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IQRA' BI-SMI RABBIKA...!

SOME NOTES ON THE INTERPRETATION OF *SŪRAT AL-'ĀLAQ*

(VS. 1-5)

URI RUBIN

I

Sūrat al-'alaq (XCVI) opens with the imperative *iqra'* which is immediately followed by the phrase: *bi-smi rabbika*... The majority of the modern translators of the Quran into English, German and French whose translations have been available to me,¹ are unanimous that *iqra'* relates to a certain prophetic text which Muhammad is commanded to read or recite. But the translators do not agree on the contents of this text. Pickthall translated: "Read: In the Name of thy Lord..." which implies that *bi-smi rabbika* opens the text which the prophet is commanded to read. Arberry's translation implies the same: "Recite: In the Name of thy Lord." Most translators, however, assume that *bi-smi rabbika* does not form part of the text which the prophet must read or recite, but merely describes how the prophet should carry out the command: *iqra'*. Accordingly, *iqra' bi-smi rabbika* is rendered: "Read/Recite in the Name of thy Lord."² Scholars who studied the Quran and Muhammad's *Sīra* translated likewise.³ This translation implies that our verse is understood to contain a general command to the prophet to start delivering his prophetic message, in the Name of his Lord. According to both

¹ For the bibliographical details of the translations mentioned hereby see J. D. Pearson, "Bibliography of translations of the Quran into European languages", in A. F. L. Beeston and others (eds.), *Arabic literature to the end of the Umayyad period*, Cambridge 1983, 502 ff.

² "Read, in the Name of thy Lord" — Sale, Palmer, Muhammad Asad; "Lies" — Henning, Ullmann, "Recite" — Rodwell, Bell, M. Zafarullah Khān, N. J. Dawood; "Trage vor" — Paret. "Pêche" — Blachère. "Proclaim" — A. Yusuf 'Alī. "Call" — H. Amīr 'Alī.

³ E.g., Lohmann, 249: "rezitiere im Namen..."; Schedl, 47: "Rufe im Namen..."; Buhl-Schaefer, 137: "Sag her im Namen...". Cf. also, G. H. A. Juybnoll, "The position of Qur'ān recitation in early Islam", *JSS* XIX, 1974, 240 ff.

perceptions, however, the translation of *bi-smi rabbika* remains the same: "in the Name of thy Lord."

But what seems to be the consensus of modern scholars concerning the translation of *bi-smi rabbika* will not necessarily be the result of a re-examination of the Muslim interpretation of *Sūrat al-'alaq*. Such an examination, which is undertaken in this paper, may unveil another possible approach to which modern scholars have not yet paid the serious attention it deserves.

II

The command: *iqra' bi-smi rabbika* should be compared to other Quranic verses containing the phrase: *bi-smi rabbika*. There are only three other such verses, in all of which the wording is: *fa-sabbih bi-smi rabbika l-'azīm* (LVI/74, 69; LXIX/52) — "and praise the magnificent Name of the Lord." The *bi-* of *bi-smi* in these verses is evidently *bā' zā'ida*, as is indicated in another Quranic verse: *sabbih isma rabbika l-'a'lā* (LXXXVII/1), where the *bā'* is absent. A similar structure, with *uḍkur* instead of *sabbih*, occurs in LXXXIII/8 *wa-uḍkur isma rabbika*; it recurs in LXXVI/25 as well.⁴ Verse 1 of *Sūrat al-'alaq* is unique in that it has *iqra'* and not *sabbih* or *uḍkur*, but its formal structure is identical with that of the other verses containing *bi-smi rabbika*. The conclusion is, therefore, inevitable. The *bi-* in our verse as well is *bā' zā'ida*.

This interpretation of the *bi-* is corroborated in some early Muslim commentaries. Abū 'Ubayda (d. 210/825) says: *iqra' bi-smi rabbika: maḡzāhu: iqra' isma rabbika*.⁵ Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) is even more explicit. He says that the *bā'* may be added in speech without affecting the meaning, so that *iqra' bi-smi rabbika* means *iqra' isma rabbika*.⁶ He goes on to adduce further Quranic verses containing this kind of *bi-*.⁷

The interpretation of *iqra' bi-smi rabbika* in the sense of *iqra' isma rabbika* was suggested several decades ago by scholars like Hirschfeld and Grimme. The former translated our verse: "Proclaim the Name of thy Lord..."⁸ The latter rendered it: "Preise den Namen deines Herren."⁹ But since the days of Nöldeke-Schwally this interpretation has been totally

rejected by most modern scholars.^{9a} Nöldeke-Schwally,¹⁰ who were also aware of the above interpretation of Abū 'Ubayda, contended that *qara'a bi-* is never used as an equivalent to *qara'a*; it occurs only in the sense of "to read in a certain text" or "to adhere to a certain *qirā'a*" (i.e., a variant reading of the Quran), like *qāla bi-ṣay'in*. But clear additional evidence of the usage of *qara'a bi-* in the sense of *qara'a* may be found in ex-Quranic material. To begin with, al-Rāzī (d. 607/1210) adduces a verse of al-Aḥḩāl, in corroboration of Abū 'Ubayda's interpretation; it reads:

.../ *Sūtu l-mahāgiri lā yaqra'na bi-l-suwarī*
Dark-eyed (women), who do not recite the *sūras*.¹¹

More examples from *Hadīṯ* literature may easily be gleaned according to Wensinck's *Concordance* (s.v. *qr'*). The most typical cases occur in traditions dealing with the recitation (*qirā'a*) of Quranic passages during the *ṣalāt*. For instance: *man qara'a bi-qul huwa llāhu aḩad fa-ka-annama qara'a bi-tūlī l-Qur'āni* "He who recites (the *sūra* opening with) *qul huwa llāhu aḩad*, shall be (rewarded) as though he recited one third of the Quran."¹² In a parallel version of the same tradition, the *bi-* is absent: *man qara'a allāhu l-wāḩidu (!) l-samadu fa-qad qara'a tūta l-Qur'āni*.¹³ Many traditions assert the importance of the recitation of the *Fātiḩa*, or *Umm al-Qur'ān*, as it is sometimes called: *lā ṣalāta li-man lam yaqra' bi-fātiḩati l-Kitāb*.¹⁴ "There is no (valid) prayer for him who does not recite the *Fātiḩa*". And another version says: *man ṣallā ṣalātan lam yaqra' fīhā bi-Umm al-Qur'ān fa-hiya ḩidāg*.¹⁵ In a parallel version the *bi-* is again absent: ...*fa-qara'a Umma l-Qur'ān*.¹⁶ And there are more such cases.¹⁷

Such examples in which the *bi-* may or may not occur, without ever affecting the meaning of *qara'a*, confirm that in *Sūrat al-'alaq*, *iqra' bi-smi rabbika* may very well be understood as *iqra' isma rabbika*, as held by Abū 'Ubayda and Ibn Qutayba.

