

Genealogy of the Prophet: Reassessing Ibn Sa‘d’s Qur’ānic Reference in Sīra Nabawiyya

Ahmad Sanusi Azmi¹, Norazmi Anas², Amran Abdul Halim³, Mohd Nor Adzhar Ibrahim⁴, Wan Khairul Aiman Wan Mokhtar⁵

Abstract

Genealogy plays a crucial role in historiography. An account of genealogy serves as an instrument to legalize kinship in the Arab tribal world. One of the most important aspects in understanding the history of Prophet Muḥammad’s life (the Sīra Nabawiyya) is his genealogy. It is not an exaggeration to say that almost all the biographies of Muḥammad commence their discussion by introducing his lineage, including Ibn Sa‘d, one of the prominent figures in Islamic historiography. The present study seeks to explore Ibn Sa‘d’s hermeneutical response to and understanding of Qur’ānic reference to the Prophet’s genealogy. It will also