

Tor Andrae's Historical-Psychological Reading of the Revelation of Prophet Muhammad: A Study of Mohammed: The Man and His Faith

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the views of the Swedish orientalist Tor Andrae on the concept of revelation experienced by the Prophet Muhammad, as articulated in his work *Mohammed: The Man and His Faith*. Revelation serves as one of the theological foundations of Islam; however, in Western academic scholarship, it has often been approached through a variety of perspectives. This research seeks to fill a scholarly gap, as Andrae's perspective on revelation has received relatively little attention compared to that of other scholars. Using a qualitative library research method and a content analysis approach, this study examines Andrae's arguments and ideas concerning the revelation of the Prophet Muhammad. The findings indicate that Andrae perceives the Prophet's revelation as an authentic and unexpected mystical experience, arising from the Prophet's inner anxiety about the Day of Judgment. Nevertheless, Andrae rejects the notion that revelation emerged from a vacuum. He argues that the experience represents a synthesis of pre-existing theological ideas within the Arabian milieu. Thus, Andrae situates the Prophet Muhammad's revelation not as a purely divine message, but as a complex psychological and historical phenomenon in which the Prophet absorbed and reformulated the non-Orthodox ideas that surrounded him.

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INTRODUCTION

Revelation is a fundamental concept in Islam that forms the basis of religious authority and the legitimacy of the Prophet Muhammad's apostleship. The Qur'an itself is understood by Muslims as the word of God, gradually revealed through the Angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad over a period of approximately twenty-three years (Ajahari, 2018). This concept is affirmed in many Qur'anic verses, among them: "*Indeed, We sent it (the Qur'an) down during a blessed night...*" (Q.S. ad-Dukhān [44]: 3) and "*Say, whoever is an enemy to Gabriel – it is he who has brought it down upon your heart by permission of Allah...*" (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 97). These verses indicate that revelation is understood as a divine process affirming the authenticity of the Prophet Muhammad's message. However, the transcendence of this revelatory process does not imply that revelation is detached from human interests or from historical limitations. In essence, revelation was revealed for the benefit and well-being of humankind (Haq, 2019).

For Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad's experience of revelation is understood as a process of hearing the "voice" of God within his inner self, an experience he could only express through metaphorical language. At times, the Prophet described receiving revelation as akin to hearing the sound of a "ringing bell." Muslims believe that what was conveyed through revelation was not the essence of God's being, but rather His will, expressed in human language that is, in Arabic (Saeed, 2008). In the tradition of Islamic theology, the doctrine of revelation is regarded not only as a form of divine communication but also as an epistemological foundation for all branches of religious knowledge. The Qur'an is present not merely as a sacred text, but also as a guide for life that has been internalized by the Muslim community throughout history (Rahman, 1980).

Nevertheless, in modern academic studies particularly within the field of the history of religions revelation is understood within a broader framework. Several scholars have sought to interpret the prophetic experience of Muhammad through historical, psychological, and phenomenological perspectives. One of the key figures in this discourse is Tor Andrae (1885–1947), a Swedish historian of religion. Through his work *Mohammed: The Man and His Faith*, Andrae sought to explain the doctrine of the Prophet Muhammad's revelation within the context of historical and comparative religious studies (Andrae, 1936). Andrae's study is particularly intriguing because it situates the prophetic experience of Muhammad within a broader horizon—not merely as an internal theological phenomenon of the Muslim community, but as a universal religious phenomenon comparable to mystical and prophetic experiences in other traditions. Thus, examining Andrae's perspective on revelation is essential for understanding how early twentieth-century Western academic discourse framed the prophetic experience of Muhammad.

The concept of revelation has been widely studied by previous researchers, including the article by Habibuddin and Ihdi Aini (2020) titled “*The Concept of Qur’anic Revelation from the Perspective of William Montgomery Watt*” (Aini, 2020), and also the article by Nurul Sakinah Darsal (2025) titled “*The Concept of Qur’anic Revelation According to W. Montgomery Watt*” (Darsal, 2025) which discusses the concept of the Prophet Muhammad’s revelation from the perspective of William Montgomery Watt. Next is the article by Moh. Achwan Baharuddin (2015) titled “*The Concept of Qur’anic Revelation According to Stefan Wild,*” which explains the concept of the Prophet Muhammad’s revelation as understood by Stefan Wild (Baharuddin, 2015). Furthermore, Said Mujahid et al. (2024) wrote an article titled “*The Shift in the Meaning of Revelation: An Analysis of the Concept of Revelation According to Abdullah Saeed,*” which discusses the meaning and concept of revelation as it undergoes a shift in Abdullah Saeed’s perspective. (Said Mujahid, Khairul Fadli Simamora, 2024). In addition, no previous study has been found that specifically examines the concept of the Prophet Muhammad’s revelation from the perspective of Tor Andrae. Therefore, this article seeks to fill this research gap by focusing on how the doctrine of the Prophet Muhammad’s revelation is understood in Tor Andrae’s view.