The command to "recite the Name" of the Lord seems to refer to a certain act of devotion which the prophet is prompted to perform in

^{9a} In recent years, only Lüling (p. 291f) seems to have been aware of the value of Abū 'Ubayda's interpretation.

¹⁰ I, 81–82. See also Buhl-Schaefer, 137 note 35; Lehmann 256.

¹¹ Rāzī, XXXII, 13. Cf. Wright, II, 160A.

¹² Ahmad, V, 141.

¹³ Tirmidī, XI, 24.

¹⁴ Buhārī, I, 192; Muslim, II, 9; Tirmidī, II, 46.

¹⁵ Abū Dāwūd, I, 188; see also, 198; Muslim, II, 9, 10, 160; Buhārī, II, 72; Mālik, I, 148.

¹⁶ Tirmidī, XI, 5.

¹⁷ E.g., *Faḩ al-bārī* II, 202: *iqra' mā tayassara ma'aka min al-Qur'ān... yaqra'u bi-mā tayassara 'alayhi...* Mālik, I, 138: *wa-qad kāna l-qar'u yaqra'u bi-l-m'āna... wa-kāna l-qar'u yaqra'u sūrata l-baqara...* And see further Tirmidī, II, 102, 103 etc.

⁴ And cf. LV/78: *tabāraka smu rabbika*.

⁵ Abū 'Ubayda, II, 304.

⁶ Ibn Qutayba, 248: *wa-l-bā' uzāḩu fī-l-kalām wa-l-ma'nā liqā'uhā... wa-qawluhu: iqra' bi-smi rabbika, ay isma rabbika*. And see also Rāzī, XXXII, 13 (Abū 'Ubayda); Ṭabarī, XXX, 151.

⁷ XXIII/20; LXXVI/6; XIX/25; LXVIII/6; LX/1; XXII/25.

⁸ Hirschfeld, 18.

⁹ Grimme, I, 18.

honour of his Lord. The nature of this devotional act is elucidated in some further Muslim interpretations of *iqraʿ bi-smi rabbika*, which are based on Abū ʿUbayda's approach. Al-Rāzī, commenting on Abū ʿUbayda's interpretation, says: *wa-ma'nā iqraʿ isma rabbika, ay, uḍkur isma rabbika*.¹⁸ In other words, *iqraʿ bi-smi rabbika* is equivalent to *uḍkur isma rabbika*. A scrutiny of Quranic occurrences of *ḍakara* shows that to "mention" the Name of God means to praise Him during prayer. In fact, when *ḍakara* is connected with the Name of the Lord, it always appears in juxtaposition with *sabbaha*. For instance, *Sūra LXXXVII* which opens with the command: *sabbih isma rabbika l-ʿilā* has in verses 14–15 the following statement: *qad aḥḥaba man tazakkā, wa-ḍakara sma rabbihī fa-sallā*. The close relation between *ḍakara, sabbaha*, the Name of the Lord and prayer is demonstrated also in *LXXXVI/25–26: wa-ḍkur isma rabbika bukratan wa-ʿaṣīlan; wa-mina l-layli fa-sḡud lahu wa-sabbihū laylan ṭawīlan*. Similarly, *LXXIII/7–8* reads: *inna laka fī l-nahāri sabḥan ṭawīlan; wa-ḍkur isma rabbika wa-tabattal ilayhi tabīlan*.¹⁹ In view of these Quranic verses, it is clear that when *iqraʿ bi-smi rabbika* is interpreted as *uḍkur isma* the meaning is "to mention the Name of the Lord and glorify it in a devotional supplication of gratitude and thanksgiving."²⁰

The Quranic *iqraʿ bi-smi rabbika* seems to draw on Hebrew liturgical patterns which had their origin in the Old Testament.²¹ The biblical עָרַב לַיהוָה כָּרָא בְשֵׁם יְהוָה (lit. "to call the Name of God") occurs in several contexts, the most relevant of which seems to be the one where God is glorified in a thanksgiving hymn. The following three verses are the most typical ones:

הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה קִרְאוּ בְשֵׁמוֹ הוֹדִיעוּ בְעִלְיוֹתֵיהֶם
 כּוֹס יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵשׁת רְחוּם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא
 לַךְ-אֲרֹכָה זֶכֶר הוֹדָה וְכֵשֶׁם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא²²

In these verses, "to call the Name of God" means "to magnify His name and to make known His omnipotence." In the Quran as well, the Name, or rather "the most beautiful Names of Allah" stand for the various aspects of His infinite power as the creator of the world and as the divine source of bounty and benefaction. For instance: *LIX/23–24* (tr. Arberry): "He is

¹⁸ Rāzī, XXXII, 13. See also Abū Ḥayyān, VIII, 492; Ālusi, XXX, 178–9.

¹⁹ And cf. III/41.

²⁰ This is indeed the way in which al-Rāzī perceived our verse in another work of his, named *Sarīḥ al-asmāʿ al-ḥusnā* (ed. ʿAbd al-Raʿīf Saʿd, Cairo 1980). On page 72, he adduces this verse alongside other Quranic verses dealing with the glorification of Allah.

²¹ Cf. already Hirschfeld, 19. But see, on the other hand, Nöldake-Schwally, I, 81–82, where Hirschfeld's biblical references are discarded as irrelevant.

²² *Jes. XII/4; Chron., XVI/8; Ps., CV/1.*

²³ *Ps. CXVI/13.*

²⁴ *Ibid., 17.*

God, the Creator, the Maker, the Shaper. To Him belong the Names Most Beautiful. All that in the heavens and the earth magnifies Him..."²⁵ Likewise, in *Sūrat al-ʿalaq*, the command to "recite" the Name of the Lord means to recount His greatness as the only origin of man's existence and intelligence. This meaning of our *sūra* was correctly perceived by al-Ṭabarī (d. 548/1153), who, commenting on verse 1, says: "This is a command from Allah to His prophet, to 'recite' the Name of his Lord, and to call Him by His most beautiful Names (*an yaqraʿa bi-smi rabbihī wa-an yaḍwahu bi-asmāʾihī l-ḥusnā*); the magnifying of the name is the magnifying of the person bearing the name, because the name represents what is characteristic of the person, so that there is no other way to magnify him."²⁶

The deity which the prophet is commanded to magnify in our *sūra* is not presented as *Allāh*, but rather as *rabbika*. This intimate address seems to reflect the essential monotheistic experience of the prophet who has become aware of the fact that Allah is his Lord, to the exclusion of any other deity. This point was noticed in the early *Tafsīr* of Muḡāṭil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767), where it is stated: *iqraʿ bi-smi rabbika yā Muḥammadu, yaʿnī l-wāḥida*.²⁷ The same idea is formulated more explicitly by Abū Ḥayyān (d. 754/1353) who says that the form "your Lord" (as opposed to "the Lord") is meant to be personal and intimate suggesting that Muḥammad must not follow any other god.²⁸

The one and only god which must be glorified is the Lord who created man (*allaḍī ḥalaga*) and gave him intelligence (*allaḍī ʿallama*). With these descriptive statements the monotheistic message of the opening passage of the *sūra* is fulfilled. The creative powers of God and His bounty are adduced here, as elsewhere in the Quran, to demonstrate that He is the one and only true God which must be worshipped, to the exclusion of the lesser deities to whom even the *muṣṣrikīn* themselves never attributed any creativity or bounty. These deities were considered by their followers only as intermediators between man and the High God. This point as well has been noticed by Muslim exegetes. Al-Rāzī, for instance, adduces Quranic verses in which the *muṣṣrikīn* admit that Allah is the Creator, pointing out that *allaḍī ḥalaga* in our *sūra* is designed to lead the *muṣṣrikīn*, through their own tenets, to the inevitable conclusion that Allah alone deserves to

²⁵ And see also VII/180; XVII/110; XX/8.

