and fighting is mentioned in it" the diseased of heart look like death. Thus it appears that rescripts given in the form of revelations carried more weight than did Muhammad's ordinary utterances.

The expressed purposes of the Qur'ān are varied and indicate development. To begin with it is referred to as a (١٢٩٦), a "warning" or "reminder". Then, according to the testimony of the jinn in Surah 72:2, it "guides to rectitude." Another function which is mentioned is that of its bringing good tidings to the believers and to those who show piety. These are the purposes recorded at Makkah, but in Madīnah it takes on a wider scope. There the Qur'ān confirms revelation already given to others, clarifies matters in which the People of the Book differ, and eliminates the excuse the Arabs might have had that revelation had only been sent down to the Jews and Christians, or that they would have responded had a Book been given them. In fact as it develops, "it is no longer merely a warning. It is said to be a mercy to the

1. Surah 37:3; 44:58; 50:45; 20:1,2; etc.
believers. It is Wisdom and Guidance." And the very advent of the Qur'ān increases the culpability of the wicked.

D. THE ENIGMAS OF QUR'ĀNIC INSPIRATION

Qur'ānic inspiration as finally conceived by Muhammad at once presents three main difficulties. Firstly, there is the problem of alterations. Secondly, there is the problem of materials unquestionably derived from earlier sources and certain historical discrepancies which are stated to have been revealed. And lastly, there is the problem of revelations for special occasions.

According to a tradition accepted by Western scholars, Muhammad, after Surah 53:20, added the two following verses:

"These are the swans exalted;
Whose intercession is to be hoped for."

He may have been impelled to make this compromise with the Makkan deities through the apparent hopelessness of his cause if he continued championing pure monotheism. Whatever the motive, in a few days he repented, discarded the verses as a Satanic suggestion and revised the text to read in its present form. Such interference by the Devil is referred to in the Qur'ān as the bane of every

1. Surah 17:84.
pre-Islamic prophet as well, and for this reason God  
"abrogateth what Satan throws in" (ُيَسْتَهْلِكُوا ما يَلْبِثُونَ).  

But alterations are not only sanctioned because of  
Satanic suggestions, but the proviso is also laid down  
that "Allah will delete what He willeth," and yet whatever  
verse is cancelled or caused to be forgotten will be re­  
placed by an equal one, or even a better one. It is  
little wonder that in the face of such substitutions his  
critics accused him of manufacturing his revelations -  
"When We substitute one verse for another - Allah knoweth  
best what He sendeth down - they say: 'Thou art simply an  
'inventor'." There is an example in Surah eight where a  
modification immediately follows a former assertion. Just  
after the Battle of Badr the statement is made that be­  
lievers will be able to overcome enemies even though they  
should be ten times their number. But later, probably  
as the result of various Muslim reverses, it is stated,  
"Now Allah hath made it lighter for you and knoweth that  
there is weakness among you," and a change is made from  
the above ten-to-one odds to a two-to-one ratio.  

Concerning such expedients which appear in Muhammad's  
revelations, MacDonald says, "From time to time he got  
into difficulties. A revelation proved too wide or too

5. Surah 8:66  
narrow, or left out some important possibility. Then there came another to supplement or correct, or even to set the first quite aside - Muhammad had no scruples about progressive revelation as applied to himself."

The second group of difficulties arises out of the relation of the Qur'ānic to definite sources; and yet the claim that they are derived from supernatural revelation is stated in no uncertain terms. Although the Prophet presumably learned them orally, there are nevertheless certain Qur'ānic passages which are unmistakably derived from Rabbinic literature. For example, a statement identical to one in Surah 11:9 occurs in Raschi on Genesis 1:2, and part of the story of Abraham in Surah 21:52-73 is taken word for word from Midrash Rabbah on Genesis.

In like manner, along with the stories of Joseph in Surah 12, Moses in Surah 28 and Mary in Surah three, there comes the explanation that these were received by revelation. In order to add proof to this assertion, the statement is repeated each time that Muhammad was not present at the scene of action thus insinuating that he must have learned it from

1. D.B. MacDonald, Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory, (New York, 1926), p.70
3. Ibid. p.154 n.3.
5. Surah 28:46.
Muhammad's life, we see that there is much truth in the statement that the passages were - not, as Muslims say, revealed, but - composed from time to time, as occasion required, to sanction each new departure made by Muhammad."

Let it suffice to cite six instances of such revelations for special occasions in the Qur'ān. (a) The change of the Qiblah from Jerusalem to the Ka'bah at Makkah in the year II is vindicated in Surah 2:136-140. (b) Surah 3:145-153, 159-168 is an explanation of the reverse suffered at the Battle of Uhud in the year III. (c) In justifying Muhammad's marriage to Zaynab, the wife of his adopted son Zayd ibn-Hāridah, Surah 33:37,38 describes it not only as a special concession but also as a duty laid upon him by God. (d) The rumour of 'Ā'ishah's adultery occasioned a revelation forbidding the future spreading of such calumnies in Surah 24:11-20,23,24. (e) In Surah 66:1,2 God gives the Prophet the right to annul oaths he has made to his wives, and (f) in verse three of the same Surah, when one of Muhammad's wives divulges a secret of his, he claims to have received intelligence of the fact by Divine revelation. The use of this means in his later life for solving personal problems makes it difficult to escape the conclusion of Professor R.A. Macdonald, "You cannot possibly imagine, in the case of long periods dealing with the law of inheritance or with the usages of marriage or with the quarrels of his followers or emphasising the position and dignity of the

Prophet himself - you cannot possibly imagine that these things rose to him from his subconscious, that he did not know very well what he was saying and had not his own distinct objects in the way in which he expressed himself."

But herein exists a strange paradox. In spite of alterations, misrepresentation of sources, and opportunism in inspiration, Muhammad gives every evidence of sincerity and personal belief in the heavenly origin of his revelations. Various explanations of this mystery have been put forward by scholars. Nöldeke's thesis is that "Muhammad held all for right which the voice of his heart did not reject. As he had not a mind to distinguish good and bad...so he was not deterred from using objectionable means as well as pious fraud to spread his belief." Nor is Muir's opinion dissimilar. He states that the Prophet's course was guided by "an inexplicable combination of earnest conviction and uneasy questioning, if not of actual though unperceived self-deception. He was sure of his object, and the means could not be wrong." But Muir goes on to conclude, "The absence of spiritual light and opportunities for obtaining it which excused this marvellous self-deception in the early prophetical life of Muhammad, cannot be pleaded for

2. "Muhammad alles für erlaubt halten, was der Stimme seines Herzens nicht geradezu widersprach. Und da er nicht den zarten und festen Sinn für das Gute und Böse besass...so schreckte er nicht davor zurück, auch verwerfliche Mittel, ja frommen Betrug zur Ausbreitung seines Glaubens anzuwenden." Theodor Nöldeke, Geschichte des Corāns (Leipzig, 1909), p.5.
his later years. Ignorance was then no longer involuntary."

Finally, Bell suggests that when the Prophet's conscience was convicted by the surrounding Arab idolatry, he was motivated to grasp great truths by intuition, and laid claim to inspiration which he assumed came from God.

From the preceding Qur'anic data, it may be concluded that a dilemma does exist between the claim of a divine origin on the one hand, and the obvious human element on the other. A not improbable explanation may be that once Muhammad had responded to the call and had assumed the charge of the prophetic office as he knew it, it was essential that his revelation should bear the stamp of God's authority. He therefore may have cultivated guidance by meditation, sincerely convincing himself that the promptings he received emanated from the Source of all good. But once he had dared to forge God's name for these "flashes", the die had been cast. And having committed himself, he refused to retract. It was therefore necessary to bring on and develop these suggestions which may even have originated from an unholy source. But the results nevertheless were presented as revelations from the Most High. This was done with amazing success, and yet there remains in the Qur'ān the human watermark which was impossible for him to blot out.

1. Ibid. 6.

CHAPTER IV

MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC MESSAGE
CHAPTER IV

MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC MESSAGE

Probably no aspect of Muhammad's mission has received more attention by scholars of East and West alike than has his message. It will therefore be unnecessary to consider it at length in this thesis, and yet the very fact that it is so closely linked with the prophetic office in the Qur'ān demands a brief treatment of the subject in this relation. It is in the message that we see the Prophet's raison d'être. In fact the Qur'ān itself strictly speaking is merely a collection of his teaching and it is only through this lens that other features can be clearly seen.

A study of the message seems to establish the hypothesis that Muhammad's main impulse was religious, and that the prophetic office as he increasingly came to know it was the means he adopted in order to effect the reformation. With this in mind, let us briefly examine the spiritual centredness and the prophetic consciousness of his message in its content, and development. We shall furthermore see that the style of his preaching is not dissimilar to that employed by the Hebrew prophets.

I. THE CONTENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF HIS MESSAGE

The following verse which was delivered either late in the Makkān period or early in the Madīnān contains in a nutshell the central teaching of Muhammad's message:
"This is a proclamation to the people that they may be warned thereby, and that they may know that there is only One God, and that those of insight may be reminded." 1

Even though this passage comes mid-way in his ministry, it nevertheless reflects the emphasis upon God which pervades the marked development of the message all through the Qur'ān. It is only this deep sense of a special Divine Providence that gives significance to the Prophet's plea for gratitude, warning of judgment and promise of reward. Or as Professor Bell says, the fundamental doctrine is "the claims of Allah, the Creator, to man's gratitude and worship, He being the source of all the important blessings of life." 2

To begin with the message was not based upon the dogmatic conception of monotheism such as that quoted from Surah 14:52. But it was rather an appeal grounded upon the moral responsibility of man created and cared for by God. For example, in Surah 86:6 we see that man "was created from water dripping," in Surah 80:24-32 that God causes man's food to grow, and in Surah 88:17-20 that camels (or clouds), the heaven, mountains and the earth testify to God's power, of which man should be cognizant.

1. Surah 14:52.


But soon a greater accent was placed upon the oneness of God. Muhammad openly condemned the Makkans for attributing daughters to the deity while they themselves had sons, and vociferously attacked their polytheism by reiterating, (אֵֽלֶּה יְהוָה יָהֹי עָדָה ) "Verily, your God is one," and, (אֵֽלֶּה אֱלֹהֵי עֵדֶת ) "There is no god but Allah." The Qur'ān then goes on to develop the doctrine of God, elaborating upon His attributes and His "beautiful names." As an illustration, the following verse from the early Madīna period comprehends in a striking manner God's work of creation, His transcendence, His omniscience, and His immanence. "He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and then sat firm upon the throne; He knoweth what penetrates into the earth and what comes forth from it, what comes down from the heaven and what mounts up into it; He is with you wheresoever ye are." Once the Prophet grasped this idea of the greatness of the One God, he kept it throughout his life as the principal tenet of his message. And just as former messengers had served as mouthpieces for the Lord, so likewise was he to become the spokesman of the Almighty. Or as the Qur'ān states

1. Surah 37:149.
5. Through the anthropomorphism of His sitting upon the throne.
it, "Verily, it is the speech of a messenger honourable...

Hence everything, no matter how trivial, is set in its relation to God.

In contradistinction to the Creator's generosity, Muhammad's early preaching condemned man's niggardly attitude.

"Ye do not honour the orphan,
Nor urge to feed the destitute,
Ye devour the inheritance indiscriminately,
And ye love wealth ardently." 3

The replacement at Makkah of the tribal solidarity by a mercantile individualism may have led to unjust exploitation and oppression of the less fortunate citizens, and thus served as provocation for the Prophet's attack. "Blast man!" he says, "How ungrateful he is!" - "Allah it is who hath appointed for you the night that ye may rest therein, and the day to let you see; verily Allah is bounteous to the people, but most people do not show gratitude" - "Verily man was created avid (of gain)." 7

Thus it is that the sin of "presumption" is assailed upon religious grounds even though the immediate cause of the ingratitude was an economic and social one.

1. Surah 69:40,43.
Along with the censure of this vice there is also commendation for the virtue of gratitude to God, expressed in generosity. Benediction is the lot of "him who gives and shows piety." Nor is this correct behaviour separated from its religious context. It also derives its significance from the thankful attitude toward God, and the giving of alms was very probably a means for spiritual purification.

With the old tribal unity and sanctions broken down through the new Makkan economy, the individual himself in all likelihood became more responsible for his own actions in this world. It is therefore not difficult to see how the doctrine of the Final Judgment would more than ever serve as a necessary corrective. In any case, eschatology figures prominently in Muhammad's message. The Qur'ān abounds in graphic descriptions of the Last Day, the tortures of Hell, and the sensual pleasures of Paradise.