The significance of this study lies in the position of Tor Andrae as one of the early Orientalist scholars who specifically addressed the doctrine of revelation a central theme in Qur’anic studies. By examining his views, this research aims to enrich the body of Qur’anic scholarship and broaden the critical dialogue between Orientalist perspectives and Islamic intellectual traditions. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of how the doctrine of the Prophet Muhammad’s revelation is perceived by non-Muslim scholars, while also clarifying Tor Andrae’s intellectual position within the dynamics of Islamic studies.

METHODS

This research is a library-based qualitative study. The primary data are derived from Tor Andrae’s work *Mohammed: The Man and His Faith*, while supporting sources include literature on Orientalism and revelation in Islam, as well as other relevant articles and books. The analysis employs a content analysis method to examine the concept of revelation proposed by Andrae, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of his perspective. The research addresses the following questions: How does Tor Andrae view the revelation of the Prophet Muhammad? What analytical framework does he employ in understanding the Prophet’s revelation? And to what extent is his perspective relevant within the context of contemporary Islamic studies?

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Revelation in Islam

In Islam, the concept of revelation (*wahy*) constitutes the fundamental basis of faith as well as the epistemological foundation for all aspects of religious

teaching. Revelation is understood as a form of divine communication conveyed by God to His prophets through various means—whether through the Angel Gabriel, true dreams, or direct inspiration. The Qur’an, as the final revelation, serves as a universal and eternal guide for life, functioning as the primary source of law and ethics for Muslims. Without the doctrine of revelation, Islam would lose its authoritative foundation, for it is revelation that distinguishes divine teachings from mere products of human reason (Afsaruddin, 2020). Revelation holds a higher position than reason, particularly in matters of principle such as acts of worship and divine commands that were directly conveyed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in his time. However, Islam does not deny the role of reason entirely. Rather, reason is given space to interact with revelation—especially in explaining scientific phenomena and in understanding the signs of God’s greatness in the universe. Through intellectual reflection and the advancement of science, human reason can uncover the truths contained within revelation. At the same time, revelation affirms that reason (*‘aql*) is a prerequisite for the proper implementation of Islamic law (*shari’ah*) by a legally responsible individual (*mukallaf*). In Islam, revelation and reason are not positioned in opposition to one another but instead complement and harmonize in a mutually reinforcing relationship (Santalia, 2022). Thus, revelation does not merely concern the transmission of God’s word but also encompasses the relationship between God and humanity, as well as how humans interpret that divine message in accordance with the context of their time.

Moreover, revelation affirms the position of prophethood. A prophet does not speak out of personal desire but conveys solely what has been revealed to him. QS. an-Nisa’ [4]:136 serves as a theological foundation for the necessity of believing in God, His messengers, His scriptures, and the Last Day as an inseparable unity. Prophethood and revelation are two interdependent aspects within the structure of Islamic faith. Revelation functions as a channel of divine communication that guides the prophets in delivering the message of truth and upholding moral and monotheistic values among humankind. Through revelation, a prophet attains spiritual legitimacy and authority to guide humanity toward a civilized and righteous life. The diversity of revelatory processes reflects the greatness of God in tailoring the form of His message to the conditions and capacities of each prophet. Every form of revelation contains guidance, admonition, and legal principles that serve as directives for humankind in attaining happiness in both this world and the hereafter. Therefore, revelation functions not only as a source of law and faith but also as the foundation of civilization, establishing a harmonious relationship between human beings, nature, and God (Syafirin, 2021). With this understanding, revelation in Islam functions as a pillar of transcendence that preserves the purity of divine teachings, a normative authority binding all believers, and a source of moral inspiration that remains relevant throughout time. Therefore, the discourse on revelation has always been a central focus in Qur’anic studies, Islamic theology, and the philosophy of religion, both in classical and contemporary contexts.

Biography of Tor Andrae

Tor Andrae (1885–1946) was a Swedish historian of religion and bishop of the Church of Sweden who held significant influence in the comparative study of religions, particularly Islam. He was born on July 9, 1885, in Hevna, into a Protestant pastoral family. After studying the humanities at Uppsala University and mastering both Hebrew and Arabic, he pursued theological studies and was ordained as a priest in 1909. Under the guidance of Nathan Soderblom and Ignaz Goldziher, Andrae conducted research on the religious experience of the Prophet Muhammad, which culminated in his seminal work *Die Person Muhammeds in Lehre und Glauben seiner Gemeinde* (The Person of Muhammad in the Doctrine and Faith of His Community) (Andrae, 2018). The book traces the development of the veneration of the Prophet Muhammad within Islamic piety and mysticism, and it is still regarded as a classic contribution to Islamic studies. After earning his doctorate in theology in 1921, Andrae taught at the Universities of Stockholm and Uppsala, producing significant works such as *Der Ursprung des Islams und das Christentum* (Andrae, 1923) and *Muhammad: The Man and His Faith* (Andrae, 1936). He is best known for his psychological approach to the personality of the Prophet.

He also wrote a biography of his mentor, Söderblom (1931), and became a member of the Swedish Academy. In 1936, he was appointed Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and later served as Bishop of Linköping until his death in January 1946. Although deeply rooted in the Christian faith, Andrae demonstrated a profound appreciation for other religions, particularly Islam, which he regarded as also containing the mystery of divine grace. In his works, such as *Det osynligas värld* (Andrae, 1933) and *I myrten-trädgården: Studier i sufisk mystik* (Andrae, 1947), he explored eternal life and spiritual development with a deeply humanistic and insightful perspective. The combination of scholarly precision, psychological understanding of religious experience, and elegant writing style made Tor Andrae a significant figure in the study of religion and in Christian-Muslim relations (Encyclopedia.com, 2019).