²⁶ Ṭabarī, XXX, 151. For a further discussion of the relation of the name to the person bearing it, see, e.g., Rāzī, *Asmāʿ* 18 ff.

²⁷ Muḡāṭil, II, 244b.

²⁸ Abū Ḥayyān, VIII, 492: "...wa-ḡāra l-ḥiṭābu li-yadulla ʿalā l-ḥiṭāsiḡi wa-l-ṭarḥiṭi, ay laḡsa laka rabbun ḡayruhu.

be worshipped.²⁹ In conclusion, *Sūrat al-ʿalaq* fits in with the general monotheistic message of the Quran, its chief aim being to urge the prophet to magnify the omnipotence of his Lord and thus spread monotheism.

III

As is well known, the text of the opening passage of *Sūrat al-ʿalaq* appears in traditions about Muḥammad's first prophetic revelation,³⁰ where this *sūra* is presented as the first passage to be revealed to the prophet.³¹ Some modern scholars found in these traditions authentic evidence concerning Muḥammad's personal development and concerning the chronology of the Quran. It seems, however, that *Sūrat al-ʿalaq* became part of the traditions about Muḥammad's first prophetic experience only after a certain process which deserves a closer examination. To begin with, there is a rare tradition which seems to date back to the time when *Sūrat al-ʿalaq* was not yet even considered Meccan. The tradition is recorded on the authority of al-Sāʿib b. Yazīd (d. 82H). It runs as follows: "When God revealed to Muḥammad *iqraʾ bi-smi rabbika llaqīr ḥalaqa*, the prophet came to Ubayy b. Kaʿb and said to him: 'Gabriel commanded me to deliver this *sūra* to you in order to make it public.' Ubayy said: 'Did Allah really mention my name?' He said: 'Yes!'"³² This tradition pertains to the Median period when Ubayy already started collecting the Quranic revelations, so that such a tradition could have been circulated only prior to the establishment of the view that our *sūra* had been revealed at Mecca.

Neither do the earlier versions of the traditions about Muḥammad's first prophetic experience have any allusion as yet to *Sūrat al-ʿalaq*. One of these traditions which is recorded on the authority of ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 94H) relates that Muḥammad once said to Ḥadīġa: "Oh, Ḥadīġa, I see light and hear a voice. I am afraid I am becoming a *kāhin*" (...*la-qad ḥašīru an akūna kāhinan*). Ḥadīġa comforted him saying that he was too noble

and righteous to be a *kāhin*.³³ In another version traced back to Ibn ʿAbbās through Ḥammād b. Salama, the prophet sees light and hears voices, expresses a similar anxiety (*wa-irni aḥṣā an yakūna fīya ġunm*), Ḥadīġa comforts him, goes to Waraqa b. Nawfal and tells him about it, and the latter confirms that Muḥammad is a prophet.³⁴ The early date of these accounts is indicated not only by the absence of any specific Quranic text, but also by the way in which the image of Muḥammad is perceived. He has grave doubts in himself, fearing that he is becoming a *kāhin* or *māġnūn*. Such a perception dates back to the time when the concept of Muḥammad's *ʿisma* was not yet established. As we are about to see, more elaborate versions have these doubts expressed, if at all, by persons other than Muḥammad himself. Another tradition which likewise does not have an allusion to *Sūrat al-ʿalaq*, is recorded on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās through ʿIkrima (d. 105/723). In this tradition Muḥammad is on the mountain Aġyād, at Mecca, where he sees an angel against the horizon, throwing one leg over the other. The angel addresses him saying: "Muḥammad, I am Ġibrīl!" Muḥammad is frightened, hurries back to Ḥadīġa, says he is afraid he is becoming a *kāhin*, Ḥadīġa comforts him, goes to Waraqa who confirms that Muḥammad is indeed a prophet.³⁵ This tradition which locates Muḥammad's first prophetic experience in Aġyād³⁶ seems to be an elaboration on some Quranic passages alluding to prophetic visions seen on the horizon (LIII/7; LXXXII/23).³⁷ The tradition takes these Quranic visions as though referring to Muḥammad's first encounter with the angel whose name was Gabriel.³⁸

²⁹ Ibn Saʿd, I, 195. For the significance of Ḥadīġa's comforting words see Kister, "God will never disgrace thee", 27 ff. For the traditions about Ḥadīġa see also Lohmann, 441 ff.

³⁰ Ibn Saʿd, I, 195. See also Suyūṭī, *Ḥaṣṣīṣ*, I, 241; Ibn Saḥrāṣūb, I, 41; Sprenger, I, 343. For the traditions about Waraqa, see also Lohmann, 446 ff.

³¹ Ibn Saʿd, I, 194–195; Balāḡūrī, *Ansāb*, I, 104; Suyūṭī, *Ḥaṣṣīṣ*, I, 242; Sprenger, I, 343.

³² For another tradition with the same location see ʿIbārī, *Tajisīr*, XXVII, 27; Suyūṭī, *Dirr*, VI, 123; Ibn Kaṭīr, *Tajisīr*, IV, 249 (Ibn Laḥīʿa — Ibn Laḥīʿa — Abū l-ʿAswad — ʿAʿīṣa).

³³ For these passages, see Bell, "Muḥammad's visions", 145 ff. For the "horizon traditions", see further, Lohmann, 434 ff.

³⁴ Another "non-Quranic" encounter between Gabriel and Muḥammad was recorded in the *Maġāzī* of Abū Maʿšār al-Sindī (d. 170/786): Muḥammad feels something pressing him to the ground, he is frightened, a voice says: "do not be afraid, it is Gabriel!" Muḥammad tells about it to Ḥadīġa (Muġūṭāy), III^a, from Abū Maʿšār. Some reports say that three years before the appearance of Gabriel, Muḥammad received a non-Quranic inspiration from Iṣrāʾīl. See Ibn Kaṭīr, *Bidāya*, III, 4; Suhaylī, I, 269, 270; Ḥalabī, I, 236, 244, 261 ff., 263. See also "Iṣrāʾīl", *EF* (A.J. Wensinck), Al-Wāġidī and others rejected these reports stressing that the only angel who ever inspired Muḥammad was Gabriel. See Ibn Saʿd, I, 191; Yaʿqūbī, II, 23; Muġūṭāy, III^a-III^b. But, on the other hand, there is a noteworthy tradition stating that once Iṣrāʾīl, Gabriel and Michael appeared to Muḥammad, and the prophet saw between the eyes of Iṣrāʾīl "everything before it was sent down" (*raʾaytu bayna ʿaynay Iṣrāʾīl kullia šayʿin*

²⁹ Rāzī, XXXII, 15. See also Abū Ḥayyān, VIII, 492; Ālūsī, XXX, 180. Cf. Lohmann, 264 ff.