A problem surrounds the time element of whether the Prophet began from the outset to preach future retribution or whether he first of all simply appealed for a "sense of gratitude to God for His bounties." and then only latter, when this injunction was rejected, warned of judgment to come. Professor Bell favours the latter view. And as evidence, he cites the fact that in the early stories of

1. Surah 92:5.


3. Ibid. pp.84-90.
other prophets, which are clearly mirrors of Muhammad's own experience, the preaching of eschatology is lacking. On the other hand, Nöldeke's rearrangement of the Qur'ān by surahs gives a prominent place to this preaching right from the beginning, and hence many scholars since then have logically concluded that eschatology was an integral part of the Prophet's earliest message.

It certainly is true that an arrangement of the Qur'ān chronologically by surahs is sound as far as it goes, and yet, as has been pointed out, such a system cannot allow for the composite nature and obvious editing within the surahs themselves. From such a study of the early passages, it appears that many of the eschatological descriptions are later than Nöldeke's order would show, and that there is a greater development of details in these subsequent accounts. Nevertheless, it does seem to the present writer that warning in the light of the coming judgment, naive and undeveloped as it was at first, was woven into the message very early. Such passages as the following would tend to bear this out:

"When comes the trumpet-blast, that will then be a difficult day, for the unbelievers far from easy." 2

But even from this portion it will be seen that (الكافرون) "the unbelievers" are referred to, and thus it is not unnatural


2. Surah 74:8-10. Other early references to future retribution may be found in Surah 96:6-8; 51:6 and 34:1-12.
to assume that a message had been previously declared to them which they had rejected.

There was also the problem of whether the punishment threatened was at first this-worldly, and then only later assumed the form of coming in the next. The accounts of the former Qur'anic prophets such as Noah, Lot, Sālih and Hūd who warned of judicial cataclysms which took place in their own times may be evidence that Muhammad's message started in the same way. Also it cannot be denied that indications exist which reveal that a punishment in time was anticipated by the Prophet as well as one in eternity. For example, God is portrayed as saying, "If We so will, We shall sink the earth with them." Or again, the victory of Badr is interpreted as the temporal judgment vented upon the unbelieving Makkan. However, because future punishment appears so clearly in the Qur'an, it does not seem possible to give priority to one type or the other with any degree of certainty.

Another aspect of the early preaching was that of invitation. For instance, there are the exhortations to "do obeisance and draw near," to "flee to Allah," and to serve (عَبَّدَهُ) Him. When people refused to accept the

2. Surah 8:30-35.
5. Surah 51:50.
message, there followed condemnations for disbelief in God's signs from nature, in His benefits, in the warning, and in the Last Day. But besides the call to belief, the religious duties imposed at Makkah are remarkably simple and few in number. Prayers are to be offered frequently, the Zakāt is to be given, modesty is to be observed, parents and kinsmen are to be honoured, and cheating is to be avoided.

As Buhl says, "It is quite evident that Muhammad had at this time no thought of founding a new religion." And yet when his mission at Makkah failed, and he saw that success was not possible through employing merely the prophetic weapons of preaching and teaching, and that no threatened punishment fell as it had for former prophets; he resolved upon political measures. As we have already seen, the Apostle of God at Madīnah first looked to the Jews for support, but was rejected by them. There then probably followed a period of inner perplexity from which he emerged to divorce Islam from both Judaism and Christianity, wedding it to the Arab religion of the Ka'bah.

cleansed from its former idolatry. He now became an independent prophet. And with his new position as founder and leader of a politico-religious ummah or community, there came the necessity for propounding laws governing the complicated organisation.

From then on the flood-gates of legislation were opened, and new areas were inundated wherever a demand was found. For example, at the end of Surah 2 alone, where the transition is so patently illustrated, there are regulations covering belief, prayer, charity, alms, trustworthiness (2:172), retaliation (2:173), inheritance (2:176), fasting (2:179f), pilgrimage (2:185f), the right of sanctuary in the Sacred Mosque (2:187), trade (2:194), wine and gambling (2:216), marriage (2:220), oaths (2:224), divorce (2:227f), war (2:245), usury (2:276) and debts (2:282f). A summary of religious duties not unlike the Decalogue or Mosaic Covenant also appears.

"Let me repeat what your Lord hath forbidden you; do not associate anything with Him; with (your) parents (exercise) kindness; do not kill your children because of poverty, We shall provide for you and them; do not draw near indecencies...; do not kill the person whom Allah hath made forbidden except with justification...; do not interfere with the property of the orphan, except to improve it, until he reach his full age; fill up the measure and the balance with justice...; when ye speak, act fairly, even though it be a relative; the covenant of Allah fulfil." 2


2. Surah 5:152,153. It is interesting to note that even though the word (ٓا) "Say" is prefixed before this verse in the Qur'an, part of it at least is very evidently Muhammad's own speech.
A further development in the original message is seen in the fact that the injunction to believe in one God is expanded to: "Believe in Allah and His messenger." Nor is the way of salvation so simple as it was to begin with. "Those who have believed and wrought the works of righteousness and have believed in what has been sent down to Muhammad...He (God) hath absolved them from their evil deeds." Also, much is made of the principle of submission. "We have been commanded to surrender ourselves (أَنْسَبَأَلَّهَ) to the Lord of the worlds." Originally, salvation was not confined to Islam, but might be obtained by any unidolatrous and righteous man. However, the exclusiveness of the faith was declared by such statements as "Verily the religion in Allah's sight is Islam," and "If anyone desires any other religion than Islam, it will not be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers."

New doctrines were promulgated and applied in connection with the wars for Islam. Those who are killed in God's cause are alive. And the concept of predestination is used to answer the regrets some harboured because of the deaths which resulted from the defeat at Uhud. "If ye

1. Surah 7:158.
2. Surah 47:2.
5. Surah 2:149.
had been in your houses, those who were written down as to be killed, would have sallied out to the places where they lie." Furthermore, a higher rank came to be ascribed to those who contributed and fought before the conquest of Makkah.

Thus it was that the Prophet resorted to political means of securing his aims, and yet this was a result of the primary religious motive rather than the main cause. The former prophetic pattern which he had adopted as the original way of effecting the religious reform also underwent changes through the influence of new circumstances and requirements in his position at Madīnah. But he held on to the idea right through to the end of his life. Whatever alterations were made necessary by the vicissitudes of fortune did not bring repudiations of his former message and mission so much as additions to the fundamental concepts. When one realizes the vast differences of function between the "Warner" of Makkah and the Ruler of Madīnah, one is amazed that the abrogations are comparatively so few. It serves as good testimony to the strong impression the prophetic essentials had made upon the Apostle's mind as well as to his power of tenacity once he was gripped by such an idea.

2. Surah 57:10; 4:97; and 9:20.
II. THE STYLE AND PREACHING OF HIS MESSAGE

"The Qur'an does occupy a unique position in the Arabic literature," says Sweetman, "It is probably the first prose book in Arabic. In it we see a transition from the old bardic poetry to something of which the Arab had previously no knowledge. In this Muhammad shows his genius."

Even though the Prophet vigorously denied being "a poet" or "a sooth-sayer," nevertheless he was influenced by the manner of the old Arab kāhins in that he adopted their peculiar mode of expression with oaths and rhymed prose or sajj. In fact, the gift of poetry is practically inseparable from prophetic activity right down through the ages. Yet Muhammad definitely developed a style of his own in spite of hints taken from these poets.

As increasing demands pressed in upon his time, there is a progressive deterioration of style. This is so marked that Nöldeke based his rearrangement of the Qur'an upon it. Also the new legislation at Madīnah demanded a style of its own. The total effect was that the Prophet in his later years aimed less at succinctness of utterance, fell into the use of set phrases, and was content with mechanical

---

rhymes.

Just the same, there are parts of the Qur'ān which stand out against what otherwise might be called a maze of confusion produced by poor arrangement. Not only does the style still have an enchanting appeal to the Arab ear, but also certain thoughts are expressed in a very telling manner. First of all let us look at a few examples illustrating the form in which the message is cast. We shall then consider some instances of the occasional heights attained by the prophetic utterances.

Besides the sa'i or rhyme at the end of each verse, Muhammad employed repetition, parallelism, contrast, parables and certain rhetorical schemes which are strikingly like the elements of Semitic poetry used by the Hebrew prophets and even by Christ Himself. From the Qur'ān it is very evident that the Prophet was not unaware of the value of repetition for propaganda purposes. In Surah 55, for example, 31 out of the total of 78 verses are merely repetitions of the refrain, "Which then of the benefits of your Lord will ye train (men and jinn) count false?"

Again, there are a certain number of passages containing clauses introduced by (Israel) idha or "when". Of these the longest is Surah 81:1-14 where we have 12 (Israel)

2. Ibid. p.9.
3. Ibid. p.7. Instances where this occurs are as follows: Surah 56:1-9: (69:13-17); 74:8-10; 75:7-12, 26-30; 77:3-13; 79:34-41; 81:1-14; 82:1-5; 84:1-6; 99:1-6.
clauses leading up to the statement at the end, "a soul shall know what it has presented." Or another instance of these introductory repetitions is found in Surah 2 where 11 different verses separated by irregular intervals all begin with the phrase, (Ya Aliha Al-Basir, Amanu, "O ye who have believed."

(As an example of Muhammad's use of poetic contrast and parallelism like that of former prophets, please see the accompanying illustration).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHRASE</th>
<th>THE TWO WAYS</th>
<th>CONTRAST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PARALLELISM AND CONTRAST IN SURAH 92:5-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>۵ فاَلَمَّا مِنْ آفَتِكِ وَآفَتِكِ</td>
<td>رَمَّيْتَ بِالْغُشَرِ ۶ وَنَفَّدَ بِالْغُشَرِ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>۷ وَصَبَّةَ الْبَشْرِ</td>
<td>۷ وَصَبَّةَ الْبَشْرِ ۸ وَنَجَّيْتِكُمْ ۹ وَنَجَّيْتِكُمْ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>۸ وَنَجَّيْتِكُمْ</td>
<td>۹ وَنَجَّيْتِكُمْ</td>
<td>۱۰ وَكَدْرُ الْغُشَرِ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Qur'ān in many places contains rhetorical schemes. One such pattern is that of people in trouble calling upon God, but then when He brings prosperity, they forget Him. Tor Andrae mentions another frequently recurring outline. Firstly, there is a description of the blessings of God as revealed in His providence; secondly, the duty of man therefore is to serve the Almighty alone in faith and works; and finally, all those who fail to fulfil this obligation will experience judgment and retribution.

The (mathal or parable is another poetic device which is put to good use by the Prophet. For example, a story is told about two men, one of whom owns valuable properties and trusts in his wealth, while the other is poorer but trusts in God. At last destruction comes to the first of the two, who, having lost his possessions, laments his past folly. Or again a story is told about an unnamed town which almost certainly refers to Makkah, and warns against ingratitude:

"A town which was secure and at peace, to which its provision came comfortably from every place, which then showed itself unthankful for the good gifts of Allah; so Allah caused it to experience the garment of hunger and fear for what they had been doing."


In their form, these parables remind one of those told by 
the prophets Nathan, Isaiah, Ezekiel and above all Christ. 
The fact that some of the Qur'anic mathals are unquestion­
ably derived from Biblical sources (such as that of a tree 
in Surah 14:29,30 from Psalm 1, and the camel passing 
through the eye of a needle in Surah 7:38) is a strong 
indication that the parable itself as a rhetorical device 
also stemmed from the same root.

There are striking instances in the Qur'än of prophetic 
preaching or forthtelling of a very high order. One of 
the more famous verses in Surah 24:35 where God is associated 
with light. "Allah is the light of the heavens and the 
earth; His light is like a niche in which is a lamp, the 
lamp in glass and the glass like a brilliant star." Another fine example traces man's indifference in prosperity 
followed by devotion in trouble - "When We bestow favour 
upon man, he turns and moves away, but when evil touches 
him he makes long prayers." God's mercy and forgiveness 
is also extended to sinners, for men are encouraged not to 
"despair of the mercy of Allah; verily Allah forgiveth 
sins entirely; He is the Forgiving, the Compassionate."

3. Ezekiel 23. 
5. Surah 41:51. 
Muhammad's prophetic declamations burn with a fiery indignation toward his foes. Like Elijah's taunt to the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel, He challenges the Polytheists to "call upon them (their false gods) and let them answer you if ye speak the truth." Later on He lashes out with a stinging attack upon the Jews by comparing them and their Torah to an ass carrying books. And finally He dubs the Christians as unbelievers, even though He displays more sympathy for them than for the Jews: "Assuredly they have disbelieved (كفر) who says: 'Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary!...' 'Allah is one of three'."

