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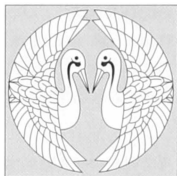
Front cover:

“Ni Heng (173—198), a poet in the service of Cao Cao”. Illustration No. 31 to the Chinese novel *Three Kingdoms* from the Album H-13 preserved in the manuscript collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies (early 19th century), 15.6 × 19.6 cm.

Back cover:

- Plate 1.** “A high-spirited stone, a divine oriole”. Illustration No. 46 to the Chinese novel *A Dream in the Red Chamber* from the same Album, 15.5 × 19.6 cm.
- Plate 2.** “Shi Ziang-yun falling asleep on the stone bench”. Illustration No. 58 to the Chinese novel *A Dream in the Red Chamber* from the same Album, 15.2 × 19.6 cm.
- Plate 3.** “Lin Dai-yu speaking to a parrot”. Illustration No. 57 to the Chinese novel *A Dream in the Red Chamber* from the same Album, 15.5 × 19.5 cm.

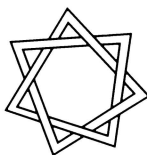
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TEXT AND ITS CULTURAL INTERPRETATION

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THE QUR'ĀN AND ITS WORLD: III. "ECHOINGS OF UNIVERSAL HARMONIES" (PROPHETIC REVELATION, RELIGIOUS INSPIRATION, OCCULT PRACTICE)*

Among the most important aspects of the traditional world-view of Muslim peoples is the idea that it is possible to establish contact with certain higher forces, with divinity. This concerns not only contact with God through prayers for help in the everyday affairs of "this life" and for the mitigation of retribution in the after-life. Such is the contact accessible to "mere mortals." But the prophets, the saints (*awlīyā'*), Šūfī *shaykhs* and Shi'ite *imāms* also establish contact with God, and this "contact" is of an entirely different nature. To this latter realm belong the ecstatic and occult practices which form an important part of popular Islamic belief.

An analysis of the corresponding ideas and behavioural stereotypes is, in our view, important if we are to understand and to interpret adequately the traditional principles underlying the cognition of reality, the particularities of a traditional world-model, and the interrelation of an ideal standard and actual religious practice.

Before turning to the sources of these ideas, the analysis of which is of great significance for understanding the problem as a whole, it is necessary to dwell at least briefly on how phenomena of this sort are treated by contemporary religious studies and a number of adjacent disciplines.

1

Recent years have witnessed renewed interest in the problem of analysing and describing phenomena which are traditionally designated by terms such as trance, possession, ecstatic states or the somewhat more neutral phrase "altered states of consciousness" (ASC). Today this question attracts ethnographers as well as scholars of religion and psychologists. Aided by the methodological apparatuses of their fields, they are attempting to make sense of the phenomenon of ASC as such. In its current definition, it includes the socially and culturally determined possibility that a number of changes can take place in human consciousness, which have extremely serious consequences both for our particular interpretations of reality as well as for the character of our self-perception [1].

The rapid growth of interest in the problem of ecstatic states and the significant achievements in the understanding of the mental mechanisms through which they arise are linked with the tumultuous expansion and serious gains made by psychiatry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In analysing known descriptions of ecstatic states, specialists tried to discover in them as many features

of a pathological character as possible. Parallels with cases described in psychiatry were considered sufficient explanations for phenomena in question. Ecstatic states were most often linked to hysteria [2]. Nonetheless, E. Linderholm noted that the tendency toward ecstatic states was directly connected to the deepest layers of the human psyche, and that such states could arise spontaneously or be consciously triggered. A person's sense of space and time could vanish in such a state, although subconscious mental activity continued. He wrote about the key particularities common to such states among members of various cultures and religions (which are connected with the "switching off" of a number of aspects of "external culture" in the course of the trance) as well as about those characteristics undoubtedly influenced by cultural surroundings [3].

The role of psycho-physiological factors in conditioning ecstatic states was most fully investigated by E. Arbmann in the third volume of his essential study. Nonetheless, he concluded that ecstatic states cannot be fully explained as hysterical trance, despite the obvious similarities in their basic manifestations [4].

* The first Russian version of the article was published in *Traditzionnoe mirovozzrenie u narodov Perednei Azii* (Traditional World Outlook of the Peoples of Western Asia), eds. M. A. Rodionov and M. N. Serebriakova (Moscow, 1992), pp. 20—33.

The socio-cultural aspect of the problem began gradually to attract more and more attention, especially after the middle of the 1950s. Materials important for understanding the specific nature of ecstatic states and their place in traditional cultures were obtained by Erica Bourguignon and the members of her group. After researching occurrences of these phenomena in almost 500 ethno-cultural situations, they concluded that in nine out of ten cases traditional cultures are typified by existence of one or more stereotypes connected with ASC [5]. On the basis of this material, Bourguignon concluded that the phenomenon of ecstatic states is, in essence, an individual negotiation of a social situation with the help of the behavioural models or social roles characteristic of a given culture [6].

An attempt to unite the psycho-physiological and socio-cultural approaches is demonstrated by research published in a 1977 collection edited by V. Crapazano and V. Garrison [7]. In his research on the phenomenon of ecstatic states, Crapazano constantly stresses the interconnection of individual social needs of the individual, psycho-physiological particularities and the set of models offered by society for the realisation of those needs. Since he considers that in the culture of each traditional society there is a system of behavioural stereotypes and social relations connected with ecstatic states, he suggests that we view such states in the context of normal psychological processes [8].

By employing role theory to explain the phenomenon of ASC, T. Sarbin and V. Allen were able to hypothesise a "scale of intensity governing the body when roles are as-

sumed". The intensity can vary from zero to extremely high, when a person is almost entirely enveloped by the role assumed. Ecstatic states are a part of this process. In particular, the authors concluded that the precisely regulated ritual side of ASC is intended to hinder their excessive duration, which can present dangers for the body [9].

A.-L. Sikkala, who has researched the phenomenon of Siberian shamanism, also employed role theory. She concluded that a person with a completely normal nervous system can be a shaman. In her opinion, the shaman's trance is typified by a delicate balance between the deep envelopment of the shaman in his role and the demands and expectations of his audience [10].

Thus, if ecstatic states were originally treated exclusively from the vantage point of mental pathology, a gradual and growing shift has taken place toward viewing them as a part of complex socio-cultural algorithms, toward explaining them from the vantage point of normal psychology. At issue is the intensification of various psychological mechanisms to a certain maximum point. Individual psychological traits — in particular, a creative bent [11] — aid this intensification, as do a system of religious and cultural stereotypes which correspond to the role assumed, and the setting (particular ritual practices, weather conditions, the time of the day, the expectations of the audience, etc.) [12].

The results of this research can be applied to an analysis of the available material, primarily Qur'anic, on the prophetic revelations of Muḥammad and will, in our view, help us toward a satisfactory interpretation of this material.

2

Muḥammad belongs to that number of historic figures whose lives continually attract the attention of historians. Dozens of published works give various answers to the question of who he was: a prophet, a creative figure endowed with exceptional sensitivity to the social needs of his society and genuinely convinced that Allah was sending down revelations, or a clever politician who skilfully used "revelations" of his own fabrication for his own purposes. For the most part, the second description is frequently applied to the Medina period of his prophetic activity, while the first is applied to the Meccan period. On this subject, special attention has been paid to early Muslim tales of Muḥammad's vocation and his prophetic revelations, as well as to the corresponding Qur'anic fragments.