³⁰ For these traditions see Sprenger, I, 330 ff.; Nädleke-Schwally, I, 78 ff.; Buhl-Schaefer, 136 ff.; Lohmann, 416 ff.; Paret, *Mohammed*, 47 ff.; Bell, "Mohammed's call", 13 ff.; Watt, *M/Mecca*, 39 ff.; Sellheim, *passim*.

³¹ Other *sūras* were also regarded as the first to be sent down to Muḥammad. For instance, *Sūra XCIV (al-Th)*, or *al-Qalam* (LXVIII). For *al-Th* see Ḥalabī, I, 261. For *al-Qalam*, *Faḥḥ al-bārī*, VIII, 521; Zurgānī, I, 222; Ḥalabī, I, 244. For harmonizing solutions see Balāḡūrī, *Ansāb*, I, 109; Ḥalabī, I, 260 ff. For other such *sūras* see further below. Cf. also Lohmann, 430 ff.

³² Ibn Saʿd, II, 341; Sprenger, I, 342.

Other versions recounting the appearance of Gabriel on Agyād do include the revelation of *Sūrat al-ʿalaq*. One of these versions was recorded by Abū Nuʿaym on the authority of ʿĀʾiṣa through ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr.³⁹ The prophet sees Gabriel on Agyād; the angel shows him how to perform the ritual abtution (*wuḍūʿ*) and how to pray, and delivers him *Sūrat al-ʿalaq*. Muḥammad returns to Hadīġa, tells her what has befallen him and she testifies that Muḥammad is a prophet.⁴⁰ A more detailed report is recorded by al-Hargūṣī in his *Šaraf al-nabi*.⁴¹ Gabriel addresses Muḥammad in Ġiyād al-Aṣġar, Muḥammad faints and is brought back to Hadīġa by people who say that he is possessed (*magḥūn*). Hadīġa denies it stressing that her husband is a prophet. The same events take place the following day, and only on the third day does Gabriel appear to Muḥammad in his most beautiful image, teaches him the *wuḍūʿ* and the *ṣalāt* and delivers *Sūrat al-ʿalaq* to him. Muḥammad returns to Hadīġa and tells her what has happened.⁴²

Other traditions containing the text of *Sūrat al-ʿalaq* are based on the notion that the Qurānic *iqraʿ bi-smi rabbika* records the reminiscences of a dialogue which is supposed to have passed between the angel and the prophet. The earliest version reflecting this idea, which still does not seem to impose new meanings on the Qurānic text, is the one recorded on the authority of ʿAbdallāh b. Šaddād (d. 81H): Gabriel comes to the prophet and says: “...*yā Muḥammad, iqraʿ!*” Muḥammad says: “*wa-mā aqraʿ?*”⁴³ Gabriel presses Muḥammad and repeats demanding: “*iqraʿ!*” to which Muḥammad responds: “*wa-mā aqraʿ?*”, this time, Gabriel says: “*bi-smi rabbika llaḏī ḥalaga...*” till he reaches: “*allama l-insāna mā lam yaʿlam.*”⁴⁴

qabla nuzūlīhī). See Hargūṣī, Brit. Lib. 89^a, idem, Tübingen, 67^a; Suyūfī, *Durr*, I, 91–92. Cf. idem, *Ḥaṣṣiḡ*, III, 156–157.

³⁹ Abū Nuʿaym, *Dalāʾil*, 70–71. See also Ibn Ḥaġar, *Isāba*, VII, 600–601 (from Abū Nuʿaym). Cf. Sprenger, I, 348–349.

⁴⁰ A tradition relating that *Sūrat al-ʿalaq* was revealed after Muḥammad was taught the *wuḍūʿ* and the *ṣalāt*, is already recorded by al-Balāḏurī (*Aṣṣab*, I, 111), on the authority of Maʿmar b. Rāšid (d. 154/770).

⁴¹ Brit. Lib. 24a–25a.

⁴² A short note is recorded by al-Fakīhī as well, to the effect that some people claim that *Sūrat al-ʿalaq* was revealed to Muḥammad in Agyād al-Saġīr, and this was the first *sūra* to be revealed (Fakīhī, 471a. See also Fasī, I, 200, from al-Fakīhī, where this note is said to be *ḡarīb ḡiddan*).

⁴³ Nöldeke–Schwally (I, 81–82) already drew attention to *Jes. XI/6: דברך אקרא אקרא לך*

קרא לך

⁴⁴ The view that only the passage ending with *lam yaʿlam* was revealed to Muḥammad in his first encounter with the angel is manifest in several traditions (e.g., Balāḏurī, *Aṣṣab*, I, 110; Muġāṭil, II, 244^a; Bayhaġī, *Dalāʾil*, I, 412; Suyūfī, *Durr*, VI, 368; Wāḥidī, 6; Qurṭubī, XX, 117; Ḥāzin, VII, 222). But there were also some who held that the first passage to be revealed ended with *al-rūḥā* (v.8), or that the whole *sūra* was revealed on that occasion. See Balāḏurī, *Aṣṣab*, I, 110, 108. And see also Lohmann, 433 ff.

At this point, the mutual exchange reaches its close, and Muḥammad returns to Hadīġa. He tells her that he thinks something evil has possessed him, she comforts him, etc.⁴⁵ The original significance of the Qurānic *iqraʿ bi-smi rabbika* may easily be traced in this tradition; it features here as Gabriel’s answer to Muḥammad’s question: “*What shall I recite?*” If this answer is supposed to provide an object for Muḥammad’s “*What...?*”, it must be rendered: “(Recite) the Name of thy Lord!” Thus, the original significance of *Sūrat al-ʿalaq*, in which Muḥammad is urged to magnify the Name of his Lord, is fully preserved. The structure of the *sūra* is also reflected in this tradition. The *sūra* has some key-words which are repeated twice: *iqraʿ* — *iqraʿ*, *ḥalaga* — *ḥalaga*; *ʿallama* — *ʿallama*. This phenomenon is reproduced in Gabriel’s command: *iqraʿ* which is also twice repeated.