The Apostle, like the former Biblical prophets, also accuses those who do not receive His message of being judicially blinded. "In the ears of those who do not believe is heaviness, and to them it is blindness;" and elsewhere He exclaims, "Woe then to those whose hearts are hard because of the remembrance of Allah!" There is another interesting correspondence with Old and New Testament men of God. When their messages had been proclaimed, whether the people believed not, they had discharged

1. I Kings 18:24.
5. Surah 5:76-77.
7. Surah 41:44.
their responsibility and were no longer liable to blame. In like manner Muhammad is told, "They are a proud transgressing people. Turn from them then; thou are not to be blamed; but remind, for the reminder will benefit the believers." Furthermore, God's command to "turn from them" is not dissimilar to Christ's instruction to His disciples that they should shake the dust off their feet if a city would not receive them. Or it is like the action of Paul and Barnabas who turned from the Jews to the Gentiles when the former rejected "the word of God."

Thus, in conclusion, we have seen that Muhammad in his message started by calling people to gratitude toward God for His blessings, and warning against the spirit of niggardliness. Punishment awaited the latter, while a reward would accompany the former. But his mission at Makkah, which was simply based upon the function of proclaiming a message as former prophets had done, failed. Therefore at Madīnah he adopted political means as well for accomplishing his aims of a religious reform. Also when the People of the Book would not receive his message, he turned from them and became an independent prophet, dictating legislation which oriented Islam toward a purified form of the Arab faith. Nevertheless, in doing this he

still held to the elements of the prophetic message and preaching which he increasingly had learned from former messengers.
CHAPTER V

MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC AUTHENTICATION—NOT BY FORETELLING NOR BY MIRACLES
CHAPTER V

MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC AUTHENTICATION

There is a common problem which faces every prophet. It is that of convincing his hearers not only with the truth of his message but also of the authenticity of his mission. This was frequently accomplished in the foretelling of a future event. And when it came to pass, the very fulfilled prophecy itself served as a seal for the prophet's reliability as a spokesman of God. This test of a true prophet is described in Deuteronomy as follows. "If thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." It was this which finally confirmed the faith of Christ's disciples in Him; namely, His repeated prophecies to them of His death and resurrection, followed by the fulfillment in the actual events.

The effect of rationalistic humanism and scientific naturalism upon thought had produced a tendency to consider anything that savours of the supernatural as suspect. "The typical attitude of the religious humanist," says Christopher Dawson, "was not to reject the prophet, but rather to divinize the poet and the philosopher on the same

1. Deuteronomy 18:21,22.
terms." Thus the emphasis upon the prophet's function as an ardent preacher has gained much popularity. Guillaume speaking of this tendency says, "An epigram which has become widely current asserts that the prophets were 'forthtellers rather than foretellers.' Whether this dictum can be sustained is very doubtful. There is no prophet in the Old Testament who was not a foreteller of the future." Admittedly, proclamation of the message has always played an essential part in prophetic activity. But when this is stressed to the exclusion of his ability to predict the future, his very title loses its special meaning. Or as Guillaume continues, "When a prophet ceases to prophesy in this sense he ceases to be a prophet and becomes a preacher." Dr. Zwemer also emphasizes this point when he says that a prophet is not only "God's spokesman and 'tells forth' his message. But he also 'fore-tells' i.e. prophesies...The Old Testament prophets from Moses to Malachi do foretell the Messiah and His Kingdom in a remarkable way. The argument from Old Testament prophecy is still valid as a proof of its Divine origin and character."

Biblical prophets also substantiated their missions in another way. Although it was not as universal a feature as prediction, miraculous signs accompanied the

ministries of Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Christ and Paul, authenticating their messages. To take but one example; Christ, before healing the man sick with the palsy, scandalized the Jewish delegation of doctors and Pharisees who had gathered to examine His orthodoxy by the statement, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." This was a prerogative of God alone! But Jesus went on to say, "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (turning to the sick man He said,) I say unto thee, Arise and take up thy couch, and go into thine house," thus vindicating His authority to make such a statement by a miracle.

Muhammad, as far as the present author can determine from the evidence in the Qurëan, used neither of these two methods in authenticating his office; namely, that of performing a miracle or foretelling a future event in his own lifetime. Nevertheless, he did employ many other means of authorization. And the very fact that there are over three hundred million Muslims in the world today is no little testimony to the convincing nature of these proofs. But before passing on to these ingenious methods which Muhammad employed, the wide divergence of opinion surrounding

1. In the case of Old and New Testament prophets, miracles and foretelling were not merely evidential in character. They usually had a didactic function and came as the result of godly faith or as a means of evoking it.


the questions of whether he predicted or performed miracles demands a brief consideration.

It is certainly true that Muhammad foretold the future in relation to the Final Judgment, Heaven and Hell. Also there are several verses in the Qur'ān which have been interpreted as prophesies, such as the spread of Islam (Surah 41:53), the return to Makkah (Surah 28:85) and the Byzantine victory (Surah 30:1-3). The first of these reads as follows:

"We shall show them Our signs in the skies and in themselves, until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth."

Stanton for one views this as a prediction that the Muslim faith would be extended to other countries. The crucial Arabic word upon which the meaning hinges is (مَفَاتِيحُ), literally meaning "horizons". Bell notes that this verse is "often taken as referring prophetically to Muslim victories in various lands, but it is probably the natural signs seen in the sky and in the creation and generation of man as set forth in the Qur'ān that are referred to."

Thus apart from special pleading, it is doubtful how much weight can rightly be ascribed to the predictive character of this passage.

1. Cp. Surah 27:89,90; 22:1,2; 11:120; etc. Scholars have however shown that these eschatological materials in the Qur'ān have been derived from earlier sources.


The verse which is held to be a prophecy that Muhammad would return to Makkah states:

"He who imposed the Qur’an upon thee is certainly going to restore thee to a place to fall back upon." ¹

If this was spoken (a) after the Hijrah and before the return to Makkah, and (b) if by the term (مکه) Makkah is meant, this would be a prediction. From the evidence, it is probably certain that the time of composition was some years before the conquest of the Prophet's home metropolis. Some say the verse was revealed to Muhammad during the Hijrah to comfort him and still his complaints. A more likely view is that the time was probably the year II at Madinah. But the meaning of (مکه) is the deciding factor. Sale actually inserts the word "Makkah" in italics and thus takes this connotation of (مکه) for granted in his translation. Rodwell on the other hand renders (مکه) as "home", explaining that probably "paradise" is meant. Lastly, Bell translates the term literally as "a place of return." He adds that the sense seems to be that Muhammad will find another basis for his religion, having realized the futility of dependence upon the People of the Book.⁶

¹. Surah 28:33a.
³. Bell, op. cit., p.382.
⁶. Bell, op. cit., p.382.
Here again, positive proof that this reference is a prediction appears to be ruled out by the inconclusive nature of its interpretation.

Much has been made of the opening passage of Surah 30 as a definite prophecy of a Byzantine victory and hence a clear authentication of the Prophet's inspiration.

"The Romans have been victorious (or defeated),
In the nearer part of the land, but they after
their victory (defeat) will be defeated (victorious),
In a few years." 1

Muir calls this a "sagacious augury," and Stanton views it as a prediction. It is interpreted as a foretelling of Heraclius' victory over the Persians in 625 A.D., after the Byzantines had suffered a defeat probably in Palestine during the year 615 A.D. But a consideration of the Arabic word (َةَلَة) reveals that a change of the meaning from the passive form "to be defeated" to the active "to be victorious" merely involves an alteration in the vowel points, the consonants remaining the same. When it is remembered that the text to begin with was unpointed, this would make the prophecy true whatever the outcome might be, according to the sense which would be read into the pronunciation.

2. Stanton, The Teaching of the Qur'ān, p. 24
3. Muir, Life of Mahomet, (London, 1877), p. 126. In a note on this prophecy, he says (p. 127), "The commentators add a very convenient story in illustration. Abu-Bakr, on this passage being revealed, laid a wager of ten camels with 'Abba ibn-Khalf, that the Persians would be beaten within three years. Muhammad desired him to extend the period to nine years, and to raise the stake. This Abu-Bakr did, and in due time won one hundred camels from 'Abba's heirs."
Rodwell holds this to have been intentional when he says, "The whole passage was probably constructed with the view of its proving true in any event." Dr. Bell on the other hand, by inverting the more usual reading, interprets the verses as referring to the ultimate victory of the Believers, and dates the passage as Madīnese. Thus, this supposed prediction is also very questionable in its form and intended designation.

Speaking of foretelling as a sine qua non of prophecy, Dr. Zwemer says, "Later Arab theologians were quite aware of this and tried to find prophecies in the Qurʾān, but failed." Furthermore, if the above examples are genuine predictions, it is strange that Muhammad nowhere refers to them as authentications of his mission. On the contrary, when he is asked the hour of the arrival of the Last Day, he answers, "What hast thou to do with the mention of it? To thy Lord is its final coming. Thou art simply a warner of him who fears it." Or again after the defeat at Uḥdūd the statement is made that God is not one "to let you observe" the future or the unseen (الإِبْلِ).

Nevertheless, there are instances in the Qurʾān which if they are not attempts at prediction are at least indications of a strong desire to foretell the future as

earlier prophets had done. For example, Muhammad not only gives the unbelievers warning of a thunderbolt "like the thunderbolt of * Ad and Thamūd," but he also expresses threats in the form of rhetorical questions - "Are ye sure then that He will not sink the shore with you, or send a sand-storm upon you... or... send upon you a hurricane of wind, and drown you for your unthankfulness?" But these illustrations merely tend to confirm the fact that in the Qurʾān there are no conclusively proved prophecies concerning future events during Muhammad's life-time.

"There is no position more satisfactorily established by the Qurʾān," says Muir, "than that Muhammad did not in any part of his career perform miracles, or lay claim to the power of performing them." Yet tradition, spurred on by popular imagination, abounds with supernatural feats ascribed to the Prophet. Guillaume sees in this a reflection of Christian influence upon Islam's later development - "Controversy with Christians on the rival merits of Jesus and Muhammad may fairly be regarded as the origin of the pretended miracles, flatly contradicting the plain statement of the great Arabian and those of his immediate followers that he was not sent with power to work miracles."

1. Surah 41:12.
Hence there is recorded a parallel to the feeding of the 5,000, the healing of Salma's wounded leg on the day of Khaybar, an exorcism, the stopping of the sun and the splitting of the moon. But Bell cites the need for better authentication as another stimulus for these creations. "It is not enough that a man should claim to be a prophet and preach and teach religion. His commission from God must be evinced by signs and wonders and the miracles which he performs. Thus we see that the Muslims being...brought up against the necessity for the mission of their prophet being evinced by miracles."

That Muhammad's contemporaries expected signs from a prophet is evidenced in the Qur'an by miracles they challenged him to perform. For example:

"They say: 'We shall not give thee credance till thou causest for us to bubble up from the earth a spring; or until thou hast a garden of palm and vine, and thou cause in the midst of it rivers to gush forth; or until thou causest the heaven to fall upon us in fragments as thou hast said, or thou producethest Allah and the angels assenting. Or until thou hast a house or ornamental work, or thou ascendest into the heaven, nor shall we give credance to thy ascent until thou bringest down to us a writing which we may read.'" 3

To this Muhammad answers, "Glory be to my Lord! am I anything but a human being (sent) as a messenger?" 4

1. Ibid. pp. 135f and 156.
4. Surah 17:95b.
the wish is expressed that a treasure had been sent down to him or that an angel had come along with him. The Jews also excuse themselves from supporting the Prophet's claims by saying that God "hath pledged us not to believe in any messenger until he comes to us with a sacrifice which fire consumes."

Thus it appears from the Qur'ân that Muhammad performed no miracles nor predicted any future events in his own life time, in spite of the fact that his contemporaries expected these credentials from a prophet. But this does not mean that his mission was unauthenticted. In the next chapter it will be seen how carefully and thoroughly the Apostle dealt with this problem.

As a result of the evidence considered above, it is difficult to escape the two conclusions of Hirschfeld when he says, "A miracle was the great, but unfulfilled, longing of Muhammad, and the disappointment he felt through his impotence to perform a miracle penetrates not only the whole of the Qur'ân, but many occasional sayings"; and secondly, "All his prophecies are of an eschatological nature and beyond the control of any human being, so that no one could hope to find an opportunity of charging him with fallacious predictions."

1. Surah 11:15.
3. Hirschfeld, New Researches Into the Composition and Exegesis of the Qur'an, (London, 1902), p.44.
4. Ibid., p.47.
CHAPTER VI

MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC AUTHENTICATION -

BY INGENIOUS ARGUMENTS
CHAPTER VI

MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC AUTHENTICATION

BY INGENIOUS ARGUMENTS

There are very few pages in the Qur'ān where the matter of authentication does not receive attention. And yet, as far as the present author can determine, there has been no comprehensive study nor treatment of this subject. Muir hints at this apparently unexplored topic when he states that the Qur'ān "omits nothing, however trivial, calculated to strengthen the prophetic claim." It is true that Western scholarship has considered various aspects of this question such as the reputed miracle or ʿilmāz of Islam's Holy Book. But since much of the subject-matter dealing with Muhammad's authorization seems to have been neglected, it will be necessary to restrict most of the evidence in this chapter to the original source in the Qur'ān, with only infrequent references to the opinions of scholars.

