

## Criticism of Montgomery Watt, Dermenghem, and Sūrūsh's Opinions About the Introversive Revelation of the Prophet of Islam (s)

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### Abstract

Revelation, “the divine message to the prophets in order to guide people,” is the base and pillar of divine religions and the most precious, heavenly gem in the lap of earth residents, and it has an unbreakable connection with the nature and destiny of humans. Through the expansion of research studying Islam in the West in recent centuries, the hypothesis wherein adoption of some Qur'ānic contents from earlier religious and literary texts was an arena for the studies of Orientalists. William Montgomery Watt and Dermenghem can be deemed as those Orientalists who have connected the common phenomenological view of the West about revelation to the theological view mostly originating from Christian theology. Elucidation of this issue is necessary so that the legitimacy of Islam and Qur'ānic revelation and its superiority over all divine religions could be proved. The article at hand is organized with using the descriptive-analytical method and a criticizing approach along with gathering and analyzing data. The findings of this study show that the Western researchers and Orientalists such as William Montgomery and Emile Dermenghem have put forward their opinions based on some principles including the impact of the character of the Prophet (s) on the form of revelation, fallibility of revelation and the Prophet (s), the presence of the element of human in Qur'ān, and so on; none of these is accepted by Shī'a thinkers, and they are in contrast to the religious thoughts of Islam. Each of these principles is faced with serious criticisms including the infallibility of Qur'ān; the harmony of religion with science in Islam; the perfect character of the Prophet (s) in receiving the revelation which matters, not his being a medium; lack of ambiguity and contradiction in Qur'ānic revelation; and so on.

**Keywords:** Criticism of Orientalists' opinions, The introversive revelation of the Prophet (s), Origins of Qur'ānic revelations, William Montgomery Watt, Emile Dermenghem, Sūrūsh

### 1. Introduction

The falsity of the revelation's being introversive is of the falsities propounded by some of the Orientalists in the past three centuries in contrast to Noble Qur'ān's being revealed. In addition, this falsity has been recently fomented by some Muslim intellectuals and has been endorsed by them in their written works and speeches.

Accusing the verses of Qur'ān to be not from a divine source has a record which is as old as the life of Qur'ān itself. Probing the verses of noble Qur'ān and the biography of the Prophet (s) after the Mission shows this fact clearly that the pagans and the opponents of

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Qur'ān, at the very first years of the Mission of the revered Prophet of Islam (s), accused Qur'ān of being flagrant sorcery, calumnious slander, and ancient fables, accused the Prophet (s) of being a sorcerer, a poet, and an insane person (Qur'ān 17:47 & 51:52), and denied the revelation to be divine speech. Although they were challenged by Qur'ān in some verses to bring some chapters and even one chapter as the same as itself and were said that they were not able to do so, their rebellious and rancorous spirit or their ignorance impeded them to submit fully to the speech of God. This was as sometimes they confessed cursorily that Qur'ān could be a miracle.

In the thought of some Orientalists who study Qur'ān (Montgomery Watt, 1994: 191; Noldeke, 2004; 5-7), revelation originated from the inside of the Prophet (s), and not from his outside; the belief of the Prophet (s) in God and His worship and the abandonment of idolatry and the imitation of the past had positive impacts on him and as a result, some particular states like seeing angels were created within him. Namely, as a result of appropriate thoughts, belief in God, and self-purity, the Prophet (s) reached a rank wherein he could embody a person in front of himself, and considered that person an angle sending him messages from the supernatural world.

In this regard, Watt says that he [the Prophet] had a pure spirit and high magnanimity, and was living in a troubled environment wherein nothing ruled except oppression, rant, and anarchy and nothing was there except selfishness, theft, loot, and savagery; he always suffered observing this condition. Sometimes he secluded himself from people when he was fed up, and sought solitude for some days in a cave which was located in the middle of Tahāma mounts; he looked at the sky and gazed upon the glittering stars, earth, mountain, sea, and so on, and felt pity on account of this much ignorance and inanity with which humans were entangled. The honorable Prophet (s) supposed his pure thoughts the speech of God and divine revelation and that sublime God talked to him through his pure soul. He called his pure and benevolent soul the True Spirit, Gabriel, and the angle of revelation through which these thoughts were released and set in his tranquil heart. Generally, he called all forces in the natural world inviting to goodness and blessedness as angels and those forces inviting to evil and wretchedness as devils and jinn, and he called his duty prophethood and Mission that, due to the voice of conscience, made him responsible for uprising and invitation (Montgomery Watt, 1965).

The most important factors laying the groundwork for such falsities in the field of revelation epistemology, which has been an intellectual arena for Orientalists and Muslim thinkers in the last three centuries, are: humanism, pure experiential approach facing religious propositions, contradiction of extant propositions in holy books with the findings of new sciences, criticism of holy books, and romanticism school of thought.

This falsity was put forward in Egypt and some Islamic countries for the first time; scholars such as Rashīd Riḍā have probed and criticized it, and later many articles have been written to reject it by the researchers of Qur'ān and scholars of Shī'a. One of the key questions in the field of religion research and Qur'ānic knowledge is the question of "the quiddity of revelation," a question that has obsessed many scholars and researchers and has made them criticize and probe the propounded opinions.