But the dialogue in the tradition of ʿAbdallāh b. Šaddād may also be translated in a different manner:⁴⁶ Gabriel: “*Recite!*” Muḥammad: “*What shall I recite?*” Gabriel: “(Recite:) *bi-smi rabbika llaḏī ḥalaga...*” Such a rendering, which does not seem to reflect the original significance of the tradition of ʿAbdallāh b. Šaddād, is, nevertheless, possible, in view of further traditions in which Muḥammad is definitely commanded to recite the actual words of *Sūrat al-ʿalaq*. One of these traditions, which provides the Qurānic: *iqraʿ bi-smi rabbika* with a new meaning, has the *isnād*: Zuhūrī-ʿUrwa-ʿĀʾiṣa. It contains details about the time and location of the event. The first part was recorded by Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767)⁴⁷ and others.⁴⁸ It says that Muḥammad’s prophethood began (*awwal mā buḏʿa bihī raṣūlu llāhī*) *ḡaybi* *minha l-nubuwwa*) with a “true dream” (*al-rūḥā al-ṣādiqa*). Each dream he saw in his sleep came to him like the breaking of dawn.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Tabarī, *Tarīḡ*, XXX, 162. See also idem, *Tarīḡ*, II, 47–48; Suyūfī, *Durr*, VI, 368–369; Ibn Abī Šayba, II–12; Sprenger, I, 331.

⁴⁶ Cf. Lohmann, 429–430.

⁴⁷ Ibn Hišām, I, 249–250.

⁴⁸ Ibn Saʿd, I, 194; Balāḏurī, *Aṣṣab*, I, 105.

⁴⁹ Watt (*M/Mecca*, 40, 42) renders *al-rūḥā al-ṣādiqa* as “true vision”, stressing that it is “quite distinct from dreams.” But Ibn Ishāq’s version states explicitly that Muḥammad saw this *rūḥā* while being asleep, which means that it is practically a dream. And see also Ibn Kaṯīr, *Bidāya*, III, 4, where it is stressed that this tradition refers to a dream. And see Muġāṭilī, II, 111^a: *awwalu mā ruḥā bihī l-nubuwwa ft-l-manānī ḡarīb taḥadīḡa quḏūbuhum jumma yanzīlu l-waḥyū bāḏu*. Other reports depict the beginning of Muḥammad’s prophetic awareness in entirely different ways. Some say that it first started when his breast was cut open and cleansed (Tabarī, *Tarīḡ*, II, 52; Maqrīzī, I, 38). Others say that his prophethood began when the stones and trees of Mecca started saluting him (Ibn Hišām, I, 250; Ibn Saʿd, I, 157; Bayhaġī, *Dalāʾil*, I, 402; Balāḏurī, *Aṣṣab*, I, 104). Another report states that the first time a divine voice addressed him in a prophetic revelation was when he was working naked with Qurayš at the Kaḡba, and the voice commanded him to put on his clothes (Ibn Saʿd, I, 157; Suyūfī, *Ḥaṣṣiḡ*, I, 218–219; *Mustadrak*, IV, 179; Hargūṣī, Brit. Lib. 26^a–27^a). For the

Al-Ṭabarī has recorded the complete version of the Zuhri-ʿUrwā-ʿĀʾiṣa tradition. It goes on to relate that Muḥammad used to practise *ṭaḥannuḥ*⁵⁰ on Mount Hiraʾ. While he was practising it, Gabriel came to him, addressed him by his name, the prophet was frightened and returned to Ḥadīga asking to be covered (*zammilanz*).⁵¹ Gabriel came again and Muḥammad contemplated suicide. Gabriel re-appeared, addressed Muḥammad and eventually said: “*iqraʾ*”. Muḥammad said: “*mā aqraʾ?*”⁵²

discussion of the various forms and stages of the prophetic revelation, cf. Zurgānī, I, 210, 218, 219, 225 ff; *Zād*, I, 58 ff.; Ḥalabī, I, 252 ff., 257 ff.

⁵⁰ See Kister, “Tahannuth”, 223 ff. See also Lohmann, 419 ff. And for the term *ṭaḥannuḥ* see N. Calder, in *BSOAS*, LI, 1988, 214 ff.

⁵¹ This reflects the view that *Sūrat al-muzzammil* (LXXIII) was the first to be revealed. See also *Faḥ al-bārī*, VIII, 521 (from Aīḥ al-Ḥurāsānī); Zurgānī, I, 222. Others claimed that *al-Muddaḥḥir* (LXXIV) was the first (e.g., Buḥārī, VI, 200–201; Muslim, I, 99; Balāḍūrī, *Ansāb*, I, 107–108; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XXX, 90; idem, *Tarīḥ*, II, 51; Bayhaqī, *Dalāʾil*, I, 398, 410; etc. Cf. Yaʿqūbī, II, 22). For the interchange of *zammala* / *dallara* cf. Balāḍūrī, *Ansāb*, I, 109; Zurgānī, I, 220; Maqrīzī, I, 41; Watt *M/Mecca*, 50. And see also Lohmann, 444 ff. Later on, however, another tradition with the *isrād* Zuhri-ʿUrwā-ʿĀʾiṣa was circulated on the authority of Ibn Ishāq, having ʿĀʾiṣa stating that *Sūrat al-ʿalaq* was revealed first: *inna awwala sūra unzilāt minā l-Qurʾāniqraʾ bi-smi rabbika* (Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XXX, 162; Bayhaqī, *Dalāʾil*, I, 410; *Musīdatrak*, II, 529; Wāḥidī, 5–6). Such a statement is still missing in the Zuhri-ʿUrwā-ʿĀʾiṣa tradition as recorded by Ibn Hišām and the others. And see the same statement with different *isrāds*: Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XXX, 162–163; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, VI, 368; Ṭabarsī, XXX, 151; Zamahṣarī, IV, 270; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, I, 88. Harmonizing solutions were also soon produced. It was sometimes maintained that *Sūrat al-ʿalaq* marked the beginning of Muḥammad’s prophethood, while *al-Muddaḥḥir* marked the beginning of his public preachings. See, e.g., Ḥalabī, I, 262; Watt, *M/Mecca* 47–48. Another harmonizing solution was that *Sūrat al-ʿalaq*, 1–5 was the first opening passage to be revealed, whereas *al-Muddaḥḥir* was the first complete *sūra* to be revealed (see Balāḍūrī, *Ansāb*, I, 109). But the most common view is that *al-Muddaḥḥir* was the first to be revealed after *farrat al-waḥy*. See e.g., Buḥārī, VI, 201–202; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XXIX, 90, 91; Bayhaqī, *Dalāʾil*, I, 411; Balāḍūrī, *Ansāb*, I, 108, etc. This view contradicts the tradition presenting *Sūrat al-dhāʾa* as the first to be sent down following *farrat al-waḥy* (Balāḍūrī, *Ansāb*, I, 108–109; Ṭabarī, *Tarīḥ* II, 48; Ibn Kaṭīr, *Biḍāya*, III, 17).