As was seen in the last chapter, these proofs do not include the more usual supernatural seals of true prophethood; namely, prediction and miracles. But they rather take the form of rational arguments. In one place Muhammad seems to betray a secret longing for an evidential miracle or sign, but then is consoled by the fact that it is not God's will to convert all. Nevertheless, numerous other

2. Surah 6:35.
authorizations are presented. In fact the whole gamut is too vast to be considered here, and it will therefore be necessary to cite merely examples of the different types. I have sought to arrange them in sixteen major groupings. Like the various strains in a Bach fugue, these authentications are introduced at consecutive stages in the development of Muhammad's mission, and yet continue in concurrent harmony throughout the Qur'ān.

I. THROUGH THE USE OF OATHS

Perhaps the earliest means the Prophet used to verify his mission were oaths of corroboration. For example, in Surah 53, an assertion is made "by the star when it falls" that Muhammad has not gone astray nor erred, nor does he speak of his own inclination, but by divine suggestion or revelation. And again in Surah 51, pledges are given to substantiate the truth of the message. But then in Surah 81, such attestations by the stars, the night and the morning are declared to be unnecessary since "it is verily the speech of a noble messenger...Your comrade is not mad...It is not the speech of a satan stoned." Other oaths are sworn by the Lord of heaven and earth, by Mt. Sinai, by the Book given to Moses, by the Ka'bah, by the sky, by the sea, by

5. Surah 52:1-7. The references to the Ka'bah and to the sky in this passage are in doubt.
the Book that makes clear, and by the Qur'ān. This naive manner of authorization disappears almost completely at Madīnah, probably because more mature arguments had by that time been found.

II. THROUGH THE EXAMPLE OF FORMER PROPHETS AND PEOPLES

Muhammad also appealed to what might be called historical and archaeological proofs. The peoples of Ḫad, Thamūd and Pharaoh are referred to as having counted their prophets as false, only to be destroyed in the end. But besides this historical allusion, later on the ruins, probably at Madain Sālih on the caravan route to Syria, are mentioned as tangible evidence of the cataclysmic judgment that overtook the Thamūdites for having rejected their prophet Sālih: "There are their houses, tumbled down for the wrong which they did; surely in that is a sign for a people who have knowledge." Similar evidence is also presented in Surah 20:128 where the question is asked, "Has it not served as guidance to them how many generations We have destroyed before them, in whose dwelling-places they walk? Verily in that are signs for those of sagacity."

1. Surah 44:1.
3. The Thamūdites were probably the same as those people mentioned in the cuneiform annals of Sargon II and known to classical writers such as Pliny as "Thamudaei". Cf. Hitti, History of the Arabs, (London, 1937), p.30.
4. Surah 69:4-6,9,10.
Other (ذات) or signs are seen in the drowning of Noah's people for their unbelief and in the destruction of the city of Lot for its wickedness.

The Prophet's position is furthermore strengthened by calling the faith of former believers to witness. In the Makkan period he refers to the fact that the learned of the Children of Israel had known the authenticity of the revelation and views this as a sign. And in Madīnah he even portrays Abraham, Lot, Ishmael, Jacob and his sons as Muslims, summoning his hearers to follow Islam as "the creed of Abraham" (ملة إبراهيم). Muhammad also places himself in the succession of the prophets. His inspiration is like that of Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, Solomon and David.

Thus when the Prophet's contemporaries disbelieved his authenticity and challenged him to produce a sign, he exploited this very situation as a demonstration of his genuineness by citing historical accounts of former peoples who had treated their messengers in the same way and had then tasted bitter punishment as proof of their misapprehension.

2. Surah 51:37 and 15:75.
5. Surah 2:121,126.
Did not the ruins of former communities in Arabia bear silent testimony to such tragedies? Here was ocular evidence of what would befall Muhammad's people if they rejected him. Furthermore by picturing former true prophets as Muslims, he was able to present himself as coming in their direct line. He had appeared at a time when there were no others, or as it is put in the Qur'ân, "Our messenger has come to you... at an interval amongst the messengers."

III. THROUGH THE DESCRIPTION OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Muhammad also recounted personal experiences of visions and angelic assistance as authentications of his mission. In referring to his visions in Surah 53:1-18 (which have already been considered in Chapter II), the account concludes with this line, "Verily, he saw one of the greatest signs of his Lord." Hirschfeld describes the probable motivation in Muhammad's mind for recounting the above experiences: "In his zeal he had made known that previous prophets had confirmed their missions by miracles. He therefore felt that he had exposed himself to the demand to perform one, and for this reason styled his vision a miracle." That the narrative of this visitation was

inspired by a similar experience attributed to Moses in Surah 79:15-20 is also suggested. But if only from a psychological point of view, the very fact that there are six denials that Muhammad was erring or deceived in the comparatively short accounts of the visions, the fact that the description of the scene is so hazy, and the fact that the principal figure is the speaker himself are not insignificant indications that if these experiences were not invented for the purpose, they nevertheless were calculated mainly to serve as evidential signs. The same might also be said for the night-journey "from the Sacred Mosque to the Furthest Mosque", since the reason expressed for it too was "to show him some of our signs."  

Muhammad also spoke of his Hijrah experience as a token of God's sanction, claiming that he was supported by "hosts whom ye did no see." Angelic guards are elsewhere mentioned who go before and behind him in order to insure that God's message is faithfully delivered. The purpose in acquainting his hearers of this divine escort was not so much that there was reason to doubt his fidelity as that the Prophet desired to substantiate more firmly the favour of his position and the authority of his words.

1. Ibid. p. 44.  
2. Surah 17:1.  
IV. THROUGH THE WONDERS OF CREATION

The wonders of creation are also presented as signs authenticating Muhammad's mission, since he claims to have been sent by the same God who created everything. Most of these passages are Makkah, although it is not unusual to find appeals to such natural phenomena in Madineneese sections as well. The seemingly endless repetition of such "sign" verses often taxes the patience of the Western reader, but a collection of the various wonders of nature mentioned in the Qur'an is not without its interest, if only to reveal Muhammad's observation of and familiarity with Arab outdoor life.

The following are the different wonders of the universe which are advanced as evidences given by the Prophet's Creator God, and hence indirect authentications of the truth of his message and mission:

a. Astronomical phenomena: The formation of the heavens and the earth, constellations, the night, the sun, the moon, the stretching out of the shadow, and the day.

b. Geographical phenomena: Water, mountain peaks and passes, the two seas (one sweet and fresh, and the other salty and brackish) with a barrier between them, winds and rain.

c. Vegetable life: vegetation, shoots, close-packed grain, bunches of dates, pomegranates, the bearing and ripening of fruit, bushes, olives, palms, and fruits.

d. Animal life: the birds (which are supported in flight by nothing but God), horses, mules, asses, and cattle (over which man has dominion, and which he rides, eats and milks.)

e. Human life: men, wives, sons, birth, hearing, sight, hearts, sleep, and the different tongues and colours of men.

f. Human necessities: tents, wool, furs, shade, mountain refuges, coats, ships, the subjugation of the sea with its fish to eat and its ornaments to wear, and the honey of bees.

The Prophet's preaching of the resurrection is also authenticated by similar mysteries in nature. First of all there is the example of the dead earth being revived to produce grain and gardens for palms and vines. Then there is that of seed germination: "Allah is the one who causeth the grain and the date-stone to burst, producing the living from the dead, and who produceth the dead from

2. Surah 16:10,11,14.
7. Surah 16:80.
10. Surah 16:82,83.
11. Surah 36:42.
And another illustration of this truth is the sunrise. Finally, the mystery of man's natural birth and life is presented as evidence for the like process in his future resurrection:

"If ye are in doubt about the upraising - lo, We have created you from dust, then from a drop, then from a clot, then from a piece (of flesh), formed or unformed, that We may make clear to you; We settle what We will in the wombs until a set time, then We bring you forth as infants; then (we act so) that ye may reach your maturity - some of you die, and some of you are reduced to the most abject state of life, so that after having had knowledge they know not a thing (or reach old age)." 3

In Surah 30:7 Muhammad uses a form of the teleological argument by citing the fact that God's creation must have a purpose behind it leading up to a final consummation. He says, "Have they not reflected within themselves? - Allah did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them but with the truth (or the Judgment) and a set time."

This use of the cosmological argument through appealing to the signs of nature and this hint at the teleological argument are effective in establishing the existence of God, furthermore the processes of nature afford vivid illustrations of spiritual truths in Muhammad's message, but the weakness of his presentation lies in his inability to show

1. Surah 6:95. This is similar to the argument of II Corinthians 15:35,36, "Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die."


4. Rodwell translates (الن) here as "a serious end."

the special relation these phenomena have to the authentica-
tion of his particular office. Such a claim can be made by
anyone. It merely involves reasoning based upon the facts
or ordinary existence.

V. THROUGH THE MIRACLE OF THE CUR'AN

The evidential use of signs was not limited to the
example of former prophets and peoples, nor to the wonders
of creation, but the very phrases of the CUR'AN took on
the essence of miraculous authentications. As Stanton
describes it is his book, The Teaching of the CUR'AN, the
verses "are named āyāt or signs, and the ambiguity between
this word and the same term for miracles (σημεῖα) is
played upon by Muhammad when he places those who reject
his verses on a level with those who despised the signs of
earlier prophets, or when he makes his āyāt of utterance
equal in value to their āyāt of action." Professor Bell
shows that the adoption of this technical meaning for
(σημεῖα) as "verses" only took place in the Madīnese period,
and at Makkah the terms when used merely referred to "signs".
The importance attached to this word in the CUR'AN is
evidenced by the fact that it appears in its various usages
no less than 480 times. One example of the new signifi-
cance it took on at Madīneh is found in the opening of


2. Bell, The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment,
Surah 27 where it says, "These are the signs of the Qur'an and a Book which makes clear."

But there was another way the Prophet sought to establish the miraculous nature of the Qur'an; namely, by defying his opponents to produce a surah or book like it. Hirschfeld describes the method as follows: "The proof of the veracity of the miracles performed by Moses before Pharaoh was given in the fact that the magicians were not able to imitate them. Muhammad therefore boldly challenged scoffers to bring forward a 'Sign' of the same kind as his."

The Prophet puts forward the challenge by saying, "Have they a ladder on which they listen (to the heavenly council)? Then let their listener bring authorization clear," let them produce a discourse, a surah, a Book, or ten surahs like it. The authenticating value of such a proposed contest is expressed in these words: "If they do not respond to you, know (ye) that it is rent down with Allah's knowledge." Even if they did accept the challenge, the victory was not in doubt, for "verily if men and jinn agree to produce the like of this Qur'an, they will not produce the like of it though one to the other were the backer." Furthermore, the proof is put forward that it

---

1. Surah 27:1
3. 4. Surah 52:33
5. Surah 52:34.
10. Surah 17:90.
could not have been invented apart from God, for then many contradictions would be found in it.

In substantiating the miraculous character of the Qur'ān against the charge that he had been coached, Muhammad answers that the speech of the one to whom they refer is foreign, whereas this work is in clear Arabic. The fact that the Prophet had in the past neither been a priest nor a scribe is also cited as confirmation of the Qur'ān's being a spontaneous miracle:

"Thou has not been in the habit of reciting or tracing with thy right hand any Book before it; in that case suspicious would be those who invalidate (thy claims)." 4

For this same reason, there has been much effort on the part of Muslim theologians to uphold the tradition that Muhammad could not write, thus enhancing the necessity for a miraculous revelation. Up to the present, orthodox Islam holds the ḥijāz of the Qur'ān to be the principal wonder and authenticating sign of the Prophet's

2. Surah 4:84. This reference is early Madīnese at the latest, and perhaps even Makkan. It is very doubtful that such an argument would have been proffered later on after the doctrine of Qur'ānic abrogation had received sanction.
3. Surah 16:105. It is significant to note that this argument evades the possibility that the sources of information could have been foreign and the Arabic expression could have been Muhammad's.
4. Surah 29:47.
mission. "The Muslims themselves," as Margoliouth says, "consider the book the finest that ever appeared among men. They find no incongruity in the style. To them the matter is all true and the manner all perfect. Their eastern temperament responds readily to the crude, strong, and wild appeal which its cadences make to them, and the jingling rhyme in which the sentences of a discourse generally end adds to the charm of the whole. The Qur'an, even if viewed from the point of view of style alone, was for them from the first nothing less than a miracle, as great a miracle as ever was wrought." 