Tor Andrae's Thought on the Revelation of Prophet Muhammad

Tor Andrae emphasized that Prophet Muhammad initially never expected the descent of revelation nor harbored any desire to become a prophet who would bring forth a holy book like those of the Jews and Christians. The first revelation came instead as a shocking, unexpected, and intellectually incomprehensible experience, yet it became a profound source of strength that affirmed his faith in the face of ridicule and opposition from his people, while presenting the Qur'an as a divine miracle. Andrae rejected the notion that revelation emerged without context, for in his view, the spirit of inspiration never arises in a vacuum. Inspiration, he argued, always takes shape through materials already present within the soul both in the conscious and subconscious realms and adapts itself to the dominant ideas of the surrounding social and cultural environment. Therefore, according to Andrae, the revelation received by Prophet Muhammad was likely preceded by deep inner struggle, contemplation, and

long-suppressed spiritual yearning. He further noted that the experience of revelation bears resemblance to universal religious phenomena, in which mystical or trance-like experiences are often understood as mediums of encounter with the unseen world. Ultimately, the essence of Prophet Muhammad's doctrine of revelation, as interpreted by Andrae, is rooted in a belief in divine judgment and punishment, which was later affirmed and articulated through the contents of the Qur'anic revelation (Andrae, 1936).

According to Tor Andrae, although Prophet Muhammad could have expressed his religious anxiety through other means—such as embracing Christian asceticism or monastic life—he did not choose that path. This, Andrae argued, was because even before his prophethood, Muhammad already held a firm conviction about the importance of divine revelation and the necessity of a sacred book in the Arabic language. His anxiety over the Day of Judgment drove him to retreat into solitude, while the example of Christian monks—who spent their nights in prayer, prostration, and the recitation of holy texts—left a profound impression on him. The Prophet understood that the core of religious devotion lay in the recitation of sacred scripture. Yet, because the languages of the Jewish and Christian scriptures were foreign to him, he became acutely aware of the need for a holy book in Arabic. From this realization, his desire and hope for a scripture became increasingly clear until the voice of the angel conveyed the first revelation with the word read (*Iqra'*), a term derived from the Syriac Christian liturgical tradition (*qeryana*), meaning the recitation of sacred scripture. From that moment on, each revelation was called al-Qur'an, the sacred recitation for worship. Prophet Muhammad understood the scripture not as a closed and unchanging historical record, but as a dynamic proclamation of divine grace, judgment, and moral guidance for humanity. In this view, every nation has its own prophet and sacred book, and the revelations mutually affirm one another. Therefore, Prophet Muhammad emphasized the universal unity of divine revelation, as affirmed in QS. al-Baqarah [2]:136 (Andrae, 1936).

According to Tor Andrae, although the message of Prophet Muhammad affirms the universal unity of revelation, this does not mean that every community must conform to the traditions of others. God, he argued, established different laws according to the specific needs of each nation—for instance, certain prohibitions were imposed upon the Jews as a form of divine punishment, whereas the *shari'ah* of Prophet Muhammad was more flexible in its ritual obligations. Thus, Muhammad's mission was directed specifically to the Arab people, who had previously not received a prophet, and were now granted a sacred scripture in clear Arabic (Qur'an, al-Qasas [28]:46; ash-Shu'ara' [26]:195), thereby placing them on equal footing with the *Ahl al-Kitab*. Andrae noted that the idea that each nation has its own prophet and revelation in its own language could not have arisen merely from Muhammad's speculative theology; rather, it stemmed from a historical awareness of the Arabs' coexistence with Jewish and Christian communities united by religion despite lacking a scripture of their own. Prophet Muhammad was also aware of Jewish messianic traditions and of Jesus's promise of the "Comforter", which, according to Andrae, strengthened his

conviction in his prophetic calling rather than being a product of personal invention. Andrae emphasized that Muhammad rejected the Eastern Christian conception that prophets belonged solely to the past and no longer lived, distinguishing himself from the Christian pneumatics, who were regarded more as mystics than prophets. In this light, the distinctive Islamic doctrine of revelation, which affirms the ongoing actuality of prophecy, did not originate from Judaism or Orthodox Christianity, but rather emerged from Muhammad's own prophetic experience. This stands in contrast to the Christian doctrine that places Christ as the final and complete revelation – an idea reflected in the Gospel of the Hebrews, which describes Jesus as the full embodiment of the Holy Spirit after His presence in the prophets of old (Andrae, 1936).