Byzantine polemicists already claimed that the special states into which, according to tradition, Muḥammad fell, were epileptic seizures. In 1843, G. Weil followed their lead in his biography of Muḥammad, which remained popular for many years not only in academic circles, but with the reading public [13]. A. Sprengler, a doctor by profession, authored another work in the same vein [14], which, in the words of a contemporary, A. Kramer, succeeded in creating "the only entirely successful portrait of the religion's founder, one free from all legendary embellishments" [15]. Yet he wrote of Muḥammad's hysterical seizures, describing his condition as *hysteria muscularis*.

This approach to explaining the phenomenon of Muḥammad's prophetic revelations can be explained by two circumstances: first, the highly negative attitude toward the "false prophet Muhammad" present since medieval times (the psychological phenomena which accompanied

the visions of Christian mystics were not termed pathological). Secondly, as was noted above, medical psychology of that time, which for the most part studied mental states which had advanced to the pathological stage, also viewed various borderline states as pathological. However, already in 1905, Hautsma refuted the theory of Muḥammad's epileptic and hysterical seizures [16]. This view was supported by V. V. Barthold [17] and developed by T. Andrae, who made this problem the object of special study [18]. The latter [19], and after him many other scholars [20] recognised that the theory of pathological states could not be applied to Muḥammad. Besides that, within a broad context, the identity of the psychological aspects of Muḥammad's prophetic revelations with the states of the Old Testament prophets, Christian saints and mystics, some nineteenth-century religious preachers, African and Asian sorcerers, shamans and poetic inspiration has been realised. I. N. Vinnikov in a brilliant work [21], which, unfortunately, remains practically unknown to Western scholars, not only revealed in Muḥammad's ecstatic practice features typologically inherent in shamanism but also demonstrated that the two stories about the summons of Muḥammad reflected different notions of the way of obtaining a prophetic gift (the active and the passive form of summoning) which go back to different stages of the religious-social consciousness of the Arabian population. The last conclusion has so far not been considered in the works of Western students of Islam.

M. J. de Goeje's opinion [22], supported by V. V. Barthold [23], that Muḥammad's visual illusions described in the Qur'ān could be explained by a special atmospheric ef-

fect, has not been generally accepted by specialists. It is evident that the explanation of these visions by a special hypnotic state characteristic not only of Muḥammad, is closer to the real state of things [24].

The Islamic tradition on the vocation of Muḥammad was also critically reconsidered in the works of Richard Bell [25], who followed the hypercritical trend in Islamic studies characteristic of the second half of the nineteenth—the first quarter of the twentieth century. Bell revealed contradictions between different versions of this tradition and the compositional diversity of Qur'ānic fragments which recount Muḥammad's visions. Although he accepted the reality of the very fact of the visions, which were interpreted differently by Muḥammad at different stages of his prophetic career, Bell nevertheless failed to distinguish the social and religious specification of the two groups of narratives considered by I. N. Vinnikov. *Fatra* — the interruption of contact between Muḥammad and God — was interpreted by Bell as a reminiscence of the real start of Muḥammad's prophetic activities — a period of secret preaching.

The hypercritical approach to the Islamic tradition, though it did not find general support among scholars, nevertheless made them deal with it with greater caution. It appears clear now that the traditions about the vocation of Muḥammad and of his "communion" with God preserved

certain notions characteristic of that time and, correspondingly, the ideas of the Prophet himself, on the way of creating that kind of "communion". The Qur'ānic testimony on the doubts and diffidence of the Prophet at the early stage of his activities clearly demonstrate that Muḥammad himself, as well as his environment, could accept the authenticity of his prophetic mission only by recognising its conformity with their own ideas of prophetic vocation.

Richard Bell's pupil W. Montgomery Watt, who accepted the Islamic tradition with much caution, nevertheless recognised the authenticity of its principal points. He considered Muḥammad a man with a special kind of creative individuality. He collaborated with a specialist on Western mysticism to explain the specific features of Muḥammad's prophetic experience [26].

A significant advance in the study of the phenomenon of Arabic prophecy was made by M. B. Piotrovsky, who saw behind scattered facts about the activities of Arabic "false prophets" a whole prophetic movement typologically close to the activities of the Old Testament prophets. He came to the conclusion that the Arabic "prophecy" had been a regular stage of social and ideological development characteristic of the Middle East [27]. Of principal importance also is his conclusion that the process was socially determined, "when *kāhins* and *kāhin*-like figures grew into preachers and leaders of a different kind" [28].

3

A. Poulain, who specially studied and classified religious visions, distinguished external and internal ones. External visions consist in comprehending visual objects and hearing words, the object pronouncing them is, however, not visible. Internal visions can be classified into imaginative and intellectual. The first ones reach one's consciousness directly as images, the second ones are mental links with no words [29].

Visual visions are described and considered by the Prophet in *āyāt* 53 : 4—18 and 81 : 22—25:

"This is naught but a revelation revealed, taught him by one terrible in power, very strong; he stood poised, being on the higher horizon, then drew near and suspended hung, two bows'-length away, or nearer, then revealed to his servant that he revealed. His heart lies not of what he saw; what will you dispute with him what he sees? Indeed he saw him another time by the Lote-Tree of the Boundary nigh which is the Garden of the Refuge, when there covered the Lote-Tree that which covered; his eye swerved not, nor swept astray. Indeed, he saw one of the greatest signs of his Lord".

"Your companion is not possessed (*majnūn*); he truly saw him on the clear horizon; he is not niggardly of the Unseen"*.

These visions were in detail analysed in special works [30].

The other possibility of communicating with God considered by the Qur'ān are dreams. Context analysis [31] demonstrates that the term *ru'ya* ("vision") applied in the description of the spiritual experience of Muḥammad himself (17 : 60/62, 48 : 27), as well as of Yūsuf (12 : 43) and Ibrāhīm (37 : 105), indicates mostly a "vision in a dream". It was in his dream that Muḥammad was trans-

ported to the "remotest mosque" (17 : 1) (*fiḡ. I*), in a dream the victory over the Meccans was promised him and the possibility of making *hajj* with his followers (48 : 27): "God has indeed fulfilled the vision (*ru'ya*). He vouchsafed to His Messenger truly: 'You shall enter the Holy Mosque, if God wills, in security, your heads shaved, your hair cut short, not fearing'. He knew what you knew not, and appointed ere that a nigh victory". It should be taken into account that in the last case the vision was either accompanied by words or was perceived entirely through hearing.

An analysis of the Qur'ānic texts shows that the "contact" with God by hearing was the principal form of communication between the Prophet and God; the Prophet perceives both visions and the words of Allah with his heart (*qalb*) (26 : 193—194).

The Qur'ān contains the recurring idea that man is to be comprehended as a unity of three primary components: "hearing, sight, and heart" (16 : 78/80): "And it is God who brought you forth from your mother's wombs, and He appointed for you hearing, and sight, and hearts (*al-sam'a wa-l-abṣāra wa-l-af'idata*), that haply so you will be thankful (see also 23 : 78/80; 67 : 23). Heart is considered in this case to be the repository of man's intellect (22 : 46/45): "What, have they not journeyed in the land so that they have hearts to understand with (*qulūbun ya'qilūna bihā*) or ears to hear with (*adhānūn yasma'ūna bihā*)? It is not the eyes (*al-abṣāru*) that are blind, but blind are the hearts (*al-qulūb*) within the breasts".

In that way — "by heart" — the sounds which were coming, as it appeared to Muḥammad, from without, were perceived by him as speaking directly in his consciousness.

The analysis of words derived from the stem *why*, which forms the principle Qur'ānic terms used in the sense

* Hereafter the A. J. Arberry translation of the Qur'ān is used.