VI. THROUGH THE USE OF CONJECTURE

Perhaps the most interesting and ingenious of Muhammad's authentications are those secured through the use of conjecture. These are all built up around the word "if", which though not always expressed is always insinuated.

For example, the argument is stated that even if they should see every sign, even if God should send down angels to them, and even if the dead should speak to them, they still would not believe unless God so willed. Or again,

1. Although the Qur'an claims a matchless and even miraculous character for itself, it does not define the essence of this unique quality. Some theories which have been put forward are that the miracle consists in the fact that (a) it is a literary work produced by an illiterate (?) man; (b) its style is inimitable; and (c) its content was perfectly suited to the religious needs of the Arabs of that day.


3. Surah 7:143.

even:

"If We were to open upon them a door of the heaven, and they were to go up into it continually, they would say: 'Our sight has been intoxicated; nay, we are a people enchanted.' 1"

And supposing God had given Muhammad a tangible miracle such as a parchment book from heaven as positive proof, the infidels still would not believe.

It was this unbelief then that not only made such special signs futile, but also prevented their manifestation:

"Nothing has prevented Us sending the signs, but that the people of long ago counted them false; We caused the she-camel to come to Thamud as an ocular proof, but they did her wrong." 3

Also when the question is asked why miracles like those given to Moses were not performed by Muhammad, the same reason is expressed, namely, that Moses even with these evidential signs was disbelieved. The same stubbornness of the People of the Book against conversion to Islam precluded the necessity for miracles of authentication, for "if thou bringest those who have been given the Book every sign they will not follow thy qiblah." 5

Another reason why such a verifying wonder had not occurred was that its coming would be of such a cataclysmic nature that it would then be too late for anyone

5. Surah 2:140.
who had not done so previously to believe. There would not be so much as a cry from them nor would they be saved. The vision of angels for which they had been asking would also mean like punishment. Furthermore, if such judgment came they would only complain, "O our Lord, why didst Thou not send us a messenger so that we might have followed Thy signs before we were humiliated and confounded?" And in fact this punishment would have already overtaken them had it not been for the stated time which had been predetermined.

There are other instances as well where this expedient of conjecture is employed. And some of these arguments are mentioned but once in the Qur'an. For example, one contention is that if Muhammad had falsified "any statements," God would have killed him by divine intervention. Or in answer to the query why it was that an angel had not come, God would have sent him in an incarnate form. His critics therefore would have been in the same confusion as before, because he appearing as a man would be incognito. Another one of these conjectures is cast

1. Surah 6:159.
2. Surah 36:43, also see Surah 34:9.
5. Surah 29:53.
in the form of a (مَثَالٍ) mathal or parable, perhaps inspired by the account of Moses receiving the Law amidst the thunder, lightning, fire, smoke and quaking of Mt. Sinai.

"Had We sent down this Qur'an upon some mountain, one would have seen it humbling itself and cleaving asunder for the fear of Allah." 

Finally, there is not only a hint of the possibility of a future sign, but also a statement that if God so wished, He could perform one: "If We (so) please, We shall send down upon them from the heaven a sign."

VII. THROUGH THE FUTURE PROOF OF PUNISHMENT

Although Muhammad was unable to produce such evidential miracles as his contemporaries expected of a prophet, he nevertheless pointed to the Future Judgment as the day when their desire for a sign establishing the truth of his mission would be fulfilled much to their chagrin. In this sense, God is portrayed as promising, "I shall show you My signs, so do not ask Me to make haste." Also at the scene of final punishment, this taunt will be cast into the teeth of unbelievers - "This is what ye have been casting doubt upon."

4. Surah 26:3.
At that day infidels will be forced to confess the truthfulness of what God had promised through His envoys. A soul may then express the longing, "If only I had another turn, that I might be one of those who do well." But the only response will be, "Yea! My signs have already come to thee, but thou didst count then false." Even Satan will confess the truth of God's warning and the spurious nature of his own promises, and will leave unbelievers in the lurch.

Thus it was that the Arab Apostle by preaching the certainty of the Future Judgment, secured the advantage of an authenticating miracle on trust or credit. The argument was all the more impelling for immediate belief, because delay until the actual event would render faith ineffectual.

VIII. THROUGH THE TESTIMONY OF GOD

The appeal to God's truth and faithfulness in fulfilling His word is also cited as authorization. "Think not that Allah is going to fail His promise." "Verily the promise of Allah is true." and "Who is more truthful than Allah in what He says." Or again, God is quoted as witnessing of Muhammad that he had been sent with the truth.

1. Surah 56:52b. 5. Surah 50:60. Also see Surah 3:85.
Furthermore, because the Prophet claimed to speak the very "signs of Allah," for anyone to disbelieve them was just the same as doubting the veracity of God Himself. In fact, such divine testimony alone was sufficient witness for the people, since God knew best the one who came with real guidance and the one who was in manifest error. Here again the argument is certainly valid as far as basing it upon the truthfulness of God is concerned. And since this type of authentication is probably completely Madinan, it would be especially convincing to those who through the climate of former monotheism in that city were already acquainted with the God "that cannot lie." But the weakness of the argument again rests in Muhammad's failure to establish his special prophetical relationship to the Deity or to prove that the words he spoke were actually of divine origin. The dictum that God could not lie is true, but the supposition that Muhammad could not have been mistaken does not necessarily follow.

IX. THROUGH THE TESTIMONY OF JINN, ANGELS AND APOSTLES

Not only is the witness of God mentioned as evidence for the truth of the Prophet's message and mission, but the testimony of jinn, angels and Apostles is also added.

2. Surah 17:98.
4. According to Dr. Bell's dating, Surah 14:49 is the only one of these passages that may not be Madinan, but even it is listed as either late Mekkan or early Madinan.
5. Titus 1:2; Also see Joshua 21:45.
In Surah 46, a band of jinn hear the Qur’ān with reverential awe. So impressed are they that they return to their people as warners, telling of the Book and its truth, and calling upon them to respond to Muhammad. The statement also is made that the angels bear witness to what has been sent down to the Prophet. And the Apostles as well have acknowledged their belief in God and His Messenger.

It is significant to note that none of these is an independent witness in the sense that the testimony given was directly from any of them. Here again the evidence is mediated through Muhammad alone, and thus everything depends upon his trustworthiness.

X. THROUGH THE CONFIRMATION OF PAST PROPHETS AND SCRIPTURES

The possibility of revelation to a man is established in the Qur’ān by referring to the heaven-sent Book of Moses as a precedent. The further point is then made before Muhammad’s break with the Jews at Madīnah that his doctrine was not only similar to that given to the Children of Israel but also confirmed what was with them. And the claim is advanced that "they find (the native prophet

2. Surah 4:164.
Authenticating statements which from all appearance probably originated in Muhammad's imagination are put into the mouths of Abraham, Ishmael, and former prophets. For example, Abraham and Ishmael are portrayed as praying for a messenger like Muhammad. And again, the Jewish covenant of the prophets is cast in a similar substantiating mould:

"(Recall) when Allah took the covenant of the prophets: 'Whatever Book and Wisdom I may have given you and there comes to you a messenger confirming what is with you, ye shall believe in him and help him.' He said: 'Do ye assent and take up my task on that (condition)?' They replied: 'We assent;' He said: 'Bear witness then, and I am with you among those who bear witness.'"

Even 'Iesa ibn-Maryam announced the good tidings of a messenger who would come after him "bearing the name Ahmad."

XI. THROUGH THE NOTE OF AUTHORITY

With most of the Qur'ān assuming the form of God's direct utterance, the note of authority struck in this way is constantly present. Authentication thus is taken for

1. Surah 7:156.
2. Surah 2:123.
4. Surah 61:6. Ahmad like Muhammad means "the praised". The prophecy referred to here may be that concerning the Holy Spirit in John 14:16. It is not unlikely that the Prophet based this upon information which had come to him and which had confused (παρακλητός) "Comforter" with (περικλητός) "celebrated".
granted. But besides this, authoritative declarations are expressed. For example, in Surah 61:8 the statement is made that God is going to perfect His light in spite of opposition. Furthermore, if Muhammad had any doubts concerning the authenticity of his message, they are allayed by such statements: "Be in no dubitation about it; it is truth from thy Lord," and "What has been sent down to thee from thy Lord is the truth."

Another indication of the authoritative character is the frequent use of the word ( أَنْتَ أَحْكَمُ ) generally rendered "verily" or "indeed". This expression occurs in the Qur'ān in its various forms well over a thousand times. Usually coming at the opening of a verse, ( أَنْتَ أَحْكَمُ ) has the effect of transforming what otherwise would be an ordinary statement of fact into a telling declaration. One example must suffice. The following is Surah 37:4 with the introductory particle omitted:

( أَنْتَ أَحْكَمُ لَوْا حَدٌ ) - "your God is One."

But the verse as it reads in full is far more forceful because of the introductory ( أَنْتَ أَحْكَمُ ):

( إنْ أَنْتَ أَحْكَمُ لَوْا حَدٌ ) - "Verily, your God is One."

Dogmatic assertions are also effective in striking the note of authority. They are not argued nor is there an attempt to substantiate them. They are rather delivered in the tone of revealed or unfolded truth.

2. Surah 15:1. Also see Surah 47:2.
3. As an example, see Surah 4:166.
Although speaking with authority cannot in itself be proof of true prophethood since even dictators at times exhibit it, nevertheless that this was a sine qua non of Old and New Testament prophets cannot be denied. It was a most important factor in convincing their hearers, even as it must have played an important part in persuading the Apostle's contemporaries of the genuineness of his mission.

XII. THROUGH THE EXPLANATIONS OF UNBELIEF

Muhammad's authentications were not all of a defensive nature. Just as in the military field so much of his success came from quick operations, so in upholding his prophetic office and message, he was not slow to press the attack against his critics by explaining the causes or ulterior motives for their unbelief, by challenging them to produce signs and by picking the weak points in their arguments.

Pointing out the reasons for the unbelief of his opponents, he charged them with "pride and schism", with counting as false what they had not comprehended, and with being wrong-doers. Actually, the very fact that they did not accept his signs and Evidences was proof positive that the accusers themselves were evil, for "no one disbelieves in them but the reprobate."

2. Surah 38:1.
5. Surah 2:93.
Predestination was also presented as an explanation for unbelief:

"Say: 'Verily Allah sendeth astray whomsoever He willeth, and guideth to Himself whosoever turns devoutly (to Him)." 1

Another reason why the sceptics had not received the signs was because of judicial blindness. "It is not the eyes which are blind, but blind are the hearts that are in the breasts." Concerning such Muhammad is told that he will not be able to guide the blind out of their error, but that he will only get those who believe to hear. The same verdict is pronounced against the Jews, "Allah hath set a seal upon them for their unbelief, so they do not believe." 4

The Children of Israel are also accused of loving the gain of this world rather than the truth, and therefore of bartering God's signs for a small price. The argument is furthermore put forward that the People of the Book in reality know the genuineness of Muhammad's claims if they would only admit it:

"Those to whom We have given the Book recognise it as they recognise their own sons, but a party of them conceal the truth knowingly." 6

2. Surah 22:45.
This indictment of conscious deceit and suppression of the truth may have sprung from the difficulty Muhammad experienced in getting access to Biblical knowledge. Professor Bell suggests that the Jews may have even tried to make money out of his curiosity. In any case, the disparaging charge against them of a duplicity dictated perhaps by ulterior motives must have gone far to undermine their accusations and explain their unbelief. Such forgery against God is prescribed in the Qur'an as the greatest of all sins. "Who does greater wrong than he who invents falsehood against Allah or counts His signs false?" is a denunciation which is repeated in twelve different passages in order to accentuate the gravity of the crime.

Thus it is that the Prophet sought to explain and condemn the unbelief which he encountered, thereby indirectly strengthening his own position.

XIII. THROUGH THE CHALLENGING OF OPPONENTS

We have seen in section V. of this chapter that one method Muhammad employed in establishing the miracle of the Qur'an was that of daring his opponents to produce a Book or even a Surah like it. But his challenges covered different subjects as well. He called upon those who taught that there were other gods to authenticate their claims by evidence. "Is there a god along with Allah? Say:

2. Surah 7:35.
Produce your proof, if ye speak the truth." And then the conclusion is drawn that no authority has been sent down to justify their polytheistic tenets.

In accordance with the Prophet's argument that all of creation abounded with signs testifying to his God, he challenges the Mekkan idolaters to show him anything which those apart from God had created. Then follows the satirical comment that "those upon whom ye call apart from Allah will not create a fly."

After the Battle of Uhud with its cost in life to the Muslims, the Hypocrites ( Alif-lam-ims) at Madinah justified their former advice by asserting, "If they had obeyed us, they would not have been killed." In answering their taunt, Muhammad again employs the device of a challenge. He calls on them to ward off or repel death's ultimate imminence from themselves if they speak the truth.