## **2. Opinion of "William Montgomery Watt"**

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, some of the Orientalists including "William Montgomery Watt" probed the life of the honorable Prophet (s). Under the influences of positivistic thoughts, they deemed revelation as something caused by the conscience and the inside of the Prophet (s), and not his relationship with the supernatural world and the reception of

revelation from God; to these Orientalists, revelation is originated from the inside of the Prophet (s), and not from his outside.

In other words, on account of appropriate thoughts, belief in God, and self-purity, the Prophet (s) reached a rank wherein he embodied a person in front of him, and considered that as an angel sending him some messages from the supernatural world. To analyze the life of the Prophet of Islam (s), Watt says:

There is found, at least in some men, what may be called 'creative imagination' (Von Hugel, 1926: 253)... All these put into sensuous form what many are feeling but are unable to express fully. Prophets and prophetic religious leaders, I should maintain, share in this creative imagination. (Montgomery Watt, 1965: 238)

From here, Watt considers Qur'ān an outpouring of creative imagination made by the Prophet (s) himself who is not infallible entirely (Montgomery Watt, 1961). He says:

In Muhammad, I should hold, there was a welling up of the creative imagination, and the ideas thus produced are to a great extent true and sound. It does not follow, however, that all the Qur'anic ideas are true and sound... Here are several verses in the Qur'an (Qur'ān 51: 3:39; 12:103) to the effect that 'this is one of the reports of the unseen which We reveal to thee thou didst not know it, thou nor thy people, before this.' One could admit a claim that the creative imagination was able to give a new and truer interpretation of a historical event, but to make it a source of bare fact is an exaggeration and false. (ibid: 239-240)

### 3. Foundations of Watt's view about introversive revelation

Here, it is necessary to unveil the foundations and presuppositions of Montgomery Watt so that the background for the given definitions by him for Qur'ānic revelation could be clearer. This is also to elucidate from which thinking atmosphere these definitions come, and which foundations and presuppositions have led him to offer such interpretations for Qur'ānic revelation.

#### 3.1. *The doubt of the Prophet of Islam (s) in receiving revelation*

Watt says:

The Qur'an, as we now have it in our hands, either in the original Arabic or in an English translation, is thus the body of the revelations received by Muhammad. In form God is the speaker, addressing Muhammad or the Muslims or people in general... For Muslim tradition, the Qur'an is thus the Word or Speech of God, and Muhammad himself must also have regarded it in this way. Moreover, he must have been perfectly sincere in this belief. He must have been convinced that he was able to distinguish between his own thoughts and the messages that came to him from 'outside himself.'.. Had he known that these revelations were his own ideas, the whole basis would have been cut away from his religious movement. (ibid: 16-17)

Then he continues:

To say that Muhammad was sincere does not imply that he was correct in his beliefs. A man may be sincere but mistaken. The modern Westerner has no difficulty in showing how Muhammad may have been mistaken. What seems to a man to come from 'outside himself' may actually come from his unconscious. This, of course, is not a final solution of the problem. It explains the form of Muhammad's experiences, as it does that of the experiences of the Old Testament prophets who proclaimed, 'Thus saith the Lord, ...' ; but it does not explain the content of these experiences... Without settling it, however it is possible to take the Qur'an as a body of ideas and to study the significance of these ideas in their social and historical context. (ibid: 17)

Later he goes on, "[The Prophet (s) at first believed in his mission but he] is reported to

have been assailed by fears and doubts [which, of course, never stopped his mission of prophethood]” (ibid: 21).

### *3.2. The impact of the character of the Prophet of Islam (s) on revelation and its fallibility*

To Watt, to deserve the reception of revelation, a prophet should have a particular character, and that this character may affect the “imaginary body of revelation.” Besides, happenings may occur in the life of the prophet (s) that they in turn somehow can affect the process of revelation. This is as the Prophet Muḥammad (s) is assured through God reminding him of the good things He had done for him: “Did He not find thee an orphan and give thee shelter (and care)?\* And He found thee wandering, and He gave thee guidance.\* And He found thee in need, and made thee independent” (Qur’ān 93:6-8; Montgomery Watt, 1965). To Watt, prophets were fallible and, therefore, those chosen by God for His aims were not always and in all aspects perfect; they were allowed to make mistakes as to derivatives. Recognition of this point makes us easily deem the messages of prophets in the principals of morality and worship from God. Wherever prophets made mistakes, it was in derivatives with little importance (Montgomery Watt, 2000).

### *3.3. Revelation and God’s interference in history*

Watt holds that in natural events and “the call of people to take over responsibility for these events” God’s control and the impact of His volition have an essential and determining role. With calling persons (prophets), God reinforced and supported them in advancing the events and making the destiny of those events. He says that two points can be mentioned about these internal motives. First, these should be deemed out of God’s act in humans that feasibly are done by the intercession of angels. Second, these motives are not formed “suddenly,” but they are appropriate answers pertinent to the conditions in which humans find themselves. In the history of the prophetic Mission of Muḥammad (s), some worldly factors can be seen, particularly the social and intellectual disorder in Mecca attributable to the sudden transformation from nomadism to welfare – which was out of business.

In short, the divine origin of these motives is a part of the revelation to the Prophet (s) and as a result, is a part of what he states in a worshipping way. Recognizing the divine origin of these affairs can be attained neither from observing events on the outside nor from contemplation. Since prophets had already believed in God, they considered these motives from God and therefore, accepted them (Montgomery Watt, 1994).