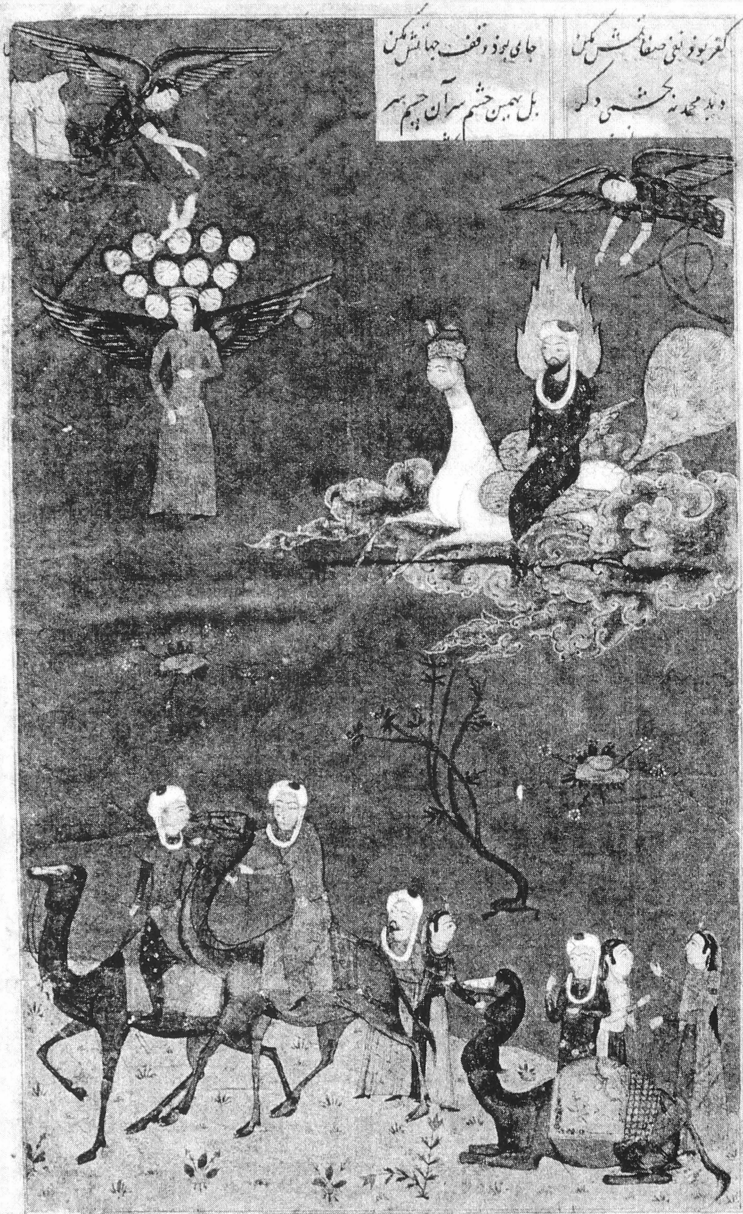


Fig. 1

of "inspiration", "revelation" shows that when they are used in connection with a human being they appear as notions implanted into human consciousness in verbal form, which could later be reproduced in one's native tongue (42 : 7/5). This imposition is something principally different from direct verbal contact: "It belongs not to any mortal that God should speak to him, except by revelation (*wahy*), or from behind a veil" (42 : 51/50). The last case concerns Mūsā; another passage tells that "unto Moses God spoke directly (*kallama ... taklīmān*)" (4 : 164/162).

It is important to note that the visions of Muḥammad were also accompanied by inspiration: "... revealed (*awḥā*) to his servant that he revealed (*awḥā*). His heart (*qalb*) lies not of what he saw; what, will you dispute with him what he sees?" (53 : 10—11).

Metricaly organised speech was firmly associated with the idea of other-worldly contacts. Before Islam there were several people in Arabia who pretended to maintain connections with the powers of the other world and who would chant metrical texts supposedly inspired by supreme forces and expected to produce magic effects. Among them there were the fortune-teller (*kāhin*), tribal preacher (*khātib*) and poet (*shā'ir*). Combining in his own person several social functions formerly belonging to different people Muḥammad performed as well the functions of prophet, preacher and poet of the Muslim community. Muḥammad's opponents repeatedly denied his prophetic mission, citing the similarity of his preaching and behaviour with the words and deeds of *kāhins*, *khātib*s and *shā'irs*. According to the tradition, a spirit (*jinnī*) could throw a pre-Islamic poet to the ground, pressing his chest with its knees [32], which corresponds with the stories of Muḥammad's personal experience. The following words are ascribed to the contemporary and panegyrist of the Prophet, poet Hassān b. Thābit: "Many a well made poems resounded through the night, which I received coming down from the air of the sky (*wa-qāfiyatīn 'ajjat bi-l-laylīn raẓīmatīn talaqqayatu min jawwī-l-sammā'i nuzūlahā*). Further the poet is speaking about the Qur'ān: "The one who does not speak poetry (*lā yantuqu shi'ra 'indahu*) sees it and is unable to say something similar" [33].

The Prophet's adversaries also charged that he was inventing his "revelations", that he was a "possessed" man (*majnūn*), who, according to the ideas of that time, spoke words inspired by supreme forces (68 : 51), that he was a "wizard" (*sāhir*) or "enchanted" (*mashūr*) (10 : 2; 17 : 47/50). The Prophet denied these accusations and received a special revelation (69 : 40—46): "it is the speech of a noble Messenger. It is not the speech of a poet (*shā'ir*) (little do you believe) nor the speech of a soothsayer (*kāhin*) (little do you remember). A sending down from the Lord of all Being. Had he invented against Us any sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand, then We would surely have cut his life-vein and not one of you could defended him".

In this connection it should be mentioned that in the Qur'ān none of Muḥammad's opponents compares his behaviour with the actions of *'arrāf* ("fortune-teller", or "soothsayer"), who, unlike the *kāhin*, was always the initiator of contact with the deity [34].

Kāhin, *khātib*, and *shā'ir* differed not only in the level of their "contact with the deity", which could occur in verbal form, but also in the form of the contact and the character of their speech. Stylistic analysis of the Qur'ānic text

shows that Muḥammad's sermons included forms characteristic of the performance of each of these persons [35]. Evidently inheriting their social functions and the style of their preaching, the Prophet was obliged also to inherit the special forms of their behaviour in this specific situation. It possibly explains the variety of forms (*al-kayfiyyāt*) of "contacts" with God already noted by medieval Muslim scholars. Al-Suyūfī (1445—1505) enumerates five such forms, other theologians — up to ten [36].

Through an analysis of the Qur'ān and the early Islamic tradition it is possible to reconstruct the main features of the psychological phenomenon which Muḥammad viewed as prophetic inspiration (*wahy*).

Most often the revelations came at night, "before dawn" (97 : 5; 53 : 1). Muḥammad felt their approach by his special state. They could come in a dream or in waking reality so that he could distinguish in his mind certain words and sounds which he could later reproduce in his native tongue. Sometimes these revelations were accompanied by a light similar to "the shining light of dawn", which appealed to pre-Islamic notions of contacts with supreme forces [37]. In those moments Muḥammad experienced ecstatic states, often painful: he tossed convulsively, felt blows which set all his being atremble, his soul seemed to leave his body, foam came from his mouth, his face turned red and pale in turns, he would sweat even when it was cold. The last feature is stressed most often [38].