⁵² In other versions of the Zuhri-ʿUrwā-ʿĀʾiṣa tradition, which were admitted into canonical Ḥadīḥ as well, Muḥammad says: *mā anā bi-qarʾin* — “I do not read” (e.g., Buḥārī, VI, 214; Muslim, I, 97; ʿAbd al-Razzāq, V, 322, and the commentaries on *Sūrat al-ʿalaq*). Western scholars have already noticed that this version is secondary, its aim being to find support for the dogma that Muḥammad could not read and write, which proved the miraculous nature of the Quran (Watt *M/Mecca* 46. See also idem, Bell’s *introduction*, 35). Under the impact of this dogma, even *mā aqraʾ* was sometimes interpreted in the negative sense. See, e.g., Suhaylī, I, 272; Zurgānī, I, 211. Other traditions have: *lasit bi-qarʾin* (Maqrīzī, I, 40), and even *wa-lam aqraʾ kitāban qāḥiḥ* (Suyūṭī, *Durr*, VI, 369; idem, *Ḥaṣāʾiṣ*, I, 240–241; Ibn Kaṭīr, *Biḍāya*, III, 7, 14). Noteworthy is the version of Mūsā b. ʿUqba (d. 141/758) which has: *kayfa aqraʾu* (Bayhaqī, *Dalāʾil*, I, 398; Suyūṭī, *Ḥaṣāʾiṣ*, I, 232; Ibn Kaṭīr, *Biḍāya*, III, 13. Cf. *Faḥ al-bārī*, I, 22; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, I, 82–83; Muḡulīyā, III, II^b). In this tradition the story of the opening of Muḥammad’s breast is also included.

Gabriel squeezed him three times and said: “*iqraʾ bi-smi rabbika llaḥī halāqa*.” At this point Muḥammad goes on to relate: “*fa-qaraʾtu fa-ataytu Ḥadīga*...” The remaining part of this tradition contains Muḥammad’s fears as to his sanity, Ḥadīga’s comforting words and Warāqa’s confirmation of Muḥammad’s genuine prophetic functions.⁵³ There is only one slight but most significant difference between this tradition and that of ʿAbdallāh b. Šaddād. In the latter the encounter with Gabriel terminates as soon as the angel says: “(*iqraʾ*) *bi-smi rabbika*”. In the Zuhri-ʿUrwā-ʿĀʾiṣa tradition the scene goes on with Muḥammad actually carrying out Gabriel’s order: “*fa-qaraʾtu*... etc.” This additional act reflects a new and more restricted perception of the imperative: *iqraʾ*ʾ; it is now an order to recite a given text. Muḥammad’s report: “*fa-qaraʾtu*...” suggests that he actually recited what Gabriel told him, i.e., the opening passage of *Sūrat al-ʿalaq*.⁵⁴ Thus, the Quranic *iqraʾ*ʾ is no longer a general demand to “recite” the Name of the Lord, but more specifically, to pronounce the words of *Sūrat al-ʿalaq*.

The same perception underlies the tradition of Wahb b. Kaysān (d. 126H),⁵⁵ which was recorded by Ibn Ishāq, according to which Gabriel brought to Muḥammad, while the latter was sleeping on Hiraʾ, a coverlet of brocade whereon was some writing (*namaḥ min dībāḡ fihī kitāb*).⁵⁶ Gabriel’s command: *iqraʾ*ʾ is repeated four times, each time the angel presses the prophet with the written text, while Muḥammad asks twice: *mā aqraʾ*ʾ and twice: *mā qā aqraʾ*ʾ. As soon as Gabriel enlightens the prophet on what he should recite (*iqraʾ bi-smi rabbika* etc.), Muḥammad relates: “So, I recited it and he departed from me, and I awoke from my sleep, and it was as if these words were written on my heart.”⁵⁷ Another tradition, traced back to Ḡābir, states explicitly that Gabriel brought to Muḥammad a coverlet of brocade whereon were written the words: *iqraʾ bi-smi rabbika*... till *mā lam yaʿlam*.⁵⁸

⁵³ Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XXX, 161–162; idem, *Tarīḥ*, II, 47.

⁵⁴ In the canonical version which has: *mā anā bi-qarʾin* (see above, note 52), Muḥammad does not recite but merely “returns with the text” to Ḥadīga: *fa-raḡāʾa bhā rasūlu llāhi*...

⁵⁵ For this tradition cf. Sprenger, I, 339 ff.; Kister, “Tahannuth”, 223.

⁵⁶ Some say that this *kitāb* is referred to in Quran II/2: *qālika l-kitābu la gāyba fihī*. See Suhaylī, I, 270; *Faḥ al-bārī*, VIII, 551.

⁵⁷ Ibn Hišām, I, 252–253. See also Ṭabarī, *Tarīḥ*, II, 48–49; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, I, 86; Zurgānī, I, 218; Kalāʾī, I, 328; Ḥalabī, I, 238; Ibn Kaṭīr, *Biḍāya*, III, 12. In the version of Yūnus b. Bukayr from Ibn Ishāq, the brocade is missing, but not Muḥammad’s statement that the words he recited were written on his heart. See Bahyaqī, *Dalāʾil*, I, 402 ff.; Suyūṭī, *Ḥaṣāʾiṣ*, I, 234–235; Sellheim no. 2; Guillaume, *New ighn*, 28 ff.

⁵⁸ Suyūṭī, *Durr*, VI, 368; *Musīdatrak*, II, 529.

IV

The view that the imperative: *iqraʿ* signifies an order to recite the actual words of *Sūrat al-ʿalaq* is reflected not only in traditions of *asbāb al-muzāʾil* but also in the comments of the exegetes on this *sūra*. Abū Ḥayyān reports that some say that the words *bi-smi rabbika* are the object (*mafʿūl*) of *iqraʿ* in the sense that the prophet is ordered to recite them, as one says: *iqraʿ al-ḥamdu li-llāhi*, i.e., recite: “*al-ḥamdu li-llāhi*”.⁵⁹ Such an interpretation seems to have been influenced by the fact that the root *qaraʿa* occurs in the Quran either with *al-kiaḅ* as object,⁶⁰ or, more frequently, with *al-Qurʾān*.⁶¹ Therefore, a textual object had also to be found for our *iqraʿ* and it was, quite naturally, looked for in the actual wording of the Quranic text which follows *iqraʿ*.

A theological consideration also enhanced the need to tone down the original meaning of *iqraʿ*. Commenting on the interpretation of Abū ʿUbayda which takes *iqraʿ bi-smi rabbika* in the sense of *uḫkur ismahu*, al-Rāzī (d. 607/1210) says: “...such a demand does not befit the prophet, because he used to do nothing but to mention Allah; therefore, how can he be commanded to do what he has already been doing all the time.”⁶² The impact of this consideration brought about a significant change in the original meaning of Abū ʿUbayda’s interpretation which is reflected in al-Qurtubī (d. 671/1272). Al-Qurtubī says that some hold that *ism rabbika* stands for the Quran, and that *iqraʿ bi-smi rabbika* means *iqraʿ isma rabbika*, so that the *bi-* is *zāʾida*.⁶³ According to this reshaped interpretation of Abū ʿUbayda, *iqraʿ bi-smi rabbika*, while being synonymous to *iqraʿ isma rabbika*, means: *iqraʿ al-Qurʾān*. The theological disadvantage noted by al-Rāzī has thus been eliminated; the prophet is not ordered to magnify his Lord, but merely to recite the Quranic revelations as they come down to him.