### *3.4. The human element in revelation*

Since every prophet should be sent on his Mission using the language of his tribe, therefore language is a human-related structure and, at the same time, it can be said that language is the creation of God. Not only do revealed texts have a human element due to using human language, but also they have another element which is the result of the way a religious society takes towards accepting religious texts and considering them as part of its life; although the text of holy books is in a sense objective, in the perception of it by the religious society there is a subjective element (ibid).

### *3.5. Probing and criticizing the viewpoint of Watt and the reasons for its falseness*

- The first reason to reject the falsity of “introversive revelation” is that no reason proves it, e.g., it is a claim with no reason. How could one prove that revelation is the

realization of the unconscious mind? What is the relationship between the acceptance of unconscious mind and revelation?

- Manifestations of unconscious mind are consistent with its content, namely, every person displays what he or she has on the inside. Unconscious manifestations of a knowledgeable and educated person differ greatly from that of an illiterate and unschooled person. How did the greatest divine thoughts and knowledge come to the mind of a prophet who had been busy with the routines of life before his prophetic Mission, a prophet who had not been educated by a teacher and had not read a book? (Shākir, 2014) How was it possible for a prophet whose unconscious mind had no sciences and knowledge to display the most valuable knowledge and the most illuminating facts through his conscious mind?
- If revelation is the manifestations of unconscious mind, then why does not it appear in all persons and it only appears in one or a few particular persons in different eras? Is it acceptable from the psychological point of view for a mental and spiritual phenomenon to be manifested only sometimes in a particular person? Why does not anybody else contemporary to a prophet claim such a manifestation except that vey prophet (of course, a claim with reasons and clear evidence)?
- Unconscious manifestations may be transformed or forgotten when they appear in the conscious mind, i.e., one becomes oblivious and forgets many of his thoughts; however, prophets never forgot the contents of revelation. This shows that their knowledge was not of the type of usual and routine human knowledge to be transformed (ibid).
- The opinion of the prophets themselves who were pure and honest persons is a reason to reject this proposition. This is because they deemed revelation nothing except the relationship between themselves and the God of the world. If revelation had not been anything except the manifestation of the unconscious mind, it would not have been ascribed to God untruthfully by those who were famed among people as honest and fair (ibid).

This falsity – how the Prophet (s) was assured that what was induced into him was revelation and [God forbid] was not diabolic induction – originates from this that no difference is seen between revelation and acquired knowledge and it is deemed that revelation is of the conceptual sciences type. This is whereas such is not true. In revelation, there is presence and facts observance. Sciences and knowledge in revelation are directly overflowed into the heart of the Prophet and illuminates him entirely. It is all faith, certainty, illumination, peace, and assurance. With illumination and faith, there is no opportunity for doubt.

Zurāra says, “I told Imām Ṣādiq, ‘How the Prophet (s) was not afraid if the divine revelations made onto him were not inductions from Satan.’ Imām said, ‘When God chooses one to be a messenger, He descends upon him peace and dignity so that he would see what is revealed to him from God like what he sees with his eyes’” (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 18: 262).

It was said to Imām that how prophets recognize that they are prophets. Imām said, “Veil is removed from their eyes” (ibid: vol. 11: 56).

Jawādī Āmulī (2002) holds that in its three types (direct, indirect, or through the intermediation of revelation angel), revelation is the speech of God that He ascribes it to Himself; if it is descended, the messenger of God will receive that speech from the revelation angel. In this case, again there is no place for doubt because that area is the area of reason. In the realm of reason, there is no mischief and illusion cannot get inside to guise the wrong as the right, and since the wrong cannot get inside, doubt in turn cannot get inside.

In analyzing the fallibility of revelation (in the view of Montgomery Watt), it should be said that Muslims do not consider any possibility for mistakes in revelation, and see it totally consistent with the truth. In addition, Qur’ān itself leaves a seal of approval on this assertion and reads, “He (alone) knows the Unseen, nor does He make any one acquainted with His

Mysteries,-\* Except an apostle whom He has chosen: and then He makes a band of watchers march before him and behind him...” (Qur’ān 72:26&27).

Ṭabāṭabā’ī (1995) states that what is meant by “before him” is that which is between the messenger of Allah and the people to whom he has been sent, and what is meant by “behind him” is that which is between the Prophet and the origin of revelation, i.e., God; this verse implies that divine revelation is protected from the source of its issuing to the time it is communicated to people. Therefore, it is safe from the interference of Satan – from the perception of its source to the time of its being preached to people. Evidence for this point is “That He may know that they have (truly) brought and delivered the Messages of their Lord” (Qur’ān 72:28), because it implies that the divine aim for observation is to know that prophets deliver the messages of God to people; namely, the aim is for the deliverance of revelation to be realized on the outside, and if the messenger is not safe as to the aforementioned aspects, the divine aim will not be realized.

Hence, sciences and knowledge received through revelation are safe from any mistake, and even there is no probability of mistake in them. This is because revelation is not of the type of acquired sciences to be fallible; but rather, sciences and knowledge in revelation are induced into the luminous heart of the Prophet (s) directly and are observed and seen by his esoteric eyes and ears. The heart of the Prophet (s) observes the truth behind things intuitively and as a result, there cannot be any mistakes in it. In addition, no mistake can be made in descending knowledge from the heart of the Prophet (s) to his senses. This is because it originates from the esoteric soul of the Prophet (s) and is based on intuitive knowledge. Moreover, it is safe from mistakes at the stage of preaching for it is based on the intuitive observations of the heart of the Prophet, (s) and originates from there.