Most often, especially at the initial stage, the revelations came unexpectedly. In the course of time the Prophet evidently learned to accelerate the approach of similar states by wrapping his head or by slowly reading the Qur'ān at night, submitting to a kind of self-hypnosis [39]. It was prohibited, however, to accelerate or to incite the coming of a revelation consciously: "Move not thy tongue with it to hasten it; Ours it is to gather it, and to recite it. So, when We recite it, follow thou its recitation. Then Ours is to explain it" (75 : 16—19). Muḥammad considered the words received in this way as coming from the celestial book containing the words of Allah (35 : 31/28; 18 : 27/26). In the course of his prophetic activities his ideas about the actual power which conveyed the revelations changed. At first he had thought that he was listening to the words of Allah himself, later the notion of a spirit (*rūh*, 26 : 193; 42 : 52), of Jibrīl (*figs. 2, 3*), the conduit of revelations, came into being.

In 1981, in the Tartu collection of papers "Works on Sign Systems" there appeared an article by T. M. Nikolaeva considering reflections of the psychological aspects of poetic inspiration in the verse by nineteenth—twentieth century Russian poets [40]. The author used about 140 poems by A. Pushkin, M. Lermontov, E. Baratynsky, F. Tyutchev, A. Fet, V. Solov'yov, K. Balmont, A. Blok, A. Bely, I. Annensky, A. Ahmatova, M. Tsvetaeva, N. Zabolotsky, B. Pasternak, O. Mandelshtam, B. Ahmadulina. All of the poems mention certain inexplicable sounds. The poets speak of a certain "secret realm — not sound, not colour, nor colour, nor sound"; "they seem to me complaints and groans ... one all-conquering sound arises" (Ahmatova); "the far-off, secret sound of indistinct entreaty" (Blok); "unearthly echoings of universal harmonies" (Sologub); "a three-starred, scattered peal" (Balmont); "an unknown, wingless, awful call" (Blok); "a dream-world voice" (Tsvetaeva); "an orchestra of other-worldly violins" (Blok);

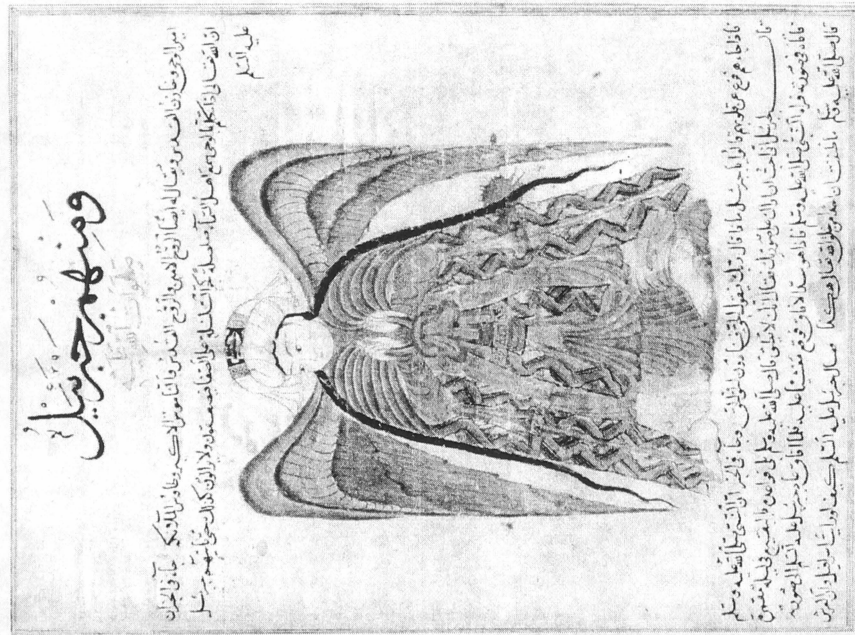


Fig. 2

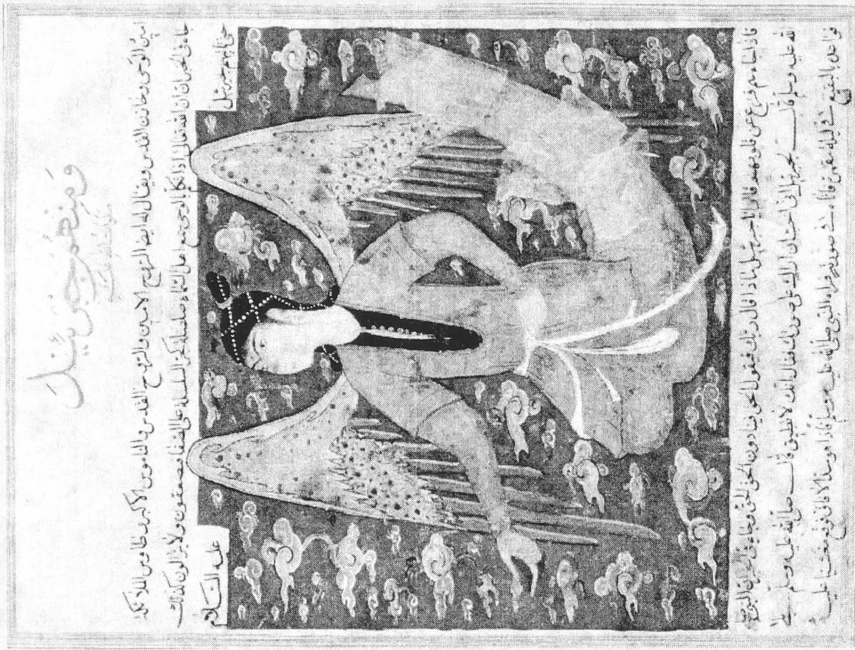


Fig. 3

"a rain of symphonies" (Belyi); "a rolling, rippling chime" (Balmont).

The poets hear these sounds at specific times, between "dusk and dawn". We find "scarlet twilight" (Blok); "the dying light of sunset" (Sologub); "foul-weathered, misted evening" (Tyutchev), "thick and sleepless night" (Paster-nak), and "the hour of sunrise" (Balmont).

As for the source of the sound, something misty and unreal is cited — "from the spheres of unearthly haze" (Balmont), "in this mad mist" (Blok) (cf. verses of Hassān b. Thābit, see above); celestial bodies — "far-off Syrian atremble" (Balmont). Sometimes the source of the sound is located in the poet himself — "singing — the boiling of blood" (Mandelstam). In some cases it is a certain fiery element — "the spirit wept, and in the starry deep the fiery sea was parted, and someone's dream in whispers spoke of me" (Blok).

T. M. Nikolaeva writes that "most probably the element of fire and flames was in some complicated way combined with the scarlet mist embracing a poet in his pre-creative period and with an insistent noise growing into rhythm" [41].

Sounds were often perceived during periods of insomnia and unrest — "in those days when the soul is trembling full of worldly troubles" (Blok), when the poet is under strain, expectantly awaiting a creative burst: "I wait for the call, I wait for the answer" (Blok); "thus I prayed: quench my dark thirst for singing" (Ahmatova).

Various creative reactions take place: "but in vain it weeps and prays" (Tyutchev); "I blaze and burn, I struggle and soar, in languors of extreme endeavour" (Fet); "a burnt to ashes layer of worlds lives within my budding ear" (Bely); "but now the words were heard... and lines came easily, dictation to a snow-white notebook" (Ahmatova); "but I forgot what I would like to say, the unflashed thought returns to realms of shadow" (Mandelstam).

Though it is important to take into account the possible influence of poetic patterns, we get in general the following picture of a special psychological state characteristic of many poets: at a certain time, "between the sunset and the dawn", entering a specific pre-creative mood, when either fiery-scarlet colours predominate, or there is night-glitter, or, just after sunset, with its gloomy mist and dark-blue-and-red shades, the poet perceives certain sounds, which could be both bright and clear or indistinct and deadened (depending on the time of the day). The source of these sounds he either feels in himself, or somewhere near, or they come from remote celestial spheres. The emotional reaction that follows may then either develop into a period of creativity or into a spiritual crisis [42].

