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The opening passages of sūras LXXIII and LXXIV are addressed to the Qur'ānic prophet in person. They both contain an order to "rise" (qum). In the former passage the prophet is ordered to rise and pray during the night, in the latter, to rise and warn. Both passages contain two unique appellations of the prophet. In the former he is addressed as al-muzzammil, in the latter as al-muddaththir.

The appellations al-muzzammil and al-muddaththir have attracted the attention of western scholars, and since Nöldeke–Schwally the prevailing view in western scholarship seems to have been that these titles reflect a pre-Islamic practice of kāhīns and false prophets. These persons used to receive revelations while being wrapped in a mantle, and since the terms muzzammil and muddaththir mean "the covered" or "the wrapped up" (in a mantle, etc.), it was concluded that Muhammad, too, followed the same practice.

Upon examining the Muslim literature of tafsīr, one is immediately struck by the fact that such an interpretation is entirely missing from the Muslim commentaries relating to these titles. Admittedly, one may claim that Muslim commentators could not tolerate the idea that Muhammad's prophetic inspiration was stimulated by practices similar to those of the pre-Islamic kāhīns and false prophets. On the other hand, however, the very absence of such an interpretation may indicate that it never occurred. Whatever the case.

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1 See Nöldeke–Schwally, I, 87; Buhl–Schäeder, 138, n. 37; Watt, MiMecca 49; Halperin, "Ibn Ṣayyād", 219–220.
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may be, the Muslim sources abound with various other interpretations which have not yet been thoroughly analysed. It would seem that such an analysis might shed new light not merely on the interpretation of these titles, but also on the attitude of the Muslims of the first centuries of Islam towards the image of their prophet.

I

The Muslim interpretations of *al-muzzammil/al-muddaththir* may be classified according to the reasons they give for Muhammad's state of being covered. The first group consists of what may be called the "neutral" explanations, i.e., those that give no reason at all. Some of the interpretations belonging to this group are confined to the lexical meaning of the terms discussed. Qatāda (d. 118 H./736) merely states that *al-muzzammil* is "*al-mutazammil fi thiyyābihi*, whereas *al-muddaththir* is "*al-mutadaththir fi thiyyābihi*. Ibn Qutayba (276 H./889) follows the same line, saying that *al-muzzammil* is "*al-mualaffī fi thiyyābihi*; Al-Zamakhshārī adds the information that *al-muddaththir* is he who is covered with a dīthāhār which is put on above the shī‘ār, the latter being an undergarment. He also adduces the ḥadīth: *al-Anṣār shī‘ār wa-l-nās dīthār.* Other interpretations of the same group merely refer to the fact that Muhammad was covered. An interpretation recorded on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās concerning the muddaththir passage says: "The prophet used to wrap himself up in garments." Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī (d. 96 H./1715) states that the muzzammil passage was revealed to Muhammad while he was wrapped up in a cloak. A similar interpretation is recorded on his

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4 See Zamakhshārī, IV, 180. See also *Kashf al-muṭālīb*, fol. 137v, Ḍūlūf, XXIX, 115. For the ḥadīth itself see Wensinck, *Concordance*, s.v. "d.th.r.". Cf. also *Fath al-bāri*, VIII, 42.
5 Sūyūtī, *Durr*, VI, 277: "kāna l-nabiyyu (s) yatadaththaru bi-l-thiyyāb.
authority concerning the *muddaththir* passage. Commenting on the *muzzammil* passage, Muqātīl b. Sulaymān (d. 150 H./767) says: "... this is because the prophet went out from the house with his clothes on, and Gabriel addressed him, saying: 'Yā ayyuhā l-*muzzammil*,' i.e., the one who has wrapped himself up in clothes, and he had actually put them on tightly."