In brief, Watt’s analysis of the revelation as “creative imagination” and “unconscious welling up” of the Prophet (s) is based on some foundations that are not justifiable and acceptable from the viewpoints of science and reason, nor are consistent with the verses of Qur’ān and the texts of the narrations transmitted from the Infallibles.

In his book *Al-Waḥy al-Muḥammadi*, Rashīd Riḍā mentions “Emile Dermenghem” as a researcher. To prove his opinion for revelation to be introversive, Dermenghem enumerates ten premises the most important of which are as follows:

- Prophet (s) met Bahira the monk in Levant. Bahira was a monotheist who rejected Trinity. Muḥammad being an adolescent received the belief of monotheism from him. Witnessing grandeur signs in this adolescent, Bahira warned his uncle Abū Ṭālib to preserve him; of course, the Prophet (s) objected some of Bahira’s beliefs such as drinking wine (Shākir, 2014).
- Warāqa b. Nawfīl was a Christian scholar who was a relative of Khadīja; perhaps Muḥammad (s) has learned things from him. Contrary to the opinion of these Orientalists, in the books *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* what is mentioned of the relationship of the Prophet (s) with the Warāqa b. Nawfīl is that after the Prophet (s) being chosen as a prophet, Khadīja informed Warāqa b. Nawfīl of the Prophet’s status, and Warāqa endorsed the prophethood of the honorable messenger (s) regarding the extant signs and evidences (ibid).
- Religions of Judaism and Christianity were widespread in Arabia. In addition, the glad tidings of the mission of Prophet (s) were put forward in their sources; perhaps Muḥammad (s) had heard some from them about his prophetic delegation and Mission.
- Salmān Fārsī was a Zoroastrian from Iran who had accepted Christianity from some monks. He was one of those who had heard the news of the Prophet of Islam (s), and perhaps he had informed the Prophet (s) of this issue.
- In his business trips that he took with Abū Ṭālib to cities like Madyan and Wādī al-Qurā, Prophet (s) learned some about their history and culture which raised his

awareness. Also in the land of Levant, he got familiar with Roman and Christian scholars and their books.

In brief, after mentioning ten premises, Dermenghem interprets “introversive” revelation like this:

The inclination of Muḥammad (s) to seek solitude augmented and in his solitude in the cave of Ḥirā he found an ineffable contentment increasing day by day. It was in a way that he stayed there for weeks with little food, and on account of persistence on fasting and night vigilance his mind became more smooth, pure, and clear to probe himself. This was to the extent that he forgot the day and night, sleep and wakening, and spent many hours sitting in the cave or lying under the sun or with long strides walked in the rocky roads of that desert. He thought voices were coming out of the rocks calling him and then he believed his prophethood (Rashīd Riḍā, 2001: 77-90).

#### 4. Criticism and examination of the viewpoint of “Emile Dermenghem”

Most of the premises used by Dermenghem to infer that revelation is introversive are personal opinions and false imaginations and claims; these are in no way historical events by the help of which such a result could be inferred. If the premises are rejected, then the acquired result will be rejected too. To prove this claim, some instances are mentioned of the untrue inferences of the events of the time of Prophet (s) (before and after prophetic Mission), which are done by this Orientalist:

- He claims that Muḥammad (s) had heard the news of Iranians’ victory over the government of Rome from the Christians of Levant and Syria. In this way, this writer tries to make people dubious about the divination – that is stated in the beginning of Rome chapter that is about the future conquest of Iranians by Romans – by saying that this was due to the very news the Prophet had heard from Christians and it had not been revealed from God to him. However, history certifies that the victory of Iranians over Rome was in 610 A.D., which was fourteen years after the last trip of his Holiness to Syria and one year before the beginning of revelations. Moreover, history verifies that the government of Rome was anarchic to the extent that no one believed it could conquer Iranians, and the court of Rome was so flagrantly feeble that even the people of Mecca mocked the verse after hearing it (ibid).
- That “Dermenghem” claims that the Prophet (s) recognized the unpleasantness of idolatry by his own intellects, disregarded the vice of that time like usury, gambling, and drinking wine, and did not make his soul impure is something true. However, that the Prophet of Islam (s) learned some points from Jews and Christians in his trips is not backed up by historical evidence. Suppose that the Prophet (s) hears from others that someone is going to be delegated as a prophet; this cannot be a proof that these talks affect him and makes him consider himself a prophet. If the Prophet of Islam (s) had heard some points from others and had replicated those in Qur’ān, his opponents would have used them as pretexts to claim that his words had been said by Levantine Christians. Besides, there is no reason for the Prophet (s) to trust whatever he hears in his trips from others and consider those as a basis for his revelations; this is not a reasonable and rational approach.
- There is no historical evidence to indicate that the Prophet met the cousin of Khadija (a), Waraqa b. Nawfil, who was an Arab luminary. As to this, what is recorded in history is this, “When Khadija (a) saw the signs of prophethood in the face of her spouse, she went to Waraqa and explained it to him. To answer his cousin, he said, ‘Your cousin is honest. What has happened to him is the beginning of prophethood and that big creed (Mission) will be revealed to him’” (Subḥānī, 1987, vol. 1: 187).