It is plain that a comparison of these materials with the Islamic tradition describing the character of Muḥammad's prophetic revelations allows one to speak about the psychological resemblance of the different forms of "contacts with God" to the emotional reaction described [43]. One can remember also that the Ancient Greek poets claimed that they were *musoleptos*, i.e. their souls were possessed by the goddess of song. We recall as well the concept of religious and poetic inspiration developed by Plato, with its similar treatment of artistic and prophetic inspiration, the amazing closeness of the Genieästhetic concept created by eighteenth–nineteenth century German philosophy and romantic poetry to the Islamic idea of prophetic gift (*nubuwwa*) [44].

Psychological research demonstrates, that a man in a special "transitional state", connected with a specific induction of the right hemisphere of his brain, can take the images created by his imagination for a special kind of communication. Besides that, the distinctive features of the neurotic-psychological strain described here have much in common with the description of Muḥammad's revelation states. What takes place in similar states is "a process of reconstruction of the functional activity of one's body, when the achievement of the desired result could be ensured by the functioning of the body as well as by the functional state of its separate sub-systems" [45].

The rhythm and structure of many revelations, the appearance of "mistakes, errors in the grammar and syntax of sayings" [46] are also apparently connected with the Prophet's neurotic-psychological strain at the time when he was preaching or having a revelation, which led to a certain destabilisation of the process of making verbal constructions. These peculiarities of Qur'ānic language inspired both the incredibly intricate explanations of medieval Muslim exegetes and entire theories of Qur'ānic language [47]. They can, however, be convincingly explained if one takes into account the peculiarities of Muḥammad's emotional state, the nervous and mental tension which accompanied the "revelation". This state led to a certain "destabilisation of the process of oral communication" [48].

Visions and psychological states new to Muḥammad came to him when he was in a state of inner tension caused both by the events of his private life as well as by the realisation of the closeness and inevitability of the great catastrophe — the Last Judgement, by his eagerness to help his relatives and members of his tribe. Becoming sure of his prophetic mission — much of this belief instigated by those same visions described by the Qur'ān — Muḥammad started to behave according to the behaviour patterns worked out by society for those people who pretended to "connections" with God. These archetypes included also a set of phenomena expected to take place in the course of such revelations. Muḥammad's consciousness included one of the principal provocative forces — the demand to follow archetypes accepted for the social roles he performed. Different forms of Muḥammad's contact with God were of the same psychological contents and were connected with his acceptance of the corresponding functions belonging to *kāhin*, *shā'ir*, and *khātib*. Evidently, the states experienced by Muḥammad, as described above, were connected with the same psychological mechanism — he was a man with a special psychological structure similar to those of many creative personalities who have left a significant trace in the history of the world.

Legends about Muḥammad's mission were created among a circle of people who remembered the stories told by the Prophet or had been present at the time of some of his revelations. These legends were later unconsciously modified in conformity with then current views on prophetic missions. That is how the version of the active form of Muḥammad's call came into being — answering the behaviour of *'arrāfs* — Arabian fortune-tellers, whose practice it was to "send an enquiry" to the gods. This tradition definitely contradicts the whole pathos of the Qur'ānic sermon: there it is many times repeated that Muḥammad was only a transmitter of Allah's will; any attempts to incite or enforce a revelation were condemned. Meanwhile, the version of the passive reception by Muḥammad of his pro-

phetic gift is confirmed by the whole totality of Qur'anic materials.

The practice of Muḥammad's reception of prophetic revelations was thus connected with the system of corresponding ideas then circulating in pre-Islamic Arabia. It should be taken into account also that in the sixth—seventh centuries many settled inhabitants of Arabia shared Jewish and Christian ideas of the connection between man and God. They could in some way have influenced the notions considered here.

In the Jewish environment of Muḥammad's time there was a belief that God, after he had ceased to send his prophets to the world, could reveal his will to some people, making them sensitive to a kind of echo of certain words and sounds (*bat qōl*) expressing his intentions. It is the lowest level of prophetic revelation. In this way future events could be predicted, though no new laws could be established through *bat qōl*, nor could the old ones be interpreted. One of the features of *bat qōl* which distinguishes it

from real prophesy was that it was not spoken in Hebrew [49].

The *āya* 51/50 of Sūra 42 cited above (*wahy... kallama taklīmān*) could be a reflection of the idea of the two "levels" of contact with God. However, it did not find any further development in the Qur'ān. Its appearance was, apparently, the result of some polemics with the Jews. Muḥammad argued that what Jews thought to be the second "level" of communication with God also corresponded to real prophetic status. Evidently the Jews, even if they recognised the possibility of Muḥammad's "contact" with God, his revelations coming in Arabic (46 : 12/11) [50], could regard the voice he heard only as *bat qōl*, i.e. the lowest level of prophecy. This led to a definitive rejection of Muḥammad's prophetic status, of the new religious and social norms instituted through his revelations. Eventually, it ended in a complete break with the Jews and helped to establish the Qur'anic idea of prophesy based mainly on the pre-Islamic traditions of Arabia.

4

After the death of the Prophet, as the dogmatic system and the law of Islam became more and more complicated, the development of the notion of prophetic revelation (*wahy*) took place. It was formed, in particular, in the course of disputes about the createdness of the Qur'ān (*khalq al-Qur'ān*) [51].

The idea of prophetic revelation developed by classic Muslim philosophy goes back to the Platonic concept of religious-poetic inspiration (recognised in Europe only during the Renaissance) — its influence on the formation there of the theory of poetic inspiration was decisive. This evidently explains the difference between the corresponding European and Islamic cultural paradigms. While in the West the idea of the mystic contents of poetic inspiration coexisted with the idea that any comparison between poetic and religious (Christian) inspiration at the same level was impossible, in Islam, within the framework of the theory of the "inimitability of the Qur'ān" (*'i'jāz al-Qur'ān*) it turned out to be possible to consider the "artistic form" of the Qur'ān through direct comparison of the sacred text with poetic, i.e. "profane" texts [52].

In the works by Muslim mystics in the Shi'ite environment there were attempts to explore the difference between prophetic gift (*nubuwwa*) and saintliness (*wilāyya*). One of the fundamental features of this difference was that prophesy was dependent upon divine revelation (*wahy*), while saintliness was connected with inspiration (*ilhām*). While the famous historian and exegete al-Ṭabarī (838—923) had explained the term *wahy*, when it was applied to prophets, as synonymous with *ilhām*, in later times *ilhām* became a stable term for the religious inspiration of saints (*awlīyā*), Ṣūfī *shaykhs* and Shi'ite *imāms*. It was discussed, in particular, by Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzī (1149/50—1209) who also distinguished between *wahy* — inspiration and vision — and *wahy* — direct contact with God. According to al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), a saint (*walī*) could possess knowledge unknown to a prophet (*nabī*), though the first one could not comprehend the knowledge of the Divine Law. The fundamental difference between *ilhām al-walī* (cf. *bat qōl*) and *wahy al-nabī* is that the first is preordained for the *walī* himself while the second one is socially significant, being addressed to all people [53].

The entire set of notions and patterns considered here was developing in Islam in conformity with the rule formulated by I. Lewis in his fundamental work "Ecstatic Religion". According to this law, as the religious system was developing and becoming more complicated, and the position of religious authorities more firm, there was more and more animosity towards ecstatic practice [54]. The opposition of the Sunni theologians to the religious practice of Ṣūfīs, especially to its extreme ecstatic forms (*mawājīd*), did not, however, hinder the growth of Ṣūfī influence [55]. Ecstatic and occult practices became widespread in popular Islam, both in its Sunni and especially its Shi'ite forms [56].