The second group of interpretations may be defined as the "praising" ones. Muhammad is said to have wrapped himself up in his mantle for a holy purpose, as a result of which he was addressed as *al-muzzammilt al-muddaththir*. These appellations are thus made to seem like a form of praise. In the first interpretations to be examined in this group, the holy reason for Muhammad's being wrapped up in his garments is prayer. These interpretations relate only to the *muzzammil* passage which, indeed, contains a specific reference to night prayer (verse 2). Al-Ālusī records the tradition of Qatāda saying that Muhammad wrapped himself up (tazammala) in his clothes in order to perform the *salāt* (prayer); he was preparing for it, and therefore he was addressed with a phrase meaning: "O, thou preparing for the worship of Allāh" (... 'alā ma'nā yā ayyuhā l-*musta'iddu li-l-'ibāda)? A similar interpretation is recorded by al-Farra' (d. 207 H./822), who says that *al-muzzammil* is he who has wrapped himself up in clothes and is preparing for prayer, and is the apostle of Allāh. This is also reported to have been the opinion of al-Kalbī (d. 146 H./763). Al-Zamakhsharī says that the prophet was praying in a wool garment (*mirf*) belonging to 'A'isha, and the Qurān praises him for that and

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7 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* XXIX, 90: ... 'an Ibrāhīm, "yā ayyuhā l-*muddaththir*", qāla: kāna muwadadthhiran fī quṭīfa. See also Suyūṭī, *Durr*, VI, 281.
8 Muqātīl, II 212b: ... wa-dhālika anna l-*nabiyya* (s) kharaja min al-bayti wa-qad labisa thiyyabahu fa-nādāhu Jibrīlu 'alayhi l-salāmu; "yā ayyuhā l-*muzzammil*" alladhī qad tazammala bi-l-thiyāb, wa-qad qammahā 'alayhi.
9 Ālusī, XXXIX, 102.
10 Farrā', III, 196: wa-l-*muzzammilu illadhī qad tazammala bi-thiyyābihi wa-tahayya'ta li-l-salāi, wa-huwa rasūlu llāhi (s).
11 Rāzi, XXX, 171.
orders him to go on with this habit. 'A'isha herself is quoted in a tradition to the effect that half the garment covered her body while she was asleep, and the other half covered Muhammad, who was praying.  

In other interpretations belonging to the same group the holy reason for Muhammad's being covered is no less than the prophetic mission itself. These interpretations are purely metaphorical, implying that Muhammad was "covered", i.e., loaded with his prophethood. 'Ikrima's (d. 105 H/723) interpretation of al-muzzammil reads: zummilta hādhā l-amra fa-qum bihi — you have been loaded with this task, so carry it out. Concerning al-muddaththir 'Ikrima says: duuththirta hādhā l-amra fa-qum bihi, which has the same meaning. 'Ikrima is also reported to have read al-muzzammal/al-muddaththar instead of al-muzzammil/al-muddaththir. In another version of 'Ikrima's interpretation Muhammad is said to have been loaded with the Qur'an. There are also some elaborations on 'Ikrima's interpretation. In al-Alūsī it is stated that the prophet was "covered" with prophethood and mental perfection (al-mutadaththir bi-l-nubuwwa wa-l-karamat al-naisaniyya). In al-Rāzī it is stated that he was wrapped up in the clothes of magnificent knowledge, noble disposition and total mercy. A somewhat different line is followed in another interpretation recorded by al-Alūsī to the effect that Muhammad was covered with human form under which was hidden his inner, eternal entity (al-haqīqa al-Muhammadiyya).

The interpretations belonging to this group treat the

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12 Zamakhshari, IV, 174. See also Kashf al-multabis, 187; Qurṭubī, XIX, 32; Alūsī, XXIX, 101-102; Baydawi, II, 284. The commentators were aware of the fact that since 'A'isha became Muhammad's wife only after the hijra, the passage must be Medinan.
13 Tabari, Tafsīr, XXIX, 78.
14 Loc. cit., 91.
15 Rāzī, XXX 171, 190; Qurṭubī, XIX, 32.
16 Ibn Kathir, Tafsīr, IV, 434, Cf. Qurṭubī, XIX, 32.
17 Alūsī, XXXX, 116.
18 Rāzī, XXX, 190: yā ayyuḥā l-muddaththiru bi-athwābī l-ʾilmi l-ʾazīm wa-l-khulqī l-karīm wa-l-rāḥmatī l-kāmīla.
19 Alūsī, XXIX, 116.
appellations *muzzammill/muddaththir* as honorific titles of Muḥammad. Accordingly, these titles are included in the lists of the honorific names and nicknames of Muḥammad which some Muslim writers managed to trace in the Qurʾān. Abū Saʿd al-Khargūšī (d. 406 H./1015), for instance, is able to point out almost 30 such names and appellations, each with the Qurʾānic verse in which it occurs. The Shiʿī author Ibn Shahrāshūb (d. 588 H./1192) claims in the introduction to his own list that the Qurʾān contains 400 names of the prophet. Both al-Khargūšī and Ibn Shahrāshūb include in their lists the nicknames *al-muzzammill* and *al-muddaththir*.