In this regard, Tor Andrae connects the concept of revelation with the ancient traditions of divine wisdom. The depiction of the Wisdom of God in the apocryphal Book of Wisdom, which was influenced by Stoic philosophy, emphasizes its purest, most active, and eternal nature as a radiant light reflecting the works of God, dwelling within the souls of prophets and the beloved of God from generation to generation. This concept, according to Andrae, intersects with the ancient Persian doctrine of the Savior or Heavenly Man, who from the beginning guided humanity on the path of truth and later revealed Himself as the Redeemer. Within the Judeo-Christian tradition, as explained by Saint Epiphanius concerning the Ebionites, Christ was viewed as the first Prophet Adam, the Heavenly Man who had manifested Himself from the beginning through the patriarchal ancestors, then incarnated twice, first in Adam and later in Christ and occasionally revealed Himself to the saints of the Old Covenant. From this belief emerged two main doctrines of revelation: First, the idea of Christ-Adam dwelling within prophets and holy men as a form of continuous revelation; Second, the belief that He incarnated only twice in the world – at the beginning and at the end – while in other times merely unveiling Himself to chosen individuals. The first view aligns with the Greco-Jewish notion of a spirit of wisdom that resides within prophets, whereas the second view corresponds to the Eastern tradition of the Redeemer who occasionally descends from heaven (Andrae, 1936).

One of the proponents of this doctrine of revelation was the mystical prophet Elxai (Elchasai), who appeared in the eastern region of the Jordan during the reign of Emperor Trajan. The name Elxai, meaning "Hidden Power," is said to have experienced a vision of a giant angel twenty miles tall, accompanied by a female figure described as 'a cloud between two hills.' According to this revelation, Christ was repeatedly reborn into the world in various forms – sometimes through a virgin mother, sometimes as an ordinary man, or merely as a spirit. Epiphanius explained that the female figure represented the Holy Spirit, since in the Aramaic language the word for "spirit" (*ruh*) is grammatically feminine. Consequently, Elxai regarded himself as the direct recipient of divine revelation, much like Simon Magus, who had referred to himself as the "Great Power of God." A similar idea appears in the Pseudo-Clementine writings, where Jesus Christ is described as the "Prophet of Truth," the "Son of God," and the

“Prince of Humanity.” All wisdom had been poured upon Him from eternity, not merely as a spirit that occasionally manifests itself, but as the eternal source of revelation. Christ was thus identified with the Prophet Adam, the first man who later became the “second man” in the person of Jesus. Therefore, the notion that Adam sinned was regarded as an insult to God, since Adam was seen as God’s very image. Epiphanius further affirmed that Christ had revealed Himself to Abraham, Moses, and other holy figures, while some prophets of the Old Testament were viewed as intruders who had inserted the narratives of the patriarchs’ sins (Andrae, 1936).

This conception was further clarified by the Sethian sect and other Gnostic figures such as Justinus and Bar Daisan. Bar Daisan, a former priest of Atargatis, taught that Christ appeared in astral form to the prophets until He was ultimately born of Mary. In Arabic sources, it is said that “the Light of God descended into his heart,” leading Bar Daisan to regard himself as an incarnation of Christ. This idea reached its culmination in the teachings of Mani, the Persian preacher who was crucified in 276 CE. According to Ibn al-Nadīm, Mani from an early age claimed to have received revelation from the “King of the Light of Heaven” and the angel Tawwarm (“the Twin”). Mani asserted that God had sent messengers to different nations: Buddha in India, Zoroaster in Persia, Jesus in the West, and himself in Babylonia. He recognized Adam, Seth, Noah, and Abraham as prophets, and used mystical titles for the Divine Being such as the “Third Messenger,” “Jesus,” and the “Virgin of Light,” who revealed themselves through the prophets. In Manichaean texts, Jesus, the Virgin of Light, and Mani were united into one, and in China, Mani was even identified as the Buddha. Thus, Mani was not merely a messenger of Jesus but was considered to be Christ Himself, the Promised Comforter. His teaching emphasized that revelation descends upon different nations in different eras. All major religions – Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Buddhism – were seen as bearers of the same divine wisdom, and their founders as messengers of God. This concept continued to persist even after Mani’s death, as evidenced by Ibn al-Nadīm’s 10th-century account of the *Ṣābi’īn* community and reports by Syriac Christian bishops about heretical groups in the Arabian Peninsula. Manichaeism, which spread widely across Central Asia, China, and Europe, was almost certainly known in Mecca, a major trading hub where Arab sources mention the presence of the Zindiqs likely followers of Mani’s teachings who had migrated from al-Hira to the city (Andrae, 1936).

Religious policy under the Byzantine Empire was extremely strict, particularly toward Gnostic sects and the spread of Manichaeism, given the dominance of Christianity in the region. Adherents of Mazdaism even openly opposed Mani’s ascetic teachings, which they regarded as destructive to the established order of life. At first, society was still granted some space to express religious identity when circumstances required it. However, amid the growing Christian dominance, certain groups paradoxically found a looser sense of religious freedom, leading to a unique phenomenon: followers of heretical teachings boldly rejected the authority of the Church. They viewed Jesus merely

as one prophet among many, or even as a divine messenger who appeared throughout the ages. Furthermore, they accused the Church of falsifying the true teachings of Christianity. The belief that all major religions especially those with founders and universal truths, contained eternal values fostered a sense of confidence among non-Christian groups. Consequently, the exclusive claims of Christianity and Judaism as the only true religions were seen as provocative. As ancient religions declined and Christianity grew dominant not only as a spiritual power but also as a symbol of cultural superiority, interreligious tensions deepened. This condition can be compared to modern India, where the theosophical view of the equality of all religions has paradoxically caused unease under the political and cultural hegemony of the West (Andrae, 1936).