By such means, the Prophet sought not only to vindicate his own cause, but also to discredit the alternate claims of his opponents; challenging then to produce the signs they had asked of him, to exhibit an object which their gods had created, and to contravene the set course of nature. Thus the principle of offence being the best

2. Surah 22:70.
5. Surah 3:162.
defence was used to good advantage. And yet since his opponents had made no prophetical claims, it is questionable how valid it was to place them under the obligation of manifesting evidential signs.

XIV. THROUGH THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATION

At Madīnah Muhammad met with the claim of the People of the Book that theirs was an exclusive faith and revelation. When Islam assumed a position independent from that of the former monotheists, the Prophet felt it necessary to contest their doctrine that they possessed the complete and only way of salvation. He sought to do this through the process of elimination, showing that the Jews and Christians could not be right, and from this drawing the assumption that Islam therefore was the true faith, and that his prophetic mission was justified.

The contention is advanced in the Qur'ān that it is unduly restricting God for the People of the Book to hold that their faith and revelation is exclusive. "He giveth to whomsoever he will; Allah is unrestricted." Here again as was seen in the last section, they are challenged to support their claim with evidence:

"They say: 'No one but those who are Jews and Christians will enter the Garden;' that is what they take on trust; say (thou): 'Produce your proof if ye speak the truth.'" 2

2. Surah 2:105.
Muhammad first of all seeks to eliminate the Jewish belief that they were the elect. He defies them to wish for death if they are so sure that they are the only ones who are going to heaven. But the very fact that they are the keenest of all people for life is cited as proof that their contention is mere pretence. They on the other hand have reason to dread the judgment to come because of their misdeeds. The question is also asked why, if they were true believers, did they in former times kill God's prophets.

Having dealt with the Jewish claim, an attempt is made to eliminate the grounds of the Christian position. It is most significant that in doing this Muhammad strikes at the heart of Christianity, God's desire to destroy the Divine Messiah, and holds this up as unbelievable and immoral. Elsewhere in the Qur'an allusions to the Cross and Christ's Atonement are made conspicuous by their absence. But from the above reasoning, the assertion is made, "Assuredly they have disbelieved who say that Allah is the Messiah." Another proof that the Jews and Christians are not the beloved of God is found in the divine punishment they have suffered for their sins.

The best example of Muhammad's authentication through

2. Surah 2:85.
the process of elimination appears in a nutshell in Surah 5:15-18. Firstly, it is pointed out that the Jews have broken God's covenant. They have therefore been cursed and their hearts have been hardened. Nor have they refrained from tampering with and forgetting part of their Scriptures. The majority of them also continue their treachery. Secondly, the Christians likewise received a covenant from God, but they too have forgotten part of their reminder, and thus God has stirred up enmity and hatred amongst them until the day of resurrection. Finally, Muhammad is presented as the messenger who has come to clarify what they have concealed of the Book; and the new revelation is described as guiding in the ways of peace and of bringing people out of darkness into the light.

The weakness of this argument is that it attacks a dogma, but then merely supplies a counter dogmatic assertion. The statement that God cannot be restricted is in itself an assumption. It does not allow for the possibility that God might have restricted Himself because of His nature or because of His choice.

XV. THROUGH THE PRESENCE AND EXAMPLE OF MUHAMMAD

Another argument for the acceptance of the authenticity of the Prophet's mission and message was the very presence of Muhammad in their midst, as well as the personal example of his own faith. The question is asked,
"How can ye disbelieve when...His messenger is amongst you?" He himself was a sign who could be seen. And the unusual strength of his personality could not but have enhanced this claim. The trust and loyalty of such men as Abu-Bakr and 'Umar as well as the success of Islam itself bears abundant testimony to the unique and forceful character of the founder of the new faith. In fact, it was this talented and magnetic quality of his person which alone can explain the effectiveness of the otherwise weak arguments for his authorization.

Muhammad also practiced the faith which he preached. In answer to God's warning that he should not be among those who counted the divine signs as false, and in answer to God's invitation that he should set his own trust upon Him, the Prophet confesses his personal faith and commitment as a Muslim. "I have been forbidden," he says, "to serve those whom ye call upon apart from Allah, when the Evidences came to me from my Lord, and I have been commanded to surrender myself to the Lord of the worlds (أَنْ أَسْلَمَ لِرَبِّي ۖ أَلْمَا كَلَّمَنِي)."

2. In elaboration of the prophetic evidence derived from Muhammad's person, tradition holds that a protuberance on his back about the size of a pigeon's egg was a divine seal marking him as the last of the prophets.
4. Surah 33:3.
5. Surah 40:68.
The point is also made that if Muhammad is wrong, he himself has everything to lose because of his total abandon to the cause. "If I go astray, it is to my own disadvantage," and, "If I invent it, ye have no power to help me against Allah." There is no doubt that a manifestation of personal conviction and belief had a great deal to do with the ability of convincing others. And yet here again the foundation of the authentication rests upon Muhammad himself, and if he is wrong or deluded or misguided, the whole proof collapses.

XVI. THROUGH THE SUCCESS OF ISLAM

The success of Islam from the Battle of Badr on, in spite of the reverse at Uhud, was hailed by the Prophet as evidence of Divine blessing, and hence as further authentication for the truth of his mission. God gave the victory of Badr "in order that He might verify the truth and falsify the false." Previously the Makkans had wanted an evidential sign. Now their desire had been fulfilled in this decisive defeat. It was the judgment of God upon them. And the only reason this punishment had not overtaken them earlier was that Muhammad was still in their midst as well as some others who were asking pardon. Later on, Badr was again referred to as an

1. Surah 34:49.
4. Surah 8:30-35.
authenticating miracle. "Ye have already had a sign in the two parties which met." One aspect of the miraculous intervention attributed to this occasion was that the Makkans saw twice as many Muslims as there really were.

Like divine help is ascribed to the lifting of the siege of Madīnah in the year V. Through the novel defence of a trench, the city held out against an estimated force of 10,000 led by Abu-Sufyān and composed of Curāysh and allied tribes who after a month finally retired in disgust. But Muhammad was not slow to attribute the withdrawal to a heaven sent "wind, and hosts which ye saw not." The Prophet was "skilful in turning every incident, whether favourable or not, into a proof of the divine interposition for the furtherance of Islam."

No sooner was the danger past after the Day of the Trench (Al-Khandaq), than Muhammad concentrated his efforts in an attack upon the Bānu-Curāysh, a Jewish tribe on the outskirts of Madinah, for their having sided with the enemy. All of their able-bodied men were slaughtered, their women and children were sold into slavery, and their lands were possessed by the Muslims. This, as well as the expulsion of the Bānū-al-Nādīr the year before, is

interpreted as God's doing:

"He brought down from their towers those of the People of the Book who backed them, and cast terror into their hearts; part ye killed and ye took prisoner part. And He caused you to inherit their land and their dwellings and their properties and land which ye had never trodden; Allah over everything had power." 1

The Battle of Hunayn in the year VIII is also portrayed in the light of supernatural intervention. God sent down invisible hosts and punished the unbelievers. But here again, Muhammad was the only authority for the angelic assistance, since they could be seen by no one else, and therefore this like so many of the other authentications depends upon the trustworthiness of the Prophet alone. The fact that defeats were not unknown to the Muslims discredits the objective evidential value of the victories. But this does not mean that military success was not a very effective weapon in proving Muhammad's divine authorization to his contemporaries. The increasing power of Islam made a decision on the matter essential, and even if there were doubts, the former treatment of unbelievers clearly revealed the cost of open opposition not to be inconsiderable.

The progress of Muhammad's influence is elsewhere appealed to as a sign of divine favour. In Surah 13:41 we read, "Have they not noticed that We come to the land diminishing it at its extremities? Allah gives decision." 2

1. Surah 33:26, 27.
3. Also cp. Surah 51:45b
Muir describes this type of the Prophet's authentication as follows: "Gradually his followers increased, and the faith of each (though only the reflection of his own convictions) was accepted by Muhammad as new and independent evidence of his mission, emanating from Him who alone can turn the heart of man." But besides the impressive expansion of Islam, its intrinsic power and value are also mentioned. It had welded former foes into a new bond of unity, and it had saved them from hell itself. This too was an evident token of God's working. Or as the Qur'ān expresses it:

"Remember the goodness of Allah to you when ye were enemies: He knit you together and by His goodness ye became brethren; ye were on the brink of a pit of the Fire and He rescued you from it. Thus doth Allah make His signs clear for you." 2

Thus it was that Islam's success in military operations, in growth of adherents, and in benefits to believers were all noted as additional proofs for the authenticity of Muhammad's mission and prophetic office.

In concluding this chapter, a few observations upon the implications of the foregoing means of authorization may be in order. The charge could be made that such a systematization is not in harmony with the Eastern mind, and it must be admitted that Muhammad most likely did not preconceive and plan out a blue print for all of these.

arguments. The indications of development and change are too marked for that. On the contrary, they probably were made to order as occasions demanded and as new thoughts suggested themselves to the Prophet. Also their bold, striking and poetic character was far more apt to capture the Arab imagination than was cold logic. But while recognising this, a systematic study of Muhammad's authentications is not without its value if only to clarify the subject from the nebulous arrangement of the Qur'ān. And there is no doubt that it does afford an opportunity better to understand and appraise the credentials of the Arab Apostle.

For example, all of these proofs hinge upon Muhammad himself. Firstly, the use of oaths, the description of personal experiences, the witness of God, Jinn, Angels and Apostles, and the note of authority depend upon the Prophet's testimony alone. Secondly, ingenious arguments are employed through conjecture, the explanations of unbelief, the verification at the Future Punishment, the challenging of opponents and the process of elimination. And yet, the ones dealing with conjecture or eschatology cannot be tested; and the rest, though they attack the position of Islam's critics, do not necessarily substantiate Islam's claims. Thirdly, the appeal to the ruins of past peoples, the wonders of creation, the miracle of the Qur'ān, the confirmation of former prophets, the presence
of Muhammad, and the success of Islam, although they are for the most part based upon objective facts, nevertheless they derive their evidential value solely from the Prophet's interpretation placed upon them. Thus it is that there is no direct or external evidence per se, such as that manifested by earlier prophets in foretelling and performing miracles - evidence in a form which could be checked and corroborated by others.

These authorizations reveal an amazing ability Muhammad possessed in bringing ultimate realities to bear upon pertinent situations. The claim of his being a Messenger sent from God is upheld consistently throughout the Qur'än, in spite of the development of his ideas and the use of different proofs for his authenticity. Yet, the fact that all of this testimony ultimately traces back to the evidence of one man, places a tremendous onus upon the trustworthiness of this one man, especially when the eternal destiny of countless human lives are at stake. There is always the dreadful possibility that one person may be deluded or may be a deceiver. With this danger in view, the Old Testament Scriptures rule out testimony which can only be substantiated by a single individual. "At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established." And for this same reason, even Christ said, "If I bear witness of

Myself, My witness is not true." Thus, even if Muhammad's integrity were unimpeachable, his authorizations cannot be held as valid since they depend exclusively upon his own testimony.

But in actual fact, instances such as his claiming direct revelation for materials obviously derived from sources or for utterances produced for special occasions make it difficult even to establish his trustworthiness. "Nor need we assume," says Professor Bell, "that he was quite incapable of a certain amount of mystification. In the later stages of his career, it is very difficult to acquit him altogether of that." Therefore since certain claims which can be subjected to testing have been weighed by Western scholarship and found wanting, it is impossible to clear from all suspicion authenticating assertions which cannot be verified. And the fact that all such evidence is locked within one human heart, rather than enhancing that person's special prophetic privilege and insight, only tends to cast further doubt upon it by encouraging the thought that there is something which cannot afford exposure.

The very quantity of the authentications seems to betray an inferiority complex in the mind of Muhammad, as if he too realized the weakness of his claim and the comparatively feeble quality of his arguments. This difficulty

seems to haunt him throughout the drive and drive him to produce ever new but never completely satisfactory credentials. A psychological reaction may also be indicated by the innumerable denials of imposture and delusion. "In the very strength of the asseveration that he was not deceived, and that his inspiration was not that of a 'rejected devil,' may we not trace symptoms of a lurking suspicion that after all something possibly was not right?"

CHAPTER VII

MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC PREDECESSORS
CHAPTER VII

MUHAMMAD'S PROPHETIC PREDECESSORS

In reading the Qur'an one cannot help but notice the great amount of attention and space which is given to the accounts of former prophets. Besides appearing to go on ad infinitum, the presentation of their vocations follows more or less a stereotyped outline. God sends to each people a messenger who is one of themselves. The prophet appeals to them to worship the one true God, and then when they refuse to listen to him, he announces the coming of divine punishment. They persist in their wicked way, and hence judgment finally falls, destroying the unbelievers. In the face of the vast treatment of these stories, the question at once arises as to what their significance and purpose really is.