III

It is most striking that in the various interpretations of *al-muzzammill/al-muddaththir* there is also a third group which may be called "pejorative". In this group one is confronted with interpretations implying that the reason for Muḥammad’s being covered is his failure to carry out the prophetic tasks which had been assigned to him. His state of being covered symbolizes inactivity, withdrawal and shrinking from meeting the hardships involved in carrying out the tasks of his prophetic mission. The subsequent commands (*qumi l-layla ..., qum fa-andhir*) are taken as orders to change this inappropriate state, and start acting fearlessly and devotedly.

The first interpretations of this kind to be examined are focused on scenes from Muḥammad’s life before his first revelation. An interpretation quoted by al-Rāzī implies that Muḥammad’s state of being covered is a metaphor, standing for his seclusion at Mount Hīrā’, where he used to practice *taḥannūth*. Al-Rāzī says:

He who is wrapped up in clothes (*al-mutadaththir bi-l-thawb*) is like him who hides under it. The prophet on Mount Hīrā’ was like one who hides from the people; it is as if it was said to him: "O, thou wrapped up in the garment of obscurity and seclusion, undertake this mission, and abandon the corner of obscurity and undertake the mission of warning the people and preaching to

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20 Khargūšī, 73°-73°.
21 Ibn Shahrāshūb, I, 130.
Other traditions are focused on the scene of the first revelation itself. These traditions are found in the earliest compilations of hadith and tafsir and they are, in fact, well known. In these traditions Muhammad is said to have been confronted by the Angel, either for the first time in his life, or after the fatra of revelation, which caused him great anxiety. He hurried home and asked to be covered, exclaiming, "zammilüni, zammilüni", or, "daththirüni, daththirüni". In these traditions Muhammad's demand to be covered is caused by his attempt to hide from the Angel. But it is sometimes stated that the need to be covered was usual with Muḥammad, because each revelation caused him to shiver with cold.

At any rate, Muslim writers were aware of the fact that by the time of his first revelation, Muḥammad was not yet delivering prophetic messages, for which reason the Qur'ān addressed him merely as al-muzzammiltal-muddaththir, and not as al-nabi or al-rasūl. Al-Suhaylî (d. 581 H./1185) notes that Muḥammad was not addressed by the Angel, "Yā Muḥammad", but rather, "Yā ayyuhā l-muddaththir", in order to convey a feeling of tenderness and kindness on the part of Allāh (li-yastashira l-lina wa-/-mu/ii(ata min rabbihi ...).

Other interpretations imply that Muḥammad's state of being covered was caused by his despair at the resistance of his opponents. A tradition traced back to the šahābī Jābir b. ‘Abdallāh relates that Quraysh gathered in Dār al-Nadwa and discussed what name they should call Muḥammad, in order to make people desert him. Some suggested kāhin, others suggested majnūn or saḥīr. Finally they agreed to call him "the one who separates the loved ones from each other"
(yufarrigu bayna al-ḥabībi wa-ḥabībihī). The prophet heard about this and covered himself and wrapped himself up in his clothes (fa-tazammala fi thiyyābihi wa-tadaathhara fihā). Gabriel came to him and addressed him: "Yā ayyuhā l-muzzammil, yā ayyuhā l-muddaththir". Another version to the same effect is traced back to Ibn ‘Abbās. It says that al-Walid b. al-Mughira made a feast for Quraysh, during which the consultation about the name took place. The names offered were sāḥir, kāhīn and shā'ir; finally, the appellation sihr yuṭhar was agreed upon. When Muḥammad heard about it he veiled his head and covered himself (wa-qannda ra'sahu wa-tadaihhard). Then Allāh revealed the muddaththir passage. The appellation sihr yuṭhar occurs in the 24th verse of Surat al-muddaththir, which makes the opening passage of this sūra seem like a divine order to Muḥammad not to despair at what is said about him by the non-believers in that particular verse. Al-Ṭabarānī (d. 548 H/1153) has recorded a fitting paraphrase of the interpretation presented in the traditions just quoted: "O thou striving to ward off the offence by (hiding under) the garment. strive to do it through preaching, and warn them of hell even though they do not believe".