In this context, Prophet Muhammad was clearly influenced—perhaps unconsciously—by the atmosphere of religious freedom that provided space for Manichaean and Gnostic communities. The preaching of itinerant Syrian preachers about the Day of Judgment strengthened the spirituality of Eastern society and helped shape his faith. Prophet Muhammad likely had no direct contact with Gnostic communities and may not have been familiar with the details of their doctrines. However, he absorbed ideas that resonated with the beliefs he already held. For this reason, it is understandable why Prophet Muhammad never intended to become a Christian. He realized—perhaps influenced by the widely circulating Gnostic-Manichaean theories of revelation—that Christianity was merely one of many religious expressions of communities guided and inspired by God. Moreover, the Prophet firmly believed that every community or nation had its own prophet who received divine revelation for its people. This conviction, combined with his personal experiences of retreat and meditation, became a gateway to understanding revelation. Such a portrayal is reminiscent of ascetics who recited verses from the Psalms or other sacred texts. Yet, for Prophet Muhammad, this experience was not merely a form of spiritual inspiration but a true revelation conveyed through an angel who dictated the sacred scripture to him. Thus, the understanding of revelation cannot be explained merely in psychological terms, for the consciousness and prophetic formation within him developed gradually and coherently (Andrae, 1936).

Therefore, the concept of revelation embraced by Prophet Muhammad rejects the notion that he was merely influenced by Ebionite or Manichaean doctrines. What differs lies only in the external form of revelation. The question of how the “Heavenly Messenger” communicated with a prophet in the Arabian Peninsula was never explained explicitly. In this regard, Prophet Muhammad did not rely on mere imagination. The only references familiar to him were the actual experiences of the Arab community through soothsayers (*kahin*) and poets. It is thus unsurprising that the pagan Arabs initially regarded him as nothing more than a new soothsayer or poet, for the Qur’an he received was composed in rhythmic, solemn, and prophetic verses—similar in style to the ecstatic utterances of the *kahin*. Moreover, there is considerable external evidence suggesting a certain relationship between the early Muslim community and

Gnostic sects. In several reports, especially those related to the Prophet's military history, the followers of Islam were sometimes referred to by their enemies as "the Sabaeans." This term denoted a pre-existing religious sect, and its usage could not have originated solely from the Qur'an. The Qur'an itself mentions the Sabaeans as a distinct community, different from both Christians and Muslims. Therefore, it can be said that during the Meccan period, the teachings of Prophet Muhammad indeed shared certain connections with the Sabaeans groups (Andrae, 1936).

An important religious term used by Prophet Muhammad during the late Meccan and Medinan periods was *ḥanīf*. In the Meccan surahs, this term refers to a believer in monotheism – a devotee of *tawḥīd* – and stands in opposition to idol worship (cf. Q. al-Bayyinah [98]: 5; Q. al-Ḥajj [22]: 33; Q. Yūnus [10]: 14). In Q. al-Rūm [30]: 30, *tawḥīd* is emphasized as the natural religion (*fiṭrah*) of humankind: "So set your face towards the religion uprightly, the nature [ordained] by Allah in which He has created mankind. There is no altering the creation of Allah. That is the upright religion, but most people do not know." In the Medinan period, the term *ḥanīf* was often used to describe Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim). The Qur'an stresses that Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but a *ḥanīf* a true Muslim (cf. Q. Āl 'Imrān [3]: 67; Q. al-Baqarah [2]: 135). Thus, the Jewish and Christian claims over Abraham were rejected, for the Torah and the Gospel were revealed only after his time. In the Qur'anic narrative, Abraham who lived among idol worshipers contemplated the stars, the moon, and the sun, eventually realizing their weakness and impermanence. This reflection led him to affirm the worship of the One True God (cf. QS. al-Rūm [30]: 30) (Andrae, 1936).

For Prophet Muhammad, *ḥanīf* denoted a pure monotheist, neither Jewish nor Christian, and certainly not an idol worshiper. A *ḥanīf* discovers truth through personal search and contemplation. Interestingly, the word derives from the Syriac term *ḥanpā*, meaning "pagan" or "infidel." Syriac Christians used it to refer to Greek pagans or to heretical sects such as the Manichaeans. However, in Arabic, the meaning shifted significantly to "monotheist," the very opposite of *mushrik* (polytheist). This transformation was likely influenced by the broader context of religious pluralism in the East, where Manichaeism and early Sabianism were initially labeled *ḥanpē* (infidels) but eventually gave rise to a new religious consciousness, belief in one God independent of Jewish or Christian ritual structures, coupled with the freedom to preserve one's national identity. Prophet Muhammad understood *ḥanīf* not as a member of a heretical sect, but as one who follows the natural monotheistic disposition (*fiṭrah*) instilled by God in humanity. Thus, the influence of Manichaean and Eastern monotheistic movements extended far beyond their original sectarian boundaries, much like a scientific or philosophical doctrine that, despite losing its historical roots, continues to shape general patterns of thought. Indeed, it was likely this current of monotheistic ideas that profoundly influenced the development of prophetic religion in the Arabian Peninsula. Later "rival prophets," such as Musaylimah, are thought to have drawn inspiration from this same movement – though their

emergence occurred at a time when Prophet Muhammad himself was not yet widely known in Mecca (Andrae, 1936).