One reason for their inclusion in the Qur'an is fairly obvious. Hurgronje expresses it thus: "The object behind the Qur'anic accounts concerning the prophets is

---


simply the expression, under other names, of the acts and experiences of Muhammad at Makkah. He often would put things he wished to say into the mouths of his predecessors, thus receiving substantiation for his own position.

However, there is another significant aspect to these stories. They reveal Muhammad's view of the prophetic office as he increasingly came to know it. And we see how he earnestly sought to fashion himself in its likeness, as the means of accomplishing the much-needed religious reform. "He reads himself and the Makkans into them," says Professor Bell of these accounts, "but he was at the same time reading these messengers and prophets into himself...Thus his conception of his position as Messenger of Allah, in other words, his prophetic consciousness was growing as he measured himself alongside the great prophets."

Let us therefore first consider the way these stories reveal the Apostle's prophetic concept which was the model or pattern of his mission. And secondly, let us examine the way in which they also serve as mirrors for the Prophet's contemporary scene.


THE PROPHET JONAH AND THE WHALE

Another illustration from Rashid al-Din's "Jami' al-Tawarikh", A.D. 1306, courtesy of the Edinburgh University Library.
I. THE MODELS FOR MUHAMMAD'S OFFICE

There are instances in the accounts of the former Qur'anic messengers which indicate that Muhammad's mission was almost certainly modelled after his conception of their office, inspiration, message and authentication. For example, God's commissioning of Moses in the holy vale of Tuwā which is mentioned in Surah 79:16f, and then again later and in fuller detail in Surah 20:8f, shows that the Apostle was not unaware that past prophets had received divine calls. Hirschfeld goes so far as to conclude that Muhammad's initial visions recorded in Surah 53:1-18 are merely more elaborate reproductions of the above incident as he already knew it.

The Qur'ān also portrays the earlier messengers as fallible men who needed to be forgiven. Noah sinned in pleading for his son, and Moses committed murder; but both were pardoned of God. In like manner (as has already been noted in Chapter II) the Prophet is also presented as one who was prone to sin. Thus Sweetman rightly says, "The impeccability of the prophets cannot be said to have much support from the Qur'ān, but in the early exposition of the doctrine in Islam, this particular tenet is set in the

2. Surah 3:141.
Also Muhammad's repeated insistence that he was no more than a human being may have been inspired by his knowledge of God's former heralds who likewise were not to be taken as Lords (لِلِّجِّیْل). There are cases where these prophets performed what might be termed a priestly function, namely that of intercession. Noah prays: "O, my Lord, pardon me and my parents, and whoever enters my house believing," and Abraham intercedes with God for his father. That the Apostle on occasions did the same may be another indication of the effect exerted upon him by his predecessors. Muhammad's practice in war, of showing severity toward his enemies but leniency toward those who submitted, may also have been derived from his view of Alexander the Great's policy, which is described as follows:

"He (Alexander) said: "As for him who does wrong, we shall punish him, then he will be taken back to his Lord, and He will punish him with punishment unheard of. But for him who has believed and acted uprightly, there is the reward of the better (world), and we shall speak to him of our affair something easy." 7

2. Surah 41:5; 17:95; 18:110.
3. Surah 3:74. This of course cannot be the case in the reference to Jesus in Surah 5:116 where He is quoted as denying His Deity, which is obviously a projection of Muhammad's prophetic idea upon Christ rather than being influenced himself by it.
The expressed purpose for the missions of the former prophets again was not dissimilar to the Apostle's. They were to bring good tidings and warnings, so that the people should have no argument against God.

As regards the Prophet's inspiration, the knowledge that Moses had been given a Book presumably may have prompted him to produce one as well. In fact a revelation in such form seems to have been so closely linked with the prophetic office that there are even references to the assumed "pages of Abraham." It is also interesting to note that in the Makkan passage describing Moses' call, God tells him to go to Pharaoh and "say" (ذکر). Although it certainly is not possible to dogmatize the basis of so little evidence, nevertheless this may be a hint at the Qur'anic usage of the term which was to become so prevalent a caption for Muhammad's utterances.

After a consideration of the messages ascribed to the prophets, Professor Bell concludes, "The fact that they are so consistently presented in the Qur'an as advocates of One God appears to me to be a weighty argument that Muhammad's activity began in the same way." This further may imply

2. Surah 28:43 and 2:50 (where the Furqān is also mentioned).
3. Surah 87:19; 53:38. According to tradition, the number of sacred books delivered to mankind has been 104. Of these, 10 were given to Adam, 50 to Seth (a name not mentioned in the Qur'an), 30 to Enoch, 10 to Abraham, one to Moses, one to David, the Injiyl to Jesus, and the Qur'an to Muhammad. Hughes, op. cit. p.475.
that the Apostle through Jewish sources had come to believe
that the core of the prophets' preaching was monotheism,
and as this faith was the great need of the idolatrous
Makkans, he too took up the same cause. The idea of
judicial blindness in respect to the reception of Muhammad's
message may be another indication of Hebrew-Christian
prophetic influence. In fact this doctrine is cited in
the Qur'ān in connection with the people of Noah and the
Jews.

Finally, as was seen in the last Chapter, the matter
of prophetic authentication seemed to plague Muhammad un-
mercifully. In his stories of previous messengers there
are instances of prophesying future events in their own
life times and of performing evidential miracles. He
therefore was aware of this. For example, there is mention
of Joseph's foretelling the lot of his fellow-prisoners;
namely, that one of them would pour out wine for his lord,
and that the other would be crucified. A miracle is also
performed with Joseph's shirt in restoring Jacob's sight.
Furthermore, Moses was given nine signs as Evidences, his
staff was changed into a serpent, his hand was made white
without any harm, and the sea clave asunder when it was

1. Cp. Isaiah 6:9,10; Matthew 13:14,15; John 12:40 etc.
2. Surah 11:30; 10:75; 57:15; 5:75.
5. Surah 17:103; 27:12.
struck with his staff. Also during his ministry in the desert a thunderbolt came as the result of the Jewish request to see God openly, and a mountain was raised over them.

In the previous two Chapters we have observed how Muhammad being unable to authorize his office by foretelling or miracle resorted to numerous other devices. The very fact that he took the matter of authentication so seriously reveals the great influence the previous prophetic tradition played in casting his role.

II. THE MIRRORS OF MUHAMMAD'S OFFICE

When Jonathan Swift wished to criticise his contemporary scene, he did so through Gulliver's travels among such people as the Lilliputians and the Brobdingnagians. Muhammad also used the same device. But instead of picturing fictitious geographical travels, he employed the medium of the "histories" of former prophets and peoples, drawing ill-concealed analogies between them and his own situation with the Quraysh at Makkah. As one illustration from among many that could be taken, let us examine a passage describing the activities of the prophet Hūd among the Thādites.

7:63 And to Thād (We sent) their brother Hūd. He said: "O my people, serve Allah, there is no god for you other than He; will ye not then show piety?"
7:64 Said the nobility who disbelieved of his people: "We think thou art in stupidity, and we think thee one of the false."

2. Surah 4:152.
3. Surah 7:63-70. This section dates probably from the late Makkan period (Bell, The Qur'ān, p.144).
THE STORY OF THE PROPHET HÜD (SURAH 7:63-70)

Taken from a MS. of the Qur'an in the Edinburgh University Library.
7:65 Said he: "O my people, there is no stupidity in me, but I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds.  
7:66 I deliver to you the messages of my Lord, and I am to you a sincere adviser and faithful.  
7:67 Does it astonish you that a reminder from your Lord should come to you upon a man from amongst yourselves, in order that he may warn you? Remember, when He made you successors after the people of Noah and increased you amply in size; and remember the gifts of Allah, maybe ye will prosper."  
7:68 Said they: "Hast thou come to us that we should serve Allah alone, and forsake what our fathers used to serve? Then bring us what thou promisest us, if thou art one of those who speak the truth."  
7:69 Said he: "There hath fallen upon you wrath and anger from your Lord; will ye dispute with me about names which you and your fathers have named, for which Allah has sent down no authority? Wait then! I too with you will be of those who wait."  
7:70 So We rescued him and those with him by a mercy from Us, and utterly cut off those who counted Our signs false, and were not believers.

In these verses we see reflections of Muhammad's office, inspiration, message and authorization, as well as the opposition he encountered.

First of all, the scope of Hud's office was to his people IÄd, just as the Apostle's mission at this time presumably extended to the Makkans. Within the comparatively short compass of this portion, there are five allusions to the fact that the messenger had come from amongst his own people. Elsewhere in the Qurʾān, we see that one objection brought against Muhammad's being a true prophet was that he was merely one of themselves, and hence we have this reiterated emphasis in regard to the

1. Surah 6:63 "their brother" and "O my people"; 7:64 "his people"; 7:65 "O my people"; 7:67 "a man from amongst yourselves".
2. Cp. Surah 38:3 etc.
Furthermore, Ḥud's claim that he was (رسول بن ربيّ آل آدم) "a messenger from the Lord of the worlds" (7:65) is simply an echo of the Apostle's words; as is also the expression of the purpose of the mission, namely that of warning (7:67). Both likewise suffered persecution from "the nobility who disbelieved" of their people, and were accused of stupidity and falsehood (7:64). And the fact that God is spoken of as (ربيّ) "my Lord" (7:66) would moreover insinuate an analogous personal commitment on the part of the older prophet to the message he preached. Nor is the claim of being a sincere and faithful adviser (7:66) dissimilar to Muhammad's testimonies about himself.

As to the matter of inspiration, Ḥud also assumes a divine origin for his messages which are those of his Lord (7:66), or a reminder from God which had come upon him (7:67). In addition, the content of the message is identical with the Prophet's appeals. There is but one God who is to be served (7:63) and whose gifts are to be remembered (7:67). The people of Ḥad, according to the Makkan pattern, then reject the admonition and uphold the polytheism of their fathers, challenging their messenger to bring upon them the destruction he had promised as authorization if he be a man of truth (7:68). But Ḥud, like Muhammad, attacks his opponents' position by pointing out that no authority has been sent down for their false gods (7:69). He then foretells (a thing which we have seen the Apostle was unable to do in spite of certain apparent attempts) in the "prophetic
perfect" that God's wrath and anger have fallen upon them, and they only need to wait to see (7:69). Destruction finally is meted out, and the unbelievers are utterly cut off for having counted God's (الغيب) "signs" as false. But the prophet with his entourage of believers is rescued by his Lord's mercy (7:70). The latter is the same interpretation that Muhammad places upon the Battle of Badr. It was there that God had fulfilled the Makkans' desire for a sign, and the only reason the punishment had been delayed was to allow the Prophet with his believers an opportunity to escape. But there was still one decided difference between the two judgments. That of the earlier prophet's was a case of direct Divine intervention, whereas at Badr the Apostle himself assumed the responsibility of effecting the punishment for God.

Lastly in considering this passage, it is interesting to note that Hud in his message alludes to Noah in the same way that Muhammad refers to Hud (7:67). The ġadites are warned to remember that they were successors of the people of Noah, whose destruction significantly enough has just been recounted in the Qur'anic portion immediately preceding. In other words, these accounts mirror the mission of the great Arabian so exactly that even the story of a former prophet contains the story of a former prophet. Such dramatization was without doubt done on purpose. And

besides revealing the ingenuity of Muhammad's mind, it cannot be denied that this device must have impressed his hearers.

The Prophet in fact is so faithfully represented in some of these sketches that it is possible to deduce certain observations concerning his mission which otherwise could not be known. Such an instance may occur in the passage about Noah in Surah 71, where it asserts:

"O my Lord, I have called my people night and day, But my calling has only increased them in flight... Then, lo, I called them publicly; Then I made public proclamation to them, and spoke to them secretly." 1

Concerning these verses, Professor Bell says, "The central portion of the Surah has so little basis in the actual story of Noah, that we may take it as the reflex of the story of the Messenger of Allah at Makkah... If we follow the indications of this passage, Muhammad began by advocating the claims of Allah in private, before beginning his public recitations, and afterwards for a time combined the two methods." 2

By the same means, light is thrown upon the development of the Apostle's office. The references to Abraham are the best example of this. Or as Sweetman remarks, "Abraham appears in the Makkah Surahs of the Qur'an in quite a different way from that in the Medinan Surahs. In

1. Surah 71:5,7,8.

the former he seems a genuine Old Testament figure and in
the latter he becomes the founder of the Ka'bah and so
apparently a prophet to the Arabs before Muhammad." We
have already seen the reason for this was the break with
the People of the Book at Madīnah with the Prophet's
subsequent reorientation of Islam toward a purified form
of the Arab religion, and hence the apt formulation of the
"religion of Abraham" the Ḥanīf. Even though this obvi-
ously is a clever adaptation on Muhammad's part, it
nevertheless is significant to notice how anxious he was to
have prophetic precedence for his actions. Another
possible indication of this transition occurs in Surah
57:27 where Noah and Abraham are mentioned, but not Moses.
Or again in Surah 4:57 Abraham alone is named. Since these
are both Madīnah verses, the unusual omitting of Moses may
imply that the break with the Jews was by this time complete.
Thus it is that the development in these prophetic stories
is more one of their application rather than of a variation in
their actual facts.