- If it is claimed that the Prophet (s) studied Torah and Bible in his short trips, learned some from them, and these became the attainments of revelation, then this question can be put forward: first, in this short period of time, how could the Prophet (s) recognize the mistakes and deviations which had entered in these two holy books and criticize them in Qur'ān? Second, there are verses in Qur'ān which are opposite to Testaments, and none of the Jews and Christians had mentioned them. Can one accept that the Prophet (s) acquired this knowledge rearing in his own environment?
- Furthermore, materials to which Nestorian Bahira, Jews, and Christians had access were way more limited than the materials of Qur'ān regarding this; that is, their sphere of knowledge is not comparable to that of the Qur'ān verses in which Jews, christens, and Testaments are introduced. For instance, two cases of superstitious stories can be mentioned which are in the distorted Torah and Bible:

In chapter 18, Torah explains descending of two angels upon Ibrahim like this: God came to earth with two angels to probe people to see whether what is transmitted to Him is truth or lie. For this, He appeared to Ibrahim (a). Ibrahim said, "Please let a little water be taken, and bathe your feet, and recline under the tree. And I will take a morsel of bread" (ibid). In addition, the second chapter of the Gospel of John reads, "And the third day there was a marriage ...and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage... They have no wine...And there were set there six waterpots of stone...Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water...to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now...the ruler of the feast tested the water that was made wine" (ibid). Is it possible to say that what is brought by the Prophet (s) under the name of revelation can be the result of such teachings in Torah and Bible?

- If the Prophet (s) had learned something from a monk (before prophetic Mission), certainly this would have been spread among Quraysh, everybody quoting it. Due to this, moreover, the Prophet (s) himself could not claim before his clan that he was illiterate and unschooled, whereas it can be seen that his Holiness began his mission with this title. Nobody said, "Lo, oh Muḥammad! You were taught by a monk in "Busra" at the age of twelve, and learned these illuminating facts from him!"
- Pagans of Mecca charged him with many slanders. They scrutinized Qur'ān so that they could find something as a pretext. This was to the extent that when they saw the Prophet (s) sitting next to a slave, they took it as an opportunity and said that Muḥammad (s) learned his words from that slave for which Qur'ān immediately answered them, "We know indeed that they say, 'It is a man that teaches him.' The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear" (Qur'ān 16:103; Subḥānī, 1987, vol. 1: 144).
- One of the premises that Dermenghem uses to justify the introversive revelation is Salmān Fārsī's becoming a Muslim and his accompanying the messenger of God. Dermenghem claims that most of the news about Judaism and Christianity existing in Qur'ān is attained from Salmān Fārsī, and not from God.

The noteworthy point is that historical evidences show the conversion of Salmān Fārsī to Islam and his getting familiar with the Prophet (s) and Muslims in Medina was after the hegira and that the honorable Prophet (s) had no meeting with Salmān in Mecca to get the news of Judaism and Christianity from him. Besides, Salmān at first was a follower of his ancestors' religion, i.e., Zoroastrianism, and he accompanied Christians and Jews for a short time of his life. When Muḥammad (s) immigrated to Medina, Salmān became familiar with Islam through the invitation of Muḥammad (s) and became a Muslim. Muḥammad (s) made a contract with his superior so that Salmān could work and make himself free with his income. In addition, the Prophet (s) and the Muslims of Medina helped him to pay his price, and then he was freed.



It is utterly clear that these historical evidences are no proof for the Prophet's (s) being affected by these events concerning the matter of revelation, and the claim of Dermenghem is groundless as to this issue. Following the opinions of Orientalists about the "introversive revelation," some of the Muslim intellectuals augmented this issue in their works and considered revelation as the internal outpouring of the Prophet (s). One of those having such a justification as regards the revelation is "Sayyid Aḥmad Khān Hindī." As to this, he says:

Something is called revelation which is engraved in the heart of the prophet due to the innate prophethood by the origin of emanation, and at times this being engraved is heard like the voice of an utterer or speaker by the outward ears and sometimes those very impressions in the heart appear like an utterer or speaker. However, there is no speech or speaker in the outside except his own illuminating self." (Hindī, 2008, vol. 1: 36)

To Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, if Qur'ān says that Gabriel reveals Qur'ān to the heart of the Prophet (s), by that it means something which is there in the heart of the Prophet (s). Namely, that very sacred faculty of prophethood that God has put inside the Prophet (s) is Gabriel. In his opinion, there is no intermediary between God and the Prophet because revelation wells up from the inside of the Prophet. Collecting revelation which is mentioned in the noble verse "It is for Us to collect it and to promulgate it" (Qur'ān 75:17) is also related to the very prophetic faculty that, like other human faculties, sublime God has created within prophets consistent with their supreme nature, and it is this very faculty that is interpreted as the "archangel" and in the terminology of religion as Gabriel (ibid).

In fact, what is revealed to prophet is nothing except the soliloquy of the prophet himself who hears it with his outward ears. Prophet imagines that someone is talking to him or he is watching a being with his outward eyes. Seclusion from mundane affairs and absolute attention to God create a series of internal understandings for which the expression of "revelation" is used. In the view of Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, God has given His prophet a holy faculty and spirit within which infallible revelations would well up. Qur'ānic verses in Arabic language surging from the inside of the Prophet also are consistent with the divine volition and do not contain even the smallest mistake. Indeed, God has given the Prophet a special faculty that would be actualized when the conditions demand. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān attempts to give natural interpretations for all matters pertinent to the prophethood (revelation, miracle) and to reject supernatural interference in the nature. He regards all miracles of the prophets out of their ontological faculties— faculties that are common and innate among all humans and are not exclusive to prophets (ibid).