Islamic tradition recounts that the group known as the *Ḥanīfs* – those who abandoned the pagan customs of the Quraysh in search of the religion of Prophet Abraham – occupies a somewhat legendary place in history, though not without factual basis. Ibn Ishāq narrates the story of four principal figures: Waraqah ibn Nawfal, ‘Ubaydallāh ibn Jahsh, ‘Uthmān ibn al-Ḥuwayrith, and Zayd ibn ‘Amr. Waraqah later embraced Christianity and studied the Scriptures; ‘Ubaydallāh at first hesitated, then converted to Islam, but upon migrating to Abyssinia, he turned to Christianity; ‘Uthmān entered Byzantine service and attained a position of honor; while Zayd chose no formal religion at all – he rejected paganism and the consumption of sacrificial meat offered to idols, praying instead at the Ka‘bah for guidance toward true worship. Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said that Zayd would be resurrected as a nation unto himself, affirming his sincere monotheism. This account suggests that three of the four *Ḥanīfs* ultimately embraced Christianity, reinforcing the view that the *Ḥanīfiyyah* inclination was influenced by Christian and Manichaean sects. As reflected in the Clementine writings, such individuals rejected pagan rituals, animal sacrifices, and the harsh legalism of the Old Testament. A significant trace of this influence appears in the figure of Waraqah ibn Nawfal, who was directly connected to the early moments of Muhammad’s prophethood. When the Prophet was deeply troubled after receiving the first revelation, Khadijah brought him to Waraqah, who declared: “*Truly, this is the Great Nāmūs who came to Moses.*” The term *Nāmūs* (from the Greek *Nomos*, meaning “law”) in Clementine tradition refers to the eternal divine law. This narrative was likely not a later invention but rather a genuine recollection of the contact between early Islam and the monotheistic seekers at the end of the *Jāhiliyyah* era. Moreover, the influence of Manichaeism is evident in Prophet Muhammad’s distinctive understanding of the death of Jesus. The Qur’an asserts: “...they said, ‘Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah.’ Yet they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but it was made to appear so to them...” (QS. An-Nisa [4]:157). This verse reflects the Qur’an’s rejection of the crucifixion, a doctrine that aligns closely with Manichaean beliefs concerning the suffering of Jesus (Andrae, 1936).

Prophet Muhammad rejected the Gnostic Docetic teaching, which held that Jesus did not truly undergo crucifixion. However, like the teachings of Mani and Basilides, he believed that another person was substituted to be crucified in place of Jesus. Early Muslim exegetes similarly interpreted the event in multiple ways: some narrated that one of Jesus’ disciples, of his own free will, offered himself, and Allah caused him to resemble Jesus so that the Jews believed they had crucified him. Others interpreted that Judas, due to his betrayal, was the one who was punished in place of Jesus. Regarding the enigmatic term “son of a widow” used by Mani, Ibn Nadim reported that Mani accused the venerated Jesus of Christianity of being a demonic figure. This claim illustrates both theological polemic and a distortion of Mani’s teachings. The notion is further emphasized in *The Book of Mysteries*, where the expression cannot be understood

as referring to the “*historical Jesus*.” Thus, both Mani’s doctrine and some early Muslim exegesis convey a dual teaching: it was not Jesus who was crucified, but a substitute. This substitute could be understood as a demonic figure, a criminal, or even a faithful disciple of Jesus who willingly sacrificed himself. Some interpretations link this with the story of the “son of a widow of Nain” who was once raised by Jesus and later gave himself as a form of repayment for that divine favor (Andrae, 1936).

Analysis of Tor Andrae’s Thought on the Concept of Revelation of Prophet Muhammad

Analytical Framework (Methodology and Sources)

Tor Andrae’s methodology in analyzing the doctrine of revelation of Prophet Muhammad aligns closely with the principles of the phenomenology of religion. According to the definition of phenomenology, which “does not address questions of truth” but rather “merely describes,” Andrae effectively suspends theological judgments regarding the absolute truth of the revelation. His focus is not to prove whether the revelation is true or false, but to approach it as an observable phenomenon (Zarkasi, 2020). He asserts that the Qur’anic revelation represents an authentic continuation of previous spiritual currents and emerged from the Prophet’s anxiety about the Day of Judgment as well as the need for a sacred scripture in Arabic – an idea inspired by the liturgical tradition of Syriac Christianity (*qeryana*). The analytical lens employed by Tor Andrae is psychological-historical, combining the study of an individual’s inner experiences with an examination of the surrounding environmental context that shaped them. Methodologically, Andrae investigates the “drivers” behind the prophetic experience, both at the “conscious” and “unconscious” levels. He explicitly links these internal psychological impulses to “belief in the teaching/revelation,” viewing them as authentic mystical phenomena arising from inner struggle. More importantly, his analysis “cannot be separated from the discussion of the human relationship with their environment” (Rozalina, 2021). Andrae prioritizes the psychology of religion, approaching the first revelation not as an ambition, but as an authentic mystical experience arising from the Prophet Muhammad’s profound anxiety about the Day of Judgment. He applies the psychology of religion to understand the Prophet’s inner state and ecstatic experiences, as well as the role of his subconscious mind.