V

The interpretation of Abū ʿUbayda was re-interpreted in another way as well. Al-Wāhidī (d. 468/1075) says that *iqraʿ isma rabbika*, which is

implied by Abū ʿUbayda, means that the prophet was given an edifying instruction to mention the name of Allah at the beginning of each *qirāʾa*.⁶⁴ This explanation seems to reflect the view of those Muslim theologians who held that the recitation of the Quran should always begin with the utterance of the “*basma*”, i.e., the formula “*bi-smi llāhi l-rahmāni l-rahīm*” which opens the Quranic *sūras*. These theologians regarded the *basma* as an integral part of the Quranic revelations, which should be recited like any other verse. The supporters of this view were mainly readers of the Quran and jurists of Mecca and Kūfa who relied on al-Sāfiʿī. They were opposed by jurists of Medina, Basra and Syria who did not pronounce the *basma* during the recitation of the Quran. The latter relied on Abū Ḥanifa.⁶⁵

The controversy on the *basma* affected not only the interpretation of our *sūra* but also the traditions recounting Muḥammad’s first revelation. Further versions of these traditions seem to reflect the view of the “supporters” of the *basma* who strove to prove that it was a genuine divine revelation, and not merely a secondary technical formula. Already in a tradition traced back to Ibn Abās through al-Dahḥāk (d. 180/796) it is stated that the first revelation to Muḥammad was: “Oh, Muḥammad, say: ‘I seek refuge with *al-samīʿ al-ʿalīm* against *al-ṣayān al-raḡīm*’. Then the angel told him to say: ‘*bi-smi llāhi l-rahmāni l-rahīm*’.”⁶⁶ The *basma* was sometimes said to have been revealed to Muḥammad together with *Sūrat al-ʿalaq*. A tradition traced back to ʿIkrima and al-Ḥasan al-Basrī says that the first passage to be revealed was the *basma*, whereas the first *sūra* was *Sūrat al-ʿalaq*.⁶⁷

One of the main issues discussed in relation to the *basma* was whether or not this formula was an indivisible part of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*, and hence, a verse in itself. Those who thought that it was, managed to circulate a tradition which is shaped on the model of the traditions recounting the revelation of *Sūrat al-ʿalaq*. In this tradition, the *basma* is said to have been sent down together with the *Fātiḥa*. *Sūrat al-ʿalaq* is not mentioned at all. The tradition, which is recorded on the authority of Ibn Ishāq (but not included in the *Sīra*), relates that Muḥammad heard voices which frightened him, and told Ḥadīga about it; she said comforting words to him, then sent him to Waraqa for advice, and Abū Bakr accompanied

⁵⁹ Wāhidī, *Wasfī*, 340^a; *qāla Abū ʿUbayda: maḡāzihu: iqraʿ isma rabbika, yuʿrīnanna l-baʿ zāʾida wa-l-maʿrāʾa: uḫkur ismahu, ka-annahu umira an yabnaḍḍa l-qirāʾata bi-smi llāhi l-ʿadḍan*. See also Bagawī, VII, 224; Qurtubī, XX, 119; Ḥāzin, VII, 223.

⁶⁰ See “*Basma*”, *EP* (De-Vaux, Gardet). Cf. Lohmann, 251f.

⁶¹ Tabarī, *Taḡḡīr*, I, 39, 40; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, I, 8; Wāhidī, 9; Aḥsāʾ, XXX, 178.

⁶² Wāhidī, 6; Aḥsāʾ, XXX, 179. Cf. also *Faḥ al-bārī*, VIII, 552; Zurgānī, I, 222; Ḥalabī, I, 242.

⁵⁹ Abū Ḥayyān, VIII, 492.

⁶⁰ X/94; XVII/14, 71, 93; LXIX/19.

⁶¹ VIII/204; XVI/98; XVII/45, 106; XXVI/199; LXXIII/20; LXXXIV/21.

⁶² Rāzī, XXXII, 13.

⁶³ Qurtubī, XX, 119; *wa-qāla qawmuh: “ism rabbika” huwa l-Qurʾānu: fa-huwa yuqūlu: “iqraʿ bi-smi rabbika”, ay isma rabbika, wa-l-baʿ zāʾida...*

him. Waraqa told Muḥammad to listen to the voices, should they occur again, and not to run away. Muḥammad obeyed, and the voice recited to him the *basmala*, commanding him to repeat it three times, which he did. Then each verse of the *Fāṭiḥa* was likewise recited by that voice, and Muḥammad repeated it three times.⁶⁸ The direct implication of this tradition is that the first *sūra* to be revealed to Muḥammad was the *Fāṭiḥa*, including the *basmala*.⁶⁹

The view of those who discarded the *basmala* as non-Quranic is reflected in another version of the same tradition which is recorded by Ibn Abī Šayba (d. 235/849). In this version, the *basmala* is replaced by the *šahāda*.⁷⁰

VI

In all of the traditions and interpretations surveyed thus far, the Quranic *bi-smi rabbika* is perceived as a direct object (*maf'ūl*) of the imperative: *iqra'*. Another line pursued by Muslim exegetes is based on the hypothesis that the object of *iqra'* is not specified in the Quranic text, so that *bi-smi rabbika* becomes a complement describing by what means, or for what reason the act of *qirā'a* is to be performed. This line originates in the Quran itself, where the phrase: *bi-smi llāhi* (but not: *bi-smi rabbika*) has once such a syntactic function (XI/41: *wa-qāla: irkabū fihā bi-smi llāhi maḡrāhā wa-mursāhā*). The unspecified object of *iqra'* is quite naturally said to be the divine revelations which the prophet was about to receive,⁷¹ or, more specifically, the Quran.⁷²

The possibilities of explaining the phrase *bi-smi rabbika* along this line are numerous. Some interpreted it as synonymous to *bi-amri rabbika*,⁷³ others, as meaning *li-aḡli rabbika*⁷⁴ or in the sense of *alā ismi rabbika*.⁷⁵ More current, however, is the interpretation derived from some versions of the traditions about Muḥammad's first revelation; it renders *bi-smi*

rabbika as *musta'imān bi-smihi*, i.e., "being aided by His name", so that he is able to recite, in spite of the fact that he cannot read (s. above, note 52).⁷⁶ No less current is another interpretation reflecting the views of the "supporters" of the *basmala*. *Bi-smi rabbika* is taken as *hāl* (circumstantial clause) denoting: *muḡfaiḥan bi-smihi*, i.e., beginning the recitation of the Quranic *sūras* with the *basmala*.⁷⁷

The view that in *Sūrat al-'alag* Muḥammad is commanded to start spreading the divine message of the Quran has thus become the most prevalent one. The interpretation preserved by Abū 'Ubayda, according to which *Sūrat al-'alag* urges the prophet to praise the Name of his Lord, was almost utterly forgotten.⁷⁸

⁶⁸ Balādufī, *Aḥsāb*, I, 105-106; Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il*, I, 412-413; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, I, 83-84; Suyūfī, *Durr*, I, 2-3; idem, *Ḥasā'is*, I, 237; Zurgānī, I, 221; Ḥalabī, I, 240; Ibn Kaṭīr, *Bi'dāya*, III, 9-10. See also Ṭabarī, XXX, 151 (without Abū Bakr's name).