One of the other Muslim intellectuals trying to provide a mental and human interpretation of revelation is Dr. Sūrūsh. With propounding the idea of "prophetic experience," he insists on this point that Qur'ān directly and without any intermediary is the composition, experience, emanation, and growth of the soul of the Prophet of Islam (s). In his first article, "Muḥammad the narrator of apostolic dream," he writes that those grand attainments are offered in Arabic, typical, and human language at a level suitable to the understanding of humans and are originated from the conscience of the Prophet (s), and the experience being holy has not made the language of experience holy and divine. Personal temper, mental images, natural incidents, and geographical and bio-tribal condition of the Prophet (s) form his experiences even at the station of generation, and they are dressed with history and geography. That is, God did not speak and write a book, but rather a historical person talked and wrote a book on behalf of Him, and his speech was the same as His speech. It was as if divinity penetrated to the human heart and became humanized, metaphysics dressed itself with the nature and became natural, and metahistory arrived on the scene of history and became historical (Şādiqī, 2017).

In this article, Sūrūsh sees Muḥammad (s) as a narrator of apostolic dreams and holds that the language of Qur'ān is humanized and Qur'ān is without any intermediary the composition of the experience, upsurge, and growth of Muḥammad's (s) soul, language, and expression.

In indivisible prophetic experience, he writes,

When Satan tempts a human, it is like that inside of that human Satan reveals something. Prophets were likewise exposed to the temptation of the angel and then discoveries occurred to them. With this explanation, if the interpretation of prophetic experience is set aside and replaced with the prophetic discovery, then no difference can be found between them. Revelation is a type of illumination that happens to the prophet... revelation is nothing but a kind of pure understanding by the prophet. The character of the prophet is like a treasury that contains secrets and knowledge. When this character wells up, divine revelation appears from the inside of his speeches. (Sūrūsh, 2005: 197)

Stating this, Dr. Sūrūsh does not accept that prophet is a human that revelation is sent to him from the heavens and that he is the receiver of it and is appointed to preach it, but rather he claims that the Prophet (s) was a mystic or discoverer that his character welled up and revelation came out of it which was subordinate to him; that is, he ignores the heavenly origin of revelation and takes it as something of humans. The analysis of Dr. Sūrūsh asserting that Qur'ān is a book by a human with mistakes is both an insult to this divine, holy text and also an ignorance of the revered Prophet's (s) high station. Lowering the station of the Prophet (s) to the level of a mystic is a kind of insult to a character that is the collector of perfections and the manifestation of divine Highest Name. Prophet's (s) degrees of existence are so high that he cannot even be compared with the other prophets. In the realm of prophethood and mission, his soul is ascended so much that it is the place of divine revelation: "With it came down the spirit of Faith and Truth ...\* To thy heart and mind, that thou mayest admonish" (Qur'ān 26:193-194). The magnificence of Prophet's (s) soul was so high that he reached the station of "infusion" in direct revelation and attained revelation from that station. Dr. Sūrūsh objects to referring to Qur'ān for showing the grandeur of Qur'ān and the station of the revered Prophet (s) – whereas the critic should not discuss religion from the inside. To answer him, it should be said that if, based on his hypothesis, Qur'ān is created by the Prophet's (s) mind and emanation, then referring to it has no problem because his claims should not be in disagreement with a Qur'ān that is created by the Prophet (s) himself. Is the Prophet (s) as the writer of Qur'ān has put the station of Qur'ān and himself high, or are its materials in agreement with the truth? In both cases, what is stated in Qur'ān – whether about Qur'ān itself or about the grandeur of the prophet (s) – is in disagreement with his hypothesis (falsity) and its parameters.

With probing the opinions of Orientalists and this group of Muslim intellectuals, it can be understood the commonality among these hypotheses is that all of them have a human interpretation of revelation and Qur'ān. They believe that being a prophet is a human and mystic experience and the origin of revelation is not heavens, and deny the existence of revelation in the Protected Table before the descent.

After providing the opinions of some of Orientalists and Muslim intellectuals regarding the falsity of introversive revelation and probing and criticizing each of them, now the intellectual and Qur'ānic reasons are put forward to reject this falsity

## **5. Reasons for rejecting the falsity of "introversive revelation"**

For probing and criticizing this approach concerning Qur'ānic revelation, the following can be mentioned:

### 5.1. Rational reasons

- The challenge of Qur'ān for pagans and its opponents to bring ten chapters or even one chapter like itself is a decisive reason for the verses of Qur'ān to be not by humans. This is because if Qur'ān had been the speech of humans (like the Prophet of Islam (s)), then all humans would not have been unable to bring something like it. Namely, during fifteen centuries passing the descent of Qur'ān, a person or a group of persons should have brought something like that human speech (according to the opinion of this group). Qur'ān reads, “Say: ‘If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur’an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support’” (Qur’ān 17:88).
- In tens of verses, Qur'ān points to abnormal phenomena which are not justifiable as to the typical system of nature, and this verifies that prophets proved their prophethood using these phenomena. If prophethood were the very voice of conscience and heavenly revelation were the pure thoughts of humans, ultimatum and recourse to miracle would be meaningless.
- If Qur'ān was the product of human experience and thinking and welled up from the esoteric conscience of the human (even of the revered Prophet (s)), during its gradual descent for twenty-three years there should have been conspicuous changes in its style, words, and meanings (because such is the feature of human speech), overpowered by the system of nature and got changed. This is whereas in the verses of Qur'ān such a transformation cannot be seen. Qur'ān reads, “Do they not consider the Qur’an (with care)? Had it been from other Than God, they would surely have found therein Much discrepancy” (Qur’ān 4:82).
- In revelation, there is something as certainty, that is, the Prophet of God (s) was certain about that which was revealed to him. This certainty was so much that the Prophet never backed down as to the attainments of revelation, and he acted according to these attainments; this is whereas the unconscious manifestations are not always attainable with certainty and tranquility. Therefore, revelation is supported by legitimate and intellectual reasons, but unconscious manifestations do not have such a backing and as a result, it is not obligatory to act according to them both legitimately and intellectually.

### 5.2. Traditional reasons to reject the falsity of introversive revelation

This set of reasons can be divided into two parts:

#### 5.2.1. Qur'ānic reasons

There are a lot of verses in noble Qur'ān that directly and indirectly introduce revelation as divine speech and determine the role of the Prophet only as the preacher and clarifier of verses. As to this, some verses are pointed out briefly here as examples:

Say: “I have no power over any good or harm to myself except as God willeth. If I had knowledge of the unseen, I should have multiplied all good, and no evil should have touched me: I am but a warner, and a bringer of glad tidings to those who have faith.” (Qur’ān 7:188)

In some verses, the revered Prophet (s) who is the essence of creation and is the beloved of God is threatened to the effect that if he devised any word from himself in the name of God, he would be punished mightily and no one could withhold this: “And if the apostle were to invent any sayings in Our name, We should certainly seize him by his right hand, and We should certainly then cut off the artery of his heart” (Qur’ān 69:44-46).

If Qur'ān is a book by a human as the Orientalists think, how could the verses that reprove the revered Prophet (s) in some cases be interpreted? In fact, if Qur'ān were made by the Prophet (s), why did he reprove himself? Could not he replace those cases by some other verses for his own interest?

Replying those that ask for bringing another Qur'ān other than this Qur'ān or the change of its verses by the Prophet of Islam (s), Qur'ān gives a decisive and dissuasive answer:

But when Our Clear Signs are rehearsed unto them, those who rest not their hope on their meeting with Us, Say: "Bring us a reading other than this, or change this," Say: "It is not for me, of my own accord, to change it: I follow naught but what is revealed unto me: if I were to disobey my Lord, I should myself fear the penalty of a Great Day (to come)." (Qur'ān 10:15)

Based on the justification of those believing in introversive revelation, angel is a word for those natural faculties that invite to virtue and felicity and Satan is the name for those natural faculties that invite to vice and wretchedness. However, what is inferred from the glorious Qur'ān is opposite to this. Qur'ān deems angels and devils some creatures distinct from our senses who have independent (and not just natural) awareness and volition. It reads, "That I will certainly fill Hell with thee and those that follow thee, everyone" (Qur'ān 38:85).

Based on the hypothesis of introversive revelation, the meaning of prophethood and mission is to be called and to be responsible out of the voice of conscience, leading to general reformations. However, the opposite of this can be understood from the glorious Qur'ān where it reads, "By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; and its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right" (Qur'ān 91:7-8). Based on this noble verse, every person with his or her God-given conscience and nature comprehends the good, bad, malice, and beauty of his or her doings. The voice of reformations is latent within every human; the point is that some listen to it and reach felicity and some others overlook it and take steps towards wretchedness. If prophethood and mission were the result of this voice of conscience – which is general – then all persons would have prophethood and mission. This is whereas sublime God has allocated this position to some of the people, and says, "When there comes to them a sign (from God), They say: 'We shall not believe until we receive one (exactly) like those received by God's apostles'" (Qur'ān 6:124).

That group of theoreticians that see Qur'ān as an outcome of Prophet's (s) dreams and see it a book of dreams which is in need of interpretation repeat the same speech of pagans at the time of Qur'ān descent whose slogan was this: "Nay," they say, "(these are) medleys of dream" (Qur'ān 21:5). It goes without saying that disturbed dreams are created by the human imagination overriding the faulty of reason; it controls the mind and dresses as a fact what is with no truth outside the mind. Now, this hypothesis is propounded in the West with a scientific guise so that it could remove the divine and holy aspect from the realm of Qur'ān, and reduce it to a typical book.

The glorious Qur'ān implicitly criticizes this hypothesis in some verses and says, "The (Prophet's) (mind and) heart in no way falsified that which he saw.... (His) sight never swerved, nor did it go wrong! For truly did he see, of the Signs of his Lord, the Greatest!" (Qur'ān 53:11-18).

If (according to this hypothesis) all of that which the Prophet (s) saw and heard were unreal and were the outcomes of his soul, Qur'ān would not deem them as fact, would not say that the Prophet's (s) knowledge instruments, whether his senses or his reason, were not falsified, and would not consider all of them as the great signs of God.