Furthermore, Andrae employs a historical approach, defined as a conscious and systematic effort to investigate, understand, and thoroughly examine the intricacies of Islamic teachings, history, and their practices throughout time (Haryanto, 2017). This historical perspective emphasizes that the psychological experiences of Prophet Muhammad did not occur in a vacuum but were deeply rooted in the “concrete practices” of his environment. Andrae systematically identifies the main “sources” of influence that shaped the formulation of the doctrine of revelation, particularly from non-Orthodox “heretical” traditions that developed in the Arabian Peninsula. He points to Syriac Christianity as the source of liturgical terminology (such as *qeryana*, which

became *Qur'an*), and Gnostic-Manichaean traditions as sources of crucial theological frameworks, including the idea of the universality of prophethood (a prophet for every nation), the concept of *Hanif* (adapted from *hanpa*), and the adoption of the doctrine of the denial of Jesus' crucifixion (QS. an-Nisa [4]: 157). He also incorporates the local Arab context by analyzing oral traditions and the poetic literature of soothsayers (*kahin*) as a referential framework that shaped the external manifestation of revelation. Through the history of religions, he compares these experiences with the traditions of other prophets, mystics, and Gnostic groups.

Furthermore, philological analysis also serves as an important tool. Tor Andrae's methodology in analyzing the doctrine of Prophet Muhammad's revelation is deeply grounded in a philological approach, particularly in the aspects of language analysis (1) and cultural-historical context (3). He explicitly applies linguistic analysis when tracing the etymology of key terms such as *Iqra'* to *qeryana* (Syriac) and *Hanif* to *hanpa*, in order to understand the precise meaning and origin of these vocabularies. More centrally, all of his arguments are firmly rooted in cultural and historical context, where he examines "linguistic practices" and theological ideas (Gnostic, Manichaean) circulating in the Arabian Peninsula to understand how the revelation was formulated. Although he does not focus on textual reconstruction (2) in the sense of manuscript comparison, he effectively conducts textual criticism (4) in a broader sense, evaluating the "authenticity" of doctrinal ideas (such as the denial of the crucifixion) by comparing them with other traditions. Ultimately, Andrae employs all these philological tools for hermeneutical purposes (5): to interpret the doctrine of revelation broadly as a phenomenon intimately connected to its linguistic and historical environment (Munir, 2024).

Finally, he employs the method of historical criticism. In line with the definition of this method, which emphasizes efforts to uncover the values (ideas) contained within historical data rather than the historical events themselves or merely their chronological aspects, Andrae systematically examines the overall development of society in pre-Islamic Arabia. He reconstructs this socio-political context as a space in which non-orthodox religious ideas could emerge and exert influence. Through this historical criticism, Andrae offers an assessment by mapping the "sources" (values) that he believes shaped the intellectual environment of Prophet Muhammad (Fahmi, 2021). He identifies the primary influences as Gnosticism and Manichaeanism, which propagated ideas of successive revelation for every nation and the doctrine of Jesus' non-crucifixion. In addition, there are influences from "heretical" Judeo-Christian traditions such as the Ebionites and Pseudo-Clementine literature (traces of which appear in the story of Waraqah bin Naufal and the term *Namus*), as well as the *Hanif* movement and the poetic literary forms of Arab soothsayers (*kahin*), which served as a reference framework for the external manifestation of revelation.

Relation to Earlier Religious Traditions

In his reading, Andrae identified several traces of Muhammad's revelation connecting with earlier religions. From the Jewish tradition, he observed similarities in the emphasis on law and ethics, although Islam placed greater stress on universal morality rather than strict ritual regulations. From Christianity, he found commonalities in liturgical forms and the concept of the living Word, even though Islam rejected the idea of the finality of Christ. From Gnostic and Manichaean traditions, he highlighted parallels with early Muslim views on the crucifixion of Jesus, namely the belief that another person was crucified in Jesus' place. Andrae also noted the influence of Jewish messianic traditions, where the idea of a promised messenger following previous prophets seemed to resonate with Muhammad's prophetic consciousness. Thus, according to Andrae, the revelation of Prophet Muhammad cannot be separated from the mosaic of religious traditions that were alive in the Arabian Peninsula at that time.

Islam's relationship with earlier religious traditions is selective, transformative, and rooted in non-Orthodox currents. Andrae argues that Prophet Muhammad did not merely adopt Judaism or Orthodox Christianity; rather, he viewed them as previous divine revelations intended for other peoples. Yet, he was profoundly inspired by the concept of the "People of the Book" and their liturgical rituals (such as the Syriac Christian *qeryana*), which fostered an awareness of and an urgent need for a scripture in the Arabic language. The most crucial theological connection, according to Andrae, was not with the orthodox traditions but with the Gnostic-Manichaean undercurrents spreading in Arabia. It was these "heretical" traditions that provided the main conceptual framework: the idea of universality (God sending prophets to every nation), the concept of *Hanif* (a pure monotheist independent of Judaism and Christianity), and most specifically, the doctrine of the denial of Jesus' crucifixion (QS. an-Nisa [4]:157), which aligns with Gnostic views. Thus, Andrae sees Islam as a revelation that absorbed and reformulated these universal ideas into a distinctly Arab prophetic expression.