⁶⁹ And see Rāzī, XXXII, 13; Ḥalabī, I, 245-246; Wāhidī, 10; *Faḥ al-bārī*, VIII, 548, 552-553; Zamaṣṣarī, IV, 270; Qurṭubī, XX, 117; Abū Ḥayyān, VIII, 492; Ālūsī, XXX, 178.

⁷⁰ Ibn Abī Šayba, 12-13.

⁷¹ Abū Ḥayyān, VII, 492; *wa-maf'ūl iqra' mahdūf, ay, iqra' mā yūhā ilayka*. See also Zurgānī, I, 211; Ḥalabī, I, 241; Ālūsī, XXX, 178.

⁷² Ibn 'Abbās, VI, 328; Rāzī, XXXII, 13; Baydāwī, II, 310; Qurṭubī, XX, 119; Ḥāzin, VII, 223; Abū Ḥayyān, VIII, 492.

⁷³ Ibn 'Abbās, VI, 328.

⁷⁴ Rāzī, XXXII, 13.

⁷⁵ Qurṭubī, XX, 119; Abū Ḥayyān, VIII, 492 (al-*Aḥfās*).

⁷⁶ *Faḥ al-bārī*, I, 22; Rāzī, XXXII, 13; Baydāwī, II, 310; Suhaylī, I, 270; Ḥāzin, VII, 223; Abū Ḥayyān, VIII, 492.

⁷⁷ Rāzī, XXXII, 13; Zamaṣṣarī, IV, 270; Baydāwī, II, 310; Qurṭubī, XX, 119; Ḥāzin, VII, 223; Abū Ḥayyān, VIII, 492; *Faḥ al-bārī*, VIII, 552.

⁷⁸ An earlier draft of this paper was read at a colloquium on *ḥadīḥ* in Cambridge, Oct. 1985. I am grateful to the organizers, P. Crone, G. Juyboll and the late M. Hinds for the opportunity of reading this paper and having the comments of the participants.

ABBREVIATIONS

- ‘Abd Al-Razzāq — ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Musannaḡ*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Rahmān al-A‘zamī, Beirut 1970.
- Abū Dāwūd — Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, Cairo 1952.
- Abū Ḥayyān — Abū Ḥayyān Muḥammad b. Yūsuf, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, Cairo 1328/1910.
- Abū Nu‘aym, *Dalā’il al-nubuwwa*, Hyderabad, repr. Beirut, n. d.
- Abū ‘Ubayda — Abū ‘Ubayda, *Maḡāz al-Qur‘ān*, ed. F. Sezgin, Cairo 1955-1962.
- Aḥmad — Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, Cairo 1313/1895, repr. Beirut n. d.
- Ālūsī — al-Ālūsī, *Ruḡ al-ma‘ānī*, repr. Beirut, n. d.
- Bagawī — Abū Muḥammad al-Bagawī, *Ma‘ālim al-tanzīl*, on margin of al-Ḥāzin, *Lubāb al-ta’wīl*, Cairo 1381/1961.
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A LEGAL OPINION OF A MUSLIM JURIST REGARDING THE SANCTITY OF JERUSALEM

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1. For reasons that may be easily classified as historical, religious, cultural, ethnic and political, the Holy Land in general and Jerusalem in particular have acquired great significance in the Islamic conscience. Thus, it is natural that many scholars with various approaches have taken an interest in this question.¹

¹ E. Sivan, "Le caractère sacré de Jérusalem aux XIIIe-XIIIe siècles," *Studia Islamica* XXII (1967), gives on pp. 149-150 (n. 1) a rich bibliography concerning this issue, containing studies by scholars such as (in alphabetical order): E. Ashtor, H. Busse, W. Caskel, S. D. Goitein (here the bibliography is especially rich and includes also items in Hebrew), Z. Hirschberg, Ch. Matthews, A. N. Poliak, G. Vajda. To his list one may add another article by H. Busse, "The Sanctity of Jerusalem in Islam," *Judaism* XVII (1968), pp. 441-468; idem, "Jerusalem and Mecca: the Temple and the Kaaba," in *The Holy Land in History and Thought*, Leiden 1988, pp. 236-246; idem and G. Kretschmar, *Jerusalem's Heiligtums-traditionen*, Wiesbaden 1987; M. J. Kister, "You shall only set out for Three Mosques," *Le Muston* [LXXXII] (1969), pp. 173-196 (reprinted in idem, *Studies in Jāhiliyya an Early Islam*, London [Variorum] 1980, item no. XIII, with some important additional notes at the end of the article; suppl. on pp. 3-4), which is especially important for the present study; forthcoming: idem, "Sanctity Joint and Divided"; E. Sivan, "The Beginnings of the *Fadā'ir al-Quds* Literature," *Der Islam* XLVIII (1971), pp. 100-110; H. Lazarus-Ya'leh, "The Sanctity of Jerusalem in Islam," in J. M. Oesterreicher and A. Sinaï (editors), *Jerusalem*, New York 1974, pp. 211-225; I. Hasson, "Sifrut Šivhey Yerusālayim" (in Hebrew), in M. Sharon (editor), *Sugiyot*, Jerusalem 1976, pp. 43-71; I. Hasson (editor), al-Wasīḥ, *Fadā'ir al-Bayr al-Muqaddas*, Jerusalem 1979; idem, "Jerusalem in the Muslim Perspective" (in Hebrew), in J. Præwer (ed.), *The History of Jerusalem*, Jerusalem 1987, pp. 283-313; S. D. Goitein, see *infra* n. 10, and "al-Kuds", *EP*, V, pp. 322-339; Ibrahim Maḥmūd, *Fadā'ir al-Bayr al-Muqaddas fī mahūzāt 'arabiyya qadima*, Kuwait 1985; O. Livneh, "On the Antiquity of Treatises Consecrated to Jerusalem, in Arabic literature" (in Hebrew), *Cathedra*, fasc. XLIV (1987), pp. 21-26; I would like to thank Dr. 'A. Elhad who has added the following items: G. Raḡab Muḥammad, "al-Masǧid al-Aqṣā bi-l-Ḥaram al-Šarīf" (in Hebrew), in *al-daw' li-l-tarḥīḥ*, March 1973, Baghdad; pp. 840-865; 'A. 'A. al-Dūrī, "Fikrat al-Quds fī al-Islām", *Qadāyā 'arabiyya*, Feb. 1981, pp. 7-28; al-'Asāḥī, Kāmil, *Aḡdātunā fī tarā Bayr al-Maqdis*, Amman 1981; idem, *Āḡarunā fī Bayr al-Maqdis*, Amman 1981 (?); 'A. Fahim Gābr, *al-Aṣḥā al-muqaddasa*, Jerusalem (printed by al-Nagāḥ Univ., Nablus) 1983; F. E.