Sorcery (*sihr*) is a special field where ecstatic practice flourished in popular Islam. Since the time of the Prophet sorcery had been denounced, but ideological controversy in medieval Islam brought forth very different opinions. Among the followers of the Prophet were people who, according to the Qur'ān, considered him a wizard (*sāḥir*) or enchanted (*mashūr*) and his preaching — sorcery given to him by someone (*sihr yu'thar*). Those people claimed also that sorcery had been unknown to their ancestors [57]. As we have just seen, original Arabian magic practice was connected with persons designated by the terms *kāhin*, *'arrāf*, *shā'ir*, *majnūn*. *Sihr* in the Qur'ān was connected first of all with Egypt (there are several descriptions of the contest between Mūsā and the wizards of the Fir'aun (for example, 7 : 113/110) and with Babylon (2 : 102/96)). The idea that *sihr* (sorcery) was connected with Babylon was common for the Near East and the Mediterranean. It is present in the Ancient tradition and in the Bible (Ex. 47 : 11).

According to the Qur'ān (2 : 96), *sihr* was received from Allah by two angels in Babylon — Hārūt and Mārūt. The guardians of this occult knowledge were shaytans, who taught it to men. In the course of the Arab conquests the Muslim state annexed the lands where occult practices had been most widespread. Those were, first of all, Egypt and Mesopotamia. By the tenth century a number of corresponding Byzantine, Persian and Indian works on occultism were translated into Arabic. This knowledge was integrated during the formation of classical Arabic culture and became one of its distinctive features.

Egypt became the centre of occult studies in the caliphate — "the Babylon of wizards", as Ibn al-Nadīm called it in the tenth century. The corresponding pre-Islamic tradition continued there for a long time. Later this centre shifted, probably towards the lands of North Africa. It was possibly, connected with the activities there of *darvish* orders, the widespread distribution of Sufism, which included in its system occult knowledge along with the heritage of Black Africa. In Arabic folklore, in particular in the tales of the "Thousand Nights and One Night" black Africans and natives of Maghrib most often appear as wizards. This shift was also reflected in folklore: Berber magicians were gaining the upper hand over Egyptian ones.

The connection of occult knowledge with the development of Sufism also manifests itself in the idea that the supreme achievement of divine magic was the cognition of "the greatest of the names" (*al-ism al-a'azam*) of Allah, which could become known only to divine messengers and prophets. They thought that with that name it was possible to kill and resurrect, to go to any place and to perform any miracle. The attitude of Muslim theologians to *sihr* developed not only under the influence of the Qur'ān but also in disputes over the existence of saints (*awlīyā*) and miracles (*mu'jiza, āya, karāma*). Mu'tazilites regarded all miracles as *sihr*. Later, however, (between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries) the notions of *sihr* and miracle became more distinct. They began to distinguish two kinds of magic: the lawful one (*al-tarīqa al-mahmūda* — "the approved way") and the forbidden (*al-tarīqa al-madhūma* — "the disapproved way"). The first one was thought to go back to Ādam and his daughter Anāq, to Sulaymān (Solomon) and to Jamshīd of Persian myths. The second one takes its roots from Iblīs, who gave this knowledge to Baydāha, his daughter (or his son's daughter). Magic as such was based on a wizard's link with *jinn*s. People who practised "lawful" magic (*al-mu'azzimūn* — "enchanters") achieved the same aim by submitting to Allah's will, by seeking his help. Those who practised "forbidden" magic

(*al-sahara* — "sorcerers") established connections with *jinn*s through evil deeds. In the Muslim world this practice was forbidden and punished with death.

Mu'tazilites, as well as Hanafites and Shafi'ites, thought that "forbidden" magic could not change the nature of things, as it was confined to affecting the human senses by various means, such as drugs, incense, etc. This point of view, however, never became dominant. Magic actions of this kind became known as *al-simīyya* (from *sima* — "sign, feature, quality"). "Real" magic was denoted by the term *al-ruhānī* ("spiritual"), in its turn it was divided into "high" (*'ilwī*) or "divine" (*rahmānī* — "of the Merciful One") and "low" (*sufī*) or "devilish" (*shayṭanī*) magic. A number of the most primitive magic actions based neither on astrology nor on "lawful" magic were called *'ilm al-ruqqa* ("the science of spindle", i.e. women's work), probably, a distortion of the term *'ilm al-ruqya* — "the science of sorcery".

Al-Ghazālī, like other theologian-traditionalists, denounced all kinds of magic, though he did not doubt the possibility of establishing contacts with *jinn*s and using their power to interfere with worldly matters. In spite of the disapproval of the Sunni theologians, magic practices and occult knowledge still make up one of the most important features of the traditional culture of all levels of Arabic-Muslim society. Moreover, small talismanic Qur'āns or talismanic sheets covered with the Qur'ānic citations, as well as the Qur'ān fragments (*āyāt*, *Sūras*, and collections of *Sūras*), took a great part of Muslim occult practice.

The phenomenon of the Qur'ān cannot be adequately explained without constantly bearing in mind that the Sacred Book derives from any source but God, that it was sent down to the Prophet in a miraculous way [58]. The Qur'ān itself is the main miracle of Islam. On the other hand, the role of the Qur'ān in the everyday life of millions of Muslims, its significance for the Muslim magic and occult practice is so great, that the phenomenon of Qur'ān could be properly evaluated if only all these matters are taken into account. One of the next papers in this series will be specially devoted to this aspect of the existence of the Qur'ān.

Notes

1. "Ecstasy research in the 20th century" (an Introduction to *Religious Ecstasy Based on Papers Read at the Symposium on Religious Ecstasy Held in Abo, Finland, on the 26th—18th of August, 1981*, ed. Nils G. Holm (Stockholm, 1982), p. 9. Also see here the rich bibliography on the subject. Hereafter cited as Holm, "Ecstasy research".

2. See, for example, P. Janet, *De l'angoisse à l'extase: un délire religieux, la croyance* (Paris, 1986); *idem.*, *De l'angoisse à l'extase: les sentiments fondamentaux* (Paris, 1988); E. Kraepelin, *Psychiatrie* (Leipzig, 1915), iv; T. Ribot, *Les maladies de la personnalité* (Paris, 1924); E. Linderholm, *Pingstsjörelsen* (Stockholm, 1904); E. Andrae, *Mystikens psykologi* (Stockholm, 1926).

3. Linderholm, *op. cit.*, pp. 11—21.

4. E. Arbmann, *Ecstasy or Religious Trance* (Uppsala, 1970), iii, p. 45.

5. E. Bourguignon, "Introduction: a framework for the comparative study of Altered States of Consciousness", *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness and Social Change* (Columbus, 1973), p. 11.

6. E. Bourguignon, *Possession* (San Francisco, 1976), p. 41; I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion* (Harmonsworth, 1971), pp. 86, 120.

7. *Case Studies in Spirit Possession*, eds. V. Crapazano and V. Garrison (New York, 1977).

8. V. Crapazano's Introduction to *Case Studies in Spirit Possession*, pp. 19—20.

9. T. Sarbin, V. Allen, "Role theory", *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, eds. G. Lindzey and E. Aronson (Menlo Park, 1968), pp. 489—92.