Comparison of the Concept of Revelation: Tor Andrae's Perspective and Islam

In Islam, revelation is theologically understood as the *kalam* of Allah, revealed with *haqq* (absolute truth), encompassing the truth of its content, the manner of its revelation, and the One Who sends it through the angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad. This revelation is pure and, as emphasized in the Qur'an, free from human desires or whims (*hawa nafsu*). Therefore, this doctrine asserts that revelation does not originate from the Prophet's psychological state or merely continue previous traditions. On the contrary, the Qur'an serves to confirm the contents of previously revealed scriptures while also acting as a criterion of truth for them. As the culmination of prophethood, the Qur'an mandates the Prophet to judge matters according to what Allah has revealed and prohibits him from following personal desires that could divert him from divine truth (Shihab, 2002). Unlike Andrae, who emphasizes historical and psychological aspects, Islam views revelation as a direct transcendental

communication that cannot be reduced to the Prophet's inner experience or to preexisting religious traditions (Andrae, 1936). In other words, while Andrae interprets revelation through the lens of phenomenology and historical criticism, Islam affirms it within a theological horizon that emphasizes the absolute and unique nature of the Qur'anic revelation.

The comparison between the Islamic doctrine of revelation and Tor Andrae's analysis reveals a fundamental contrast regarding the source of originality and the nature of revelation. The Islamic concept of revelation emphasizes the absolute transcendence of *wahy*; it is understood as a purely divine communication, descending top-down from Allah, eternal, and epistemologically above human reason, entirely separate from the "products of human rationality" or the "desires" of the Prophet. In this view, the Qur'an is *sui generis* – unique and original – serving as the final authority to correct previous traditions. In contrast, Tor Andrae employs a psychological-historical perspective, viewing revelation as an immanent synthesis that develops within history. For Andrae, revelation is the product of the Prophet Muhammad's authentic mystical experiences, which evolve while actively absorbing theological ideas circulating in his environment. The sharpest point of contrast lies in Andrae's claim that the framework of revelation (such as the universality of prophethood) and even specific doctrines (like the rejection of Jesus' crucifixion in QS. An-Nisa [4]: 157) did not emerge from a vacuum, but were brilliant adaptations of existing Gnostic-Manichaeic and Syrian Christian traditions present in the Arabian Peninsula at the time.

There is a fundamental contrast between the Islamic concept of revelation and Tor Andrae's analysis, particularly regarding the source of authority and the purity (originality) of revelation. The Islamic concept emphasizes absolute transcendence: revelation is the pure Word of Allah, top-down, *sui generis* (unique), explicitly distinct from psychological or historical products, human desires, and serves to correct previous traditions. In contrast, Andrae's phenomenological-historical perspective views revelation as an immanent synthesis (emerging from within history) and emphasizes historical continuity. Andrae argues that revelation is the result of a dialectic between the Prophet Muhammad's authentic mystical experience and his environment, in which he actively interacted with, absorbed, and transformed theological ideas from existing Jewish, Christian, Gnostic, and Manichaeic traditions. The sharpest point of contrast lies in Andrae's claim that key terms, such as *Qur'an* (derived from the Syrian Christian *qeryana*), are not purely divine revelation but rather an adoption from traditions circulating in the Arabian Peninsula at the time. Thus, the fundamental difference lies in the explanatory framework: Andrae interprets revelation phenomenologically and historically, whereas Islam affirms it within a transcendental-theological horizon.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has examined Tor Andrae's perspective on the concept of revelation in the Prophet Muhammad, as presented in his work *Mohammed: The*

Man and His Faith. The analysis shows that Andrae, employing a phenomenological lens along with a psychological-historical approach, views Muhammad's revelation as an authentic mystical experience. He rejects the notion that revelation arose from personal ambition, instead attributing it to the Prophet's inner anxiety regarding the Day of Judgment. However, Andrae's main finding is that this authentic experience did not occur in a vacuum (*ex nihilo*). He argues that revelation is a brilliant synthesis that actively absorbs and processes theological ideas already circulating in the Arabian Peninsula. Andrae specifically identifies three primary sources of influence: (1) the Gnostic-Manichaeic tradition, which provided a conceptual framework concerning the universality of prophecy (prophets for every nation) and the doctrine of the denial of Jesus' crucifixion; (2) the Syrian Christian tradition, which influenced liturgical terminology (such as *Iqra'* from *qeryana*); and (3) the poetic tradition of the Arab *kahin* (soothsayers), which shaped the external form of revelation. Andrae's view thus creates a fundamental contrast with the doctrine of revelation in Islam. While Islamic theology emphasizes the transcendental, pure (*sui generis*), and distinct nature of revelation, separate from inner psychological or historical products, Andrae stresses its immanent aspect (emerging from within history) and historical continuity. Accordingly, Andrae positions Islam not as an isolated beginning, but as a continuation and uniquely Arab reformulation of pre-existing non-Orthodox spiritual currents in the Near East.

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