In other interpretations Muḥammad’s inactivity, as signified by his being covered, is the result of a personal flaw, namely his self-indulgence. According to one of these interpretations, which is quoted by al-Ḥaḍīṣ in relation to al-muzzammil, Muḥammad was covered with a cloak belonging to Khadija, his wife, and was making love to her, upon which the muzzammil passage was revealed to him; it was as if it was said to him: "Leave aside selfish matters and occupy yourself with the worship of Allāh".

In other versions of the same interpretation Muḥammad’s

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27 Suyūṭī, Durr, VI, 276 (from al-Bazzār, al-Ṭabarānī and Abū Nu‘aym). And see other versions, Rāzī, XXX, 189-190; Qurṭūbī, XIX, 60-61.
28 Suyūṭī, Durr, VI, 281 (from al-Ṭabarānī, and Ibn Mardawayhi). See also Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, IV, 440.
29 Ṭabarānī, XXIX, 105.
self-indulgence is merely sleep; the term *muzzammil* is said to stand for one who sleeps wrapped up in a blanket; and it is said to be a metaphoric description of laziness and inactivity. The clearest exposition of this approach is found in al-Zamakhshari's commentary. He is able to adduce a verse of Dhū l-Rumma (d. 117 H./735) in which the term *mutazammil* stands for "a lazy person, negligent, who remains aloof in hardships and does not act to ward off troubles, and does not undertake to suffer difficulties". According to al-Zamakhshari, Muhammad used to sleep at night under a blanket, and he was addressed in a manner which expressed disapproval of this custom, and of his taking pleasure in sleep, as if nothing else mattered. Al-Zamakhshari goes on to say that in the *muzzammil* passage Muhammad was urged to choose *tashammur* instead of *tazammul*, i.e., to take off his blanket and get to work and devote himself to the worship of Allāh. Al-Zamakhshari concludes this explanation by stressing that Muḥammad and his companions obeyed this command by giving up sleep and devoting all their nights to prayer, till they became so weary that Allāh had to give them permission to pray only during certain parts of the night.31

Such an interpretation, which makes use of the context of the entire *sūra*, is rooted in earlier exegetic traditions. Al-Suddī (d. 128 H./745) is reported to have stated that Muḥammad wrapped himself up for sleep (... *wa-kāna qad tazammala li-l-nawm*).32 The same statement is also recorded on the authority of al-Ḍahḥāk (d. 105 H./723).33

The same interpretation appears also in the commentaries on the *muddaththir* passage. Al-Rāzī says that Muḥammad was sleeping wrapped up in his clothes (... *kāna nā’iman mutadaththiran bi-thiyābihū*), when Gabriel came and woke him, saying: "Yā ayyuhā l-muddaththir, qum fa-andhir", as though he were saying: "Stop covering yourself with clothes and sleep, and occupy yourself with this

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31 Zamakhshari, IV, 174. Cf. also Kashf al-multabis, 187; Rāzī, XXX, 17; Baydāwī, II, 284; Ṭabarsī, XXIX, 93.
32 Wāhidī, Wasīf, 300. See also Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, IV, 434.
33 Qurṭubī, XIX, 32.
mission that Allâh has assigned to you". Here again one may find earlier expressions of this interpretation. Al-Tabârî has a tradition with the "family isnâd" of Ibn Sa'd which is traced back to Ibn 'Abbâs, stating that ya ayyuhâ l-muddaththir means "yâ ayyuhâ l-nâ'îm". Al-Farrâ' and Ibn Qutayba, too, explain that al-muddaththir stands for one who puts on clothes in preparation for sleep.