But not only do we see the Prophet's mission and
development reflected in these accounts of former messengers,
but they also serve propaganda purposes. In previous

vol. II, p.123.


4. Bell, "The Development of Muhammad's Prophetic Con-
Chapters we have already noted how these "histories" are presented as having been received by direct revelation, thus acting as evidence for the Apostle's inspiration; or are cited as warnings of the doom which likewise would overtake the Arabs if they did not believe; or are used as authentications for Muhammad's mission through the prayer for and the prophecy of his coming which are put into the mouths of Abraham, Ishmael and Jesus. But there are also elements from the Prophet's contemporary situation which are introduced into these narratives without any historical foundation and yet with a definitely didactic purpose. For example, Pharaoh is quoted as saying, "Let me kill Moses... I am afraid lest he change your religion." As far as we know, there is no indication that the Egyptian Ruler was ever concerned about a possible religious reform. But there is much to confirm the fact that this was the fear of the Makkans since such a religious reform most probably was Muhammad's main aim. Another instance of fashioning a former historical personage to fit a convenient mould occurs in Surah 2:247. Here Samuel (although his name is not mentioned) is made to set the example of prescribing warfare for God, and even though his people before the

2. Surah 2:123.
order came seemed enthusiastic to fight because they had been expelled from their dwellings, yet when the command was given, they turned away. Again the foundation upon real facts is meagre as far as Jewish history is concerned, but the whole incident fits the Madīnan scene perfectly, and served as an effective screen for Muhammad's order to fight in the way of Islam.

There is another purpose for these short biographies of previous prophets which is expressed in the Qur'ān. They are included as an encouragement and consolation to Muhammad himself. "All We recount to thee of the stories of the messengers is that whereby We establish thy heart."

In summing up this study of the former Qur'ānic prophets, it is certain, as Nöldeke says, that Jewish and Christian writings in an original form were not accessible to the Apostle, and therefore his knowledge of the Biblical figures was limited and coloured by tradition. Muhammad twice confesses that only some of the stories of these messengers have been recounted to him by God, while there are others which had not been told to him. Also in the narratives, which he does relate, he generally avoids mentioning numbers, time and places. When the various

prophets are listed, they are usually kept in fairly good chronological order, and yet there are definite exceptions which cannot all be accounted for even when an allowance is made for possible re-editing and later re-arrangement. But on the other hand, this limitation of knowledge permitted the Apostle a greater freedom in adapting the stories of the former prophets to his needs and of reading his own message into their mouths. Nevertheless, he did come to know enough about them to fashion his mission, as much as circumstances allowed, according to his view of past prophetic tradition.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Human affairs, said Spinoza, are neither to be wept over nor yet derided, but to be understood. Thus in this thesis we have considered Muhammad's prophetic office as it is portrayed in the Qur'ān with a view to determining the original idea as it was conceived in the mind of the author. We shall now finish by summing up the various observations and conclusions reached.

It has been seen that the Prophet at the inception of his mission probably had a call in the form of a supernatural vision. Nevertheless his heart had probably been prepared for this, mainly through a religious impulse which may have been brought to a head by the materialistic attitude of the "hard bitten" Makkans. To begin with, his ministry was to his own relatives, and then to the people of his home town. But with the Hijrah, his mission at Madīnah not only extended to the Jews, Christians and Arabs, but it also took on a definitely political character. The People of the Book however did not respond to his overtures. Therefore he severed his spiritual bonds with them, and after deep meditation turned to create a super-tribe or ummah. This involved complex political activity, but the principal aim was still religious, for the new economy was built around a purified form of the old Arab faith with the Ka'bah as its centre, and the Ḥanīf
Abraham as its model prophet. Nor did this change in policy mean that the scope of his message was thereby limited. On the contrary, even though during his life its practical application was necessarily confined to Arabia, this did not preclude the Qur'anic implication that the message was universal in character.

Along with the progressively expanding scope of Muhammad's ministry, there was a marked development in his position from the slighted prophet of Makkah to the honoured prince and judicial head of the newly struck politico-religious system at Madīnah. But his later life witnessed at the same time a decline in his morality. He however kept his original purpose to the end; namely that of effecting a religious reform through the office of a prophet, and in spite of changing circumstances and added incites, he attained his goal with remarkable success.

In the chapter on Muhammad's prophetic inspiration, the paradox between the Qur'ān's supernatural claims on the one hand and its human elements on the other was presented. The development of his ideas such as that of the "Book", or again the alterations, the sources and the revelations for special occasions indicated these enigmas in his inspiration. The problem was further complicated by the fact that the Prophet gave evidence of being sincere in his personal belief in the heavenly origin of his utterances. A possible solution to this dilemma was suggested. Having once committed himself to the prophetic
office as he knew it, necessity was laid upon him to speak with an authority that was more than merely human. He therefore cultivated guidance by meditation and even convinced himself that the suggestions he received had emanated from the great Revealer of secrets Himself. In fact to begin with, the incites he preached were to the best of his knowledge identical with the fundamentals of monotheism as they had been formerly revealed. He therefore dared to stamp the seal of the Almighty upon his messages. Then as more information was collected and as new circumstances required, it was necessary to bring on and develop these revelations; and yet, this rendered his heart dangerously susceptible to suggestions even of an unholy nature and source.

But once he had nailed his colours to the mast, he was not the type to give in or retract. Thus it was that in the Qur’ān we saw a bold veneer of endless claims as to its divine origin, but beneath the surface there were traces of a human element and a lurking suspicion in Muhammad’s mind that he may have been guilty of the awful sin of forgery against God; or as he said, "Who then does greater wrong than he who invents falsehood about Allah, or says: 'A (divine) suggestion has been made to me,' when no suggestion has been made to him at all."

The Prophet’s message was consistently God centred. He first of all called upon men gratefully to worship God

for all of His benefits and condemned the attitude of niggardliness and presumption. Fairly early he also began to warn of a punishment in this world and the next as a necessary corrective for the evils of Makkah's individualistic materialism. He furthermore came to stress the oneness of God as against the current polytheistic idolatry. With the removal to Madīnah, his increased role brought an expansion of his message in the matters of legislation and belief. While doing this however, he still held to the elements of the prophetic message and preaching which he had learned from former messengers.

In the matter of authentication, we saw how the prophets of the Old and New Testament predicted events which when fulfilled served as objective witnesses to the truth of their Divine mission. Some of them also exhibited evidential miracles as well. But as was noted in Muhammad's case, the Qur'ān gives no conclusive evidence of his ever having foretold any historical happening or of his ever having performed a miracle, in spite of the claims of Muslim tradition. On the contrary, he expressly denied the ability to predict and the power to satisfy his contemporaries' expectation of supernatural wonders in spite of certain indications that he coveted the capacity to do so.

Nevertheless, numerous other authentications for his office were presented. As we have observed, there are very few pages of the Qur'ān which do not at least touch
upon this subject. The different proofs mount up into scores. But all of these authorizations hinge exclusively upon Muhammad himself, with no credentials of a direct and independent nature. Without exception they depend upon his own testimony, his arguments or his interpretations. This very fact as was seen places a tremendous onus upon the trustworthiness of one man, especially when the eternal destiny of countless human lives are at stake. Furthermore the dreadful possibility always exists that one person may be deluded or may be a deceiver. Also since there are claims made by the Apostle which have been tested and found wanting, such as his representing materials from sources as direct revelations from God, it is impossible to clear from all suspicion authenticating assertions which cannot be verified. As was mentioned, the very fact that all such evidence is locked within one human heart, rather than enhancing that person's special prophetic privilege and insight, only tends to cast further doubt upon it by encouraging the thought that there was something which could not afford exposure. Psychologically this would appear to be not improbable. The very quantity of the authentications along with the numerous denials of imposture and delusion would further seem to betray a complex of inferiority and guilt.

Finally, we say how the Qur'anic stories of former messengers reveal the model of the prophetic office which was in Muhammad's mind, and which he sought to reproduce
in his own ministry. It was in this capacity that he sought to bring a religious reform among his people even as his predecessors had done among theirs. But we also noticed how these "histories" were mirrors of his office. He read himself and his contemporary situation into these accounts, thus employing them as an effective didactic device. Hence we noted the clear reflection of the Apostle's office, inspiration, message and authentication as they are portrayed in the oft repeated allusions to his predecessors.

After studying his prophetic office as it is portrayed in the Qur'ān, the present writer has been greatly struck by Muhammad's intense conviction as a preacher, by his tremendous success as a religious reformer, by his remarkable ability as a military genius, and by his amazing gift as a leader of men. One is forced to recognize him as one of the greatest men that ever lived. And yet, even though he was an effective "forthteller", he was not a prophet in the sense of being a "foreteller".

Thus it is that the portrait of Muhammad in the Qur'ān is that of a prophet in the sense of a preacher of monotheism, a priest in the limited sense of an intercessor in prayer and a leader of worship, and a king in the sense of a ruler of the Muslim super-tribe. But in spite of his claim to supersede Jesus Christ, there is no comparison between this picture of the Arab Apostle and that of the Prophet who spoke as God, the Great High Priest who takes away the sin of the world, and the King of Kings who will rule for eternity.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albright, William Foxwell, From the Stone Age to Christianity, (Baltimore, 1940.)

Andree, Tor, Mohammed, The Man and His Faith, (Translated by Theophil Menzel, London, 1936.)

Arabic Text of the Qur'án.

Arnold, T.W., The Preaching of Islam, (London, 1913.)

Bell, Richard, "Chronological Arrangement of the Qur'án," (Article in MS form.)

" " "The Development of Muhammad's Teaching and Prophetic Consciousness," The MOS Bulletin, (School of Oriental Studies of the American University at Cairo, 16th November, 1934.)


" " "The Qur'án, (Translated with a critical rearrangement of the Surahs, Edinburgh, 1937,) vols. I and II.

" " "The Style of the Qur'án," (Lecture delivered at the Glasgow Oriental Society, 30th September, 1942.)

" " "Who Were the Hanifs?," The Moslem World, (April, 1930), vol. xx, pp.120-124.

Davidson, A.B., Old Testament Prophecy, (Edinburgh, 1904.)

Dawson, Christopher, Religion and Culture, (Gifford Lectures delivered in the University of Edinburgh, 1947; published in London, 1948.)
Flugel, Gustavus, *Concordantiae Corani Arabice*, (Lipsiae, 1842.)


Goldziher, I., *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, (Heidelberg, 1910.)

Grimme, H. *Mohammed*, (Munster, 1922.)


Heldar, Alfred, *Associations of Cult Prophets Among the Ancient Semites*, (Uppsala, 1945.)

Hirschfeld, Hartwig, *New Researches into the Composition and Exegesis of the Koran*, (London, 1902.)

Hitti, Philip K. *History of the Arabs*, (London, 1937)


Hurgronje, C. Snouck, *Mohammedanism*, (Lectures on its origin, its religious and political growth, and its present state, New York, 1916.)


" *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, (Ph.D thesis at the University of Edinburgh, 1929.)

MacDonald, *Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory*, (New York, 1926.)

Muir, William, *The Life of Mahomet from Original Sources*, (London, 1877.)

Müller, Theodor, *Geschichte des Corān*, (Leipzig, 1909.)


Sale, George, *The Koran*, (London, 1734.)
Stanton, *The Teaching of the Qur'ān.*


Tisdall, W. St. Clair, *The Original Sources of the Qur'ān,* (London, 1905.)

Welch, Adam C., *Prophet and Priest in Old Israel,* (London, 1936.)


" *The Muslim Creed, Its Genesis and Historical Development,* (Cambridge, 1932.)

" *Verspreide Geschriften van C. Snouck Huyghenius,* (Bonn und Leipzig, 1972.)

Wherry, A *Comprehensive Commentary on the Qur'ān,* (Comprising Sale's translation and preliminary discourse, with additional notes and emendations, London, 1896, 4 vols.)

Zwemer, S.M. *A Factual Survey of the Moslem World,* (New York, 1946.)

" *Mohammed or Christ,* (London, 1915.)

" *Studies in Popular Islam,* (London, 1939.)