10. A. L. Sikkala, *The Rite Technique of the Siberian Shaman* (Helsinki, 1978), pp. 28—31, 340—3.

11. Holm, "Ecstasy research", p. 24.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 22—4.

13. G. Weil, *Mohammad Prophet, sein Leben und seine Lehre* (Stuttgart, 1843).

14. A. Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammed* (Berlin, 1861—1865), i—iii.

15. Cited after V. V. Bartold, "Musul'manskiĭ mir" ("The Muslim world"), *Sochineniia* (Moscow, 1966), vi, p. 277.

16. Bartold, *op. cit.*, p. 284. Cf., however, O. G. Bol'shakov, *Istoriia Khalifata* (The History of the Caliphate) (Moscow, 1989), i.

p. 238, No. 104, citing the opinion of professor of psychotherapy E. A. Lychko: "All features characteristic of Muḥammad's fits are symptomatic of temple epilepsy" (also pp. 96—7).

17. V. V. Bartold, "Islam" (Islam), *Sochineniia*, vi.
18. T. Andrae, "Die Legenden von der Berufung Muhammeds", *Le Monde Orientale*, VI (1912), pp. 6—18. Also see his *Mohammed. Sein Leben und sein Glaube* (Goetingen, 1932); English edition: T. Andrae, *Mohammed. The Man and his Faith* (New York, 1936). The English edition is used by the author of the present article.
19. Andrae, *Mohammed*, p. 69.
20. A. Guillaume, *Islam* (Edinburgh, 1954), p. 25; W. M. Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 52—8; *idem.*, *Muḥammad. Prophet and Statesman* (Oxford, 1961), pp. 18—9.
21. I. N. Vinnikov, "Legenda o prizvanii Mukhammada v svete étnografii" ("The legend of the summons of Muḥammad in the light of ethnography"), *Sergei Fëdorovich Ol'denburgu: k 50-letiiu nauchno-obshchestvennoi deiatel'nosti (1882—1932)* (Leningrad, 1934).
22. M. J. de Goeje, "Die Berufung Mohammed's", *Festschrift Th. Nöldeke* (Giesen, 1906), i, pp. 1—5.
23. V. V. Bartold, "K voprosu o prizvanii Mukhammada" ("To the question of the summons of Muḥammad"), *Sochineniia*, vi, pp. 615—6.
24. Andrae, *Mohammed*, p. 65. Ahrens has a different point of view which did not find support among specialists. In his opinion, Muḥammad's visions were caused by hallucinogenic drugs, see K. Ahrens, "Muḥammad als Religionsstifter", *Der Islam* (1935), p. 24.
25. R. Bell, "Mohammad's visions", *Muslim World*, XXIV (1934), pp. 145—54; *idem.*, "Mohammad's call", *ibid.*, pp. 13—9.
26. Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 54—5.
27. M. B. Piotrovskii, "Mukhammad, proroki, lzheproroki, kakhiny" ("Muḥammad, prophets, false prophets, kâhins"), *Islam v istorii narodov Vostoka* (Moscow, 1981), p. 15.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
29. A. Poulain, *Graces of Interior Prayer* (London, 1928); cf. Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 54; Andrae, *Mohammed*, p. 64.
30. See Poulain, *op. cit.*
31. *The Qur'ân*, 12 : 43—44: "And the king said, 'I saw a dream seven fat kine, and seven lean ones devouring them; likewise seven green ears of corn, and seven withered. My counsellors, pronounce to me upon my dream (*ru'ya*), if you are expounders of dreams (*al-ru'ya*). — 'A hotchpotch of nightmares!' they said. 'We know nothing of the interpretation of nightmares (*al-aḥlâm*)' ". Cf. also *âyât* 21 : 5 and 7, where it is spoken about Muḥammad himself and, correspondingly, the word *aḥlâm* and the verb *waḥâ* ("to inspire") are used: Andrae, *Mohammed*, pp. 37ff.; Bell, *op. cit.*, pp. 145—54; R. Paret, *Muḥammad und der Koran* (Stuttgart, 1957), pp. 44—6.
32. Andrae, *Mohammed*, p. 59. Also see M. Zwettler, "A mantic manifesto: "The Sura of The Poets" and the Qur'anic foundations of prophetic authority", ed. James L. Kugel, *Poetry and Prophecy. The Beginning of a literary tradition* (Ithaca and London, 1990), pp. 75—119. Modern Egyptian scholar Naṣr Abū Zayd traced, following Ibn Khaldūn, the existing parallels between the visions (*ru'ya*) of Muḥammad and the creative experience of a poet. The publication of this work resulted in repression against the scholar in his native land, which made him emigrate, see Naṣr Hâmid Abū Zayd, *Mafhûm al-naṣṣ, Dirâsa fî 'ulûm al-Qur'ân* (Al-Qâhira, 1990), pp. 52—9. Also see Navid Kermani, "Die Affäre Abu Zayd. Eine Kritik am religiösen Diskurs und Ihre Folgen", *Orient*, XXXV (1994), pp. 25—49; S. Wild, "Die andere Seite des Textes: Naṣr Hamid Abu Zayd und der Qur'ân", *Die Welt des Islams*, XXXIII (1993), pp. 256—61; also S. Wild's Preface to *The Qur'ân as Text* (Leiden, 1996), pp. IX—XI, and "Arabic poetry", *ZDMG*, Supplement III, 2 (XIX Deutscher Orientalisierungs) (1977), pp. 700—8.
33. *The Diwan of Hassân b. Thâbit*, ed. H. Hirshfeld (London, 1910), p. 34.
34. T. Fahd, *La divination arabe* (Strasbourg, 1966), p. 62.
35. It would, however, be a great simplification to reduce the entire stylistic diversity of the corresponding Qur'anic texts to the influence of special forms of ecstatic speech activity of *kâhin*, *shâ'ir* or *khâṭib*. In examining the language of the Qur'ân from the vantage point of the indissoluble aspects of the tripartite formula "what is said, by whom, in what state?", it is possible to detect in it an "emotive aspect", which reflects Muḥammad's state when he preached, and an "indicative aspect", which reflects the group and individual status of the Prophet himself, his listeners and opponents at one moment of another of his prophetic activity. See V. I. Golunov, "Rech', émotzii i lichnost'. Problemy i perspektivy" ("Speech, emotions and personality. Problems and perspectives"), *Rech', émotzii, lichnost': Materialy i soobshchennia* (Leningrad, 1978), pp. 3—4. Here one should pay special attention to the rhythm and structure of the "revelations", to the significant number of grammatically and logically incomplete phrases, to the presence of "rough spots" and errors in the grammatical-syntactic formulation of his utterances. About it see Golunov, *op. cit.*, p. 10 (also see below, note 48 of the present article).
- The distinctive forms of "sacral language" can apparently be traced by juxtaposing the length of various "revelations", the number of compound and complex constructions, of words with a positive or negative connotation and so on (see, for example, G. V. Nikolaeva, "Vzaimosviaz' lichnostnykh i rechevykh osobennostei v situatsii émotional'nogo napriazheniia" ("Interconnection of personal and speech peculiarities under conditions of emotional stress"), *Rech', émotzii, lichnost'*, pp. 75—81.
- The adaptation of special methods for the phonetic analysis of language structure to the peculiarities of our material also offers interesting possibilities, as these methods allow one to reveal the emotional tone of individual utterances. See A. P. Zhuravlev, "Zvukovaiia organizatsiia rechi kak odin iz sposobov eč émotional'noi okras'ki" ("Sound speech organisation as one of the ways of its emotional complexion"), *Rech', émotzii, lichnost'*, pp. 97—101.
36. I. Goldziher, *Abhandlungen zur arabischen Philologie* (Leipzig, 1896), i, p. 205.
37. Andrae, *Mohammed*, p. 66.
38. A. Guillaume, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
39. J. C. Archer, *Mystical Elements in Mohammed* (New Haven, 1924), pp. 72—6; W. M. Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
40. T. M. Nikolaeva, "Iz plamnia i sveta rozhdennoe slovo" ("The word born from flame and light"), *Tekst v tekste. Trudy po znakovym sistemam*, XIV (Tartu, 1981), pp. 65—81.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 89. Cf. Josef Brodsky's remark: "... How do I write? I simply don't know. I think that a poem begins with a certain noise, a hum, if you will, with its own psychological nuance. That is, there is a certain sound in it which, if not really a thought, then at least expresses a certain relation to things. And when you write, you try more or less to get closer to this hum on paper in a certain rational fashion. Besides, I think that it is not a man who writes a poem, it is always the former poem that composes the next one. That is why the main task which stands before the author is probably to avoid repeating himself. For me, each time this hum begins, there is something new in it. ..." — the quotation is taken from "Nikakoï melodramy ..." ("Not at all melodramatic ..."), a conversation with Josef Brodsky conducted by journalist Vitaly Amursky in *Josif Brodskii razmerom podlinnika* (Josef Brodsky, Original Stature). A collection dedicated to his fiftieth birthday (St. Petersburg, 1994), p. 118. Cf. also Brodsky's remark: "The writer of poetry writes because language suggests or simply