The most interesting interpretation of al-muzzamml al-muddaththir belonging to the "pejorative" group is found in al-Suhaylî's Kitâb al-tâ'rîf 'an al-asmâ' al-mubhama fi l-Qur'ân. The author begins his comment by stating that neither al-muzzamml nor al-muddaththir can be regarded as Muḥammad's name because both are merely derived from the specific condition in which Muḥammad found himself when he was addressed. Al-Suhaylî points out that Muḥammad was addressed as al-muzzamml in order to convey the sense of mulâtâfa, i.e., kindness, that is to say, that no reproach was intended for the state he was in at the moment when he was addressed. Al-Suhaylî adduces the example of 'Alî and Ḥudhayfa, the former having once been addressed as Abu Turâb, the latter, as nawmân, and in both cases the sense of kindness was meant. Al-Suhaylî goes on to say that the muzzamml passage contains a message for everyone who lies down at night, that he should rise and pray. He also notes that the message for Muḥammad himself is clear in view of the command, "qumi l-tayla ...." It is to stop covering himself with clothes while lying down, and to turn his state into a better one. Al-Suhaylî says that the same message is included also in the muddaththir passage, and is based on a significant relation between the address "ya ayyuhâ l-muddaththir" and the subsequent command, "qum fa-andhir". He stresses that the significance of this passage may be understood only in view of the statement attributed to Muḥammad which runs as follows: "Anâ al-nadhîr al-'uryân" — "I am a naked

34 Râzî, XXX, 190. See also Ṭabarî, XXIX, 105.
35 Ṭabarî, Tafsîr, XXIX, 91.
36 Farrâ', III, 200; Ibn Qutayba, Gharîb al-Qur'ân 495.
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warner". Al-Suhayli says that the locution nadhir 'uryān stands for one who is acting resolutely and energetically (al-jāddu l-mushammīr). He adds that the warner among the Arabs used to take off his clothes and wave them while shouting, in order to make sure that his warning was noticed. He points out that in view of this, the significance of the interrelation between the address and the command is clear: The warner who has his clothes on (al-muddaththir) is contrasted with the naked warner (al-nadhir al-'uryān).

Al-Suhayli's explanation implies that the title muddaththir signifies Muhammad's shortcomings with respect to his task as a warner to his people. He is called muddaththir because of his inactivity and indolence. The command "qum fa-anlihir" means that a demand is being made that he stop being muddaththir, and turn into a nadhir 'uryān. In other words, he must "take off his clothes" and start acting as a devoted messenger.

The explanation of Al-Suhayli is unique in its brilliant insight. It is based on a very early hadīth recorded by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī says that Muhammad said:

I and my message are like a man who comes to his people, saying: 'I have seen the army (of the enemy) with my two eyes, and I am a naked warner (wa-innī anā al-nadhir al-'uryān). Rescue yourselves! Rescue yourselves!' Some obeyed him and were saved, others disbelieved and the enemy attacked and destroyed them.

Muslim writers seem to be unanimous that the idiomatic usage of the phrase anā al-nadhir al-'uryān is pre-Islamic in origin, but there is considerable disagreement as to the identity of the person who used it for the first time. At any rate, the chief advantage of Al-Suhayli is that his explanation makes the muddaththir passage look well established in authentic pre-Islamic Arabic idioms.

Generally speaking, the third group of interpretations discussed in this paper seems earlier than the other two. This group is based on the assumption that the covering of Muhammad represents an improper state from which he must set himself free. Such an approach

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38 VII, i26, IX, ii5.
39 VII, 63.
40 See Fath al-bārī, XI, 270-271; Tāj, III, 561-562 (s.v. "n.d.h.r.").
seems to stem from that early stage in which the idea of Muhammad’s ‘isma was not yet fully developed. Later on, the covering of Muhammad had to be, and indeed was interpreted as though representing a rather plausible state of the prophet (second group), or, at least, a neutral one (first group). At this stage the interpretations of the third group could be tolerated no longer. It is significant that al-Suhayli’s explanation concerning al-nadhir al-‘uryān is not repeated elsewhere, and that al-Zamakhshari’s comment concerning Muhammad’s laziness as symbolized by his sleeping under the cover of his clothes is severely criticised by al-Ālūsī. One may even venture to suggest that the third group of interpretations contains the clue to the original significance of the muzammīl-muddaththīr passages.

ABBREVIATIONS

Bukhārī - al-Bukhārī, Sahīh, Cairo 1958.

41 Ālūsī, XXIX, 101.
Khargüši - Abu Sa'd al-Khargüši, Sharaf al-nabī, MS, Br. lib. Or. 3014.
Muslim - Muslim, Sahīh, Cairo 1334 H./1915.
Suhaylī, Asmā' - al-Suhaylī, al-Tārīf 'an al-asmā' al-mubhama fi l-Qur‘ān, MS.
Br. lib., Or. 2184.