After summing up this group of verses, it can be concluded that this heavenly book has been descended upon the apostle of God through revelation. This revelation is a sort of heavenly speech that cannot be ascertained with senses and reasoned thinking, but rather it is through some other type of comprehension and conscience that can be found in some persons

– based on divine volition and the qualities of the person. This person receives esoteric – hidden from the senses and reason – injunctions, through revelation and divine training; also taking the responsibility for this matter is called prophethood.

### 5.2.2. Traditional reasons

There are many traditions transmitted to us from the Infallibles wherein they explicitly consider Qur’ān the divine speech being issued from the Protected Table. Each of these traditions confirms this point. As an instance, some traditions are pointed out here that are mentioned both by the Sunni narrators in their tradition books and by the Shī’a narrators in their tradition sources:

Hārith b. Hāshim asked the messenger of God (s), “O the messenger of God (s)! How does the revelation descend upon you? The messenger of God (s) responded, “Sometimes revelation descends upon me like a bell (which is the most difficult form of revelation for me) and then goes away from me while I have comprehended the revelation. Also sometimes, the angel of revelation is represented in the posture of a man who talks to me and I understand his speech” (Zarqānī, 1995: 76).

Ibn Abī ‘Umayr narrates from Hishām b. Sālīm who narrates from Imām Ṣādiq, “One of our companions said to his Holiness (Imām Ṣādiq) that the messenger of God (s) sometimes in a normal state said, ‘Gabriel said so and so’ or ‘This was Gabriel who commanded me to do in such a way.’ However, sometimes he fainted while receiving the revelation. Why was he like this?” To answer him, Imām said, “Whenever, directly and without the interception of Gabriel, revelation descended upon his Holiness, that state engulfed him because receiving revelation from sublime God was hefty and difficult, and whenever Gabriel became an intermediary between his Holiness and God, that state did not catch him. In this state he said, ‘Gabriel said things like this’ or ‘This is Gabriel saying like this’” (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1995, vol. 18: 125).

Muḥammad b. Muslim and Muḥammad b. Marwān say, “Imām Ṣādiq (a) said, ‘Due to divine grace, the messenger of God (s) understood that Gabriel was descended from God’” (Majlisī, 1982, vol. 18: 262).

Therefore, revelation descent cannot be doubted and prophets never had doubts about their mission. As to this issue, what is mentioned in the books of history is not true, and should be corrected and clarified.

About this, Shaykh Mufīd says,

Through the miracle, the Prophet (s) understands that the speech is the word of God, and is not from Satan. That Qur’ān is a miracle and no one can bring a like of it made the Prophet (s) realize Qur’ān is descended from God and is His speech, like Moses (s) when he got certainty through the miracles of “Bright Hand” and “transformation of a walking stick to a dragon” to the effect that the speech of the tree had been from God. (Mufīd, 1992: 38-39)

A lot of authentic narrations have been transmitted to us from the mass and the elite in which the holy beings of the Infallibles deem noble Qur’ān issued from God and the Protected Table. They see the role of the revered Prophet (s) in the process of revelation, at first, reception and communication and, then in the second stage, training and explication. The falsity of “introversive” revelation which has been put forward by some Orientalists and Muslim researchers of Qur’ān look for proving noble Qur’ān to be by a human and to be not divine; this opinion is the initiator of personal ideas, imaginations, and false claims of its originators. These accusations attributed to Qur’ān by the mentioned groups are the same false attributions that the pagans and opponents of Qur’ān at the beginning of Islam and the life time of the messenger of God (s) accredited to Qur’ān, to which glorious Qur’ān in many verses has given conclusive and solid answers and has proved their falsehood.

## 6. Conclusion

Orientalists such as Montgomery Watt and Dermenghem who have not accepted the divine origin of Qur'ānic revelation have referred to various models offered about human extraordinary achievements such as writings of mystics and poets to explicate this miraculous phenomenon, among which religious experience, epilepsy and hysteria, personal genius, and creative imagination within the Prophet (s) are the most important models of these.

In this article, these opinions have been probed and criticized elaborately. However, to sum up, there are common points in these opinions that can be taken into consideration here:

- Montgomery Watt and Dermenghem have a materialistic interpretation of the world, see the world confined by the nature, and perceive all phenomena from an experiential viewpoint and, therefore, cannot believe and fathom the issue of revelation that is related to metaphysics.
- Most of the claims are put forward without any convincing reason. In these explications, little similarities are used as pretexts to lower the status of revelation.
- Most of the mentioned explications have been propounded from an early time, even from the time of the Messenger of God (s). Noble Qur'ān has criticized them and has given evidences for their falsehood.
- The time of revelation descent was not under the control of the Prophet (s), whereas in most of the mentioned explications one can set himself or herself in a condition wherein those states can happen to him or her.
- Explication of prophets' revelation in the forms of religious experience, inspiration and so on originates from a Western, Christian thinking, and is for removing the problems of the Scripture such as its contradiction with new sciences; this is a matter that is not compatible with noble Qur'ān and Islamic setting.
- Of the major differences between the quiddity of Qur'ānic revelation and the explications offered by the Orientalists are the infallibility of Qur'ān; agreement between science and religion in Islam; the element of personal investigation (Ijtihad) and the role of time and place to answer changing needs; the rationalization of knowledge of Islam; Islam's being unaffected by the culture and conditions of the time; and lack of ambiguity, terseness, and contradiction in prophets' revelation.

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