dictates the next line. At the beginning of a poem, the poet, as a rule, does not know how it will end. Sometimes he is very surprised at the result, for the result is sometimes better than he expected; his thought sometimes goes farther than he had hoped. This is the moment when the future of a language intervenes in its present. As we know, three types of knowledge exist: analytic, intuitive, and the method used by the biblical prophets — revelation. Poetry is distinguished from other forms of literature by its simultaneous use of all three (tending primarily toward the second and third), for all three are present in language. Sometimes, with the aid of a single word, a single rhyme, the writer of a poem succeeds in reaching a place he has never been — farther, perhaps, than he intended. First and foremost, the writer of a poem writes because the composition of verses immensely accelerates consciousness, thought, one's sense of the world. Having experienced this acceleration once, a person is no longer capable of refusing to repeat the experience. He becomes dependent on this process, as people become dependent on drugs or alcohol. Someone in a similar state of dependency on language is, I think, a poet" (Josef Brodsky's address on receiving the Noble Prize. Cited from V. Ufliand, "Ot poeta k mifu" ("From the poet to the myth"), *idem.*, p. 174).

Cf. also J. L. Borges' comment: "Music, the feeling of happiness, mythology, faces on which time has left its mark, twilight or landscapes at times — they all either say or want to say something which we should not lose. That is why they exist. This proximity of revelation (my emphasis — E. R.) is, possibly, an aesthetic phenomenon" — in Russian edition of Borges' writings: *Kolleksiia: rasskazy, esse, sikhovoreniia* (Collection: Stories, Essays, Poetry) (St. Petersburg, 1992), p. 310.

43. Andrea, *Mohammed*, p. 60.

44. Navid Kermani, "Revelation and aesthetic dimension: some notes about apostles and artists in Islamic and Christian culture", *The Qur'ān as Text*, pp. 214—24. Cf. the conclusion by A. Guillaume: "All the Hebrew prophets were poets" — see his *Prophesy and Divination among the Hebrews and Semites* (London, 1938), p. 243.

45. T. A. Nemchin, *Sostoianie nervno-psikhologicheskogo napriazheniia* (The State of Neuro-Psychological Strain) (Moscow, 1983), p. 128.

46. Golunov, *op. cit.*, pp. 3—12.

47. E. L. Nosenko, *Osobennosti rechi v sostoianii emotsional'noi napriazhemosti* (Peculiarities of the Speech in the Situation of Emotional Tension), (Dnepropetrovsk, 1975); N. V. Vitt, *Rech' v kriticheskoj situacii: predvaritel'nye materialy eksperimental'nykh issledovanii po psikholingvistike* (Speech in Critical Situation: Preliminary Results of the Experimental Studies in Psycho-Linguistics) (Moscow, 1974); N. Ahlberg, "Some psycho-physiological aspects of ecstasy in recent research", *Religious Ecstasy*, pp. 63—73; O. Wikstrom, "Possession as a clinical phenomenon: a critique of the medical model", *idem.*, pp. 87—102.

48. K. Vollers, *Volkssprache und Schriftsprache im Alten Arabien* (Strassburg, 1960). Marmarajī, "Tariqa fi-l-'ilm", *Al-Mashrik*, 29/8 (1931), pp. 274—6.

49. A. Polak, "Bat kol", *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1972—1982), iv, p. 323—5; L. Katsnelson, "Bat-kol", *Evreiskaia Entsiklopediia* (St. Petersburg, n. d.), iii, pp. 896—9.

50. P. A. Griaznevich, "Razvitie istoricheskogo soznaniia arabov (VI—VIII veka)" ("The development of historical consciousness of the Arabs in the sixth—eighth centuries"), *Ocherki istorii arabskoj kul'tury X—XV vv.* (Moscow, 1987), pp. 75—155.

51. J. van Ess, "Verbal inspiration. Language and revelation in classical Islamic theology", *The Qur'ān as Text*, pp. 177—94.

52. N. Kermani, "Revelation", pp. 221—2; I. J. Boulatta, "The rhetorical interpretation of the Qur'ān: 'i'jāz and related topics", *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'ān*, ed. A. Rippin (Oxford, 1988), pp. 139—57.

53. F. Jadaane, "Révélation et inspiration en Islam", *Studia Islamica*, XXVI (1967), pp. 32—3.

54. I. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

55. About ecstatic practices in the Sūfi environment see in detail in *Religious Ecstasy*, pp. 226—40.

56. See B. A. Donaldson, *The Wild Rule. A Study of Muḥammadan Magic and Folklore in Iran* (London, 1938). On one of the links between ecstatic religious practice and political activity in modern Iran see J. Hjarre, "The Ta'ziya ecstasy as political expression", *Religious Ecstasy*, p. 167—77.

57. *The Qur'ān*, 10: 2; 17: 47/50; 28: 36; 38: 4/3.

58. When this article was ready for publication, I received information about the publication of the papers presented in 1995 at the Strasbourg conference devoted to a topic very close to that of the current article (*Oracles et Prophetes dans l'antiquité. Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 15 — 17 Juin 1995*, ed. Jean-Georges Heintz, (Paris, 1997). — Travaux du Centre de Recherche sur le Proche-Orient et la Grèce Antiques, vol. 15). The publication proves the growing interest of the scholarly community in the topic. The papers presented at the conference covered a broad historical and geographical ranges: Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Semitic world-Hebrew Bible, Christianity, Islam, Greece and Rome. Of prime importance for us are the presentations of T. Fahd's "De l'oracle à la prophétie en Arabie" (pp. 231—41) and R. G. Khoury's "Poésie et prophétie en Arabie: convergences et luttes" (pp. 243—58).

Illustrations

Fig. 1. "The Night Journey of Muḥammad and the Ascent to Heaven", a later miniature from the early sixteenth-century manuscript C 1674 of *Khamsa* by Niẓāmī preserved in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, fol. 3b, 21.2 × 13 cm. The depiction is connected with Sūra 17: 1 and 17: 93/95.

Fig. 2. "Jibrīl", a miniature from the fourteenth-century manuscript E 7 of *'Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt wa gharā'ib al-mawjūdāt* by Abū Yahya Zakariyā' b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Qazwīnī preserved in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, fol. 36a, 28.4 × 21.8 cm.

Fig. 3. "Jibrīl", a miniature from the manuscript D 370 of *'Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt wa gharā'ib al-mawjūdāt* by Abū Yahya Zakariyā' b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Qazwīnī of 988/1580 preserved in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, fol. 33a, 24.8 × 18.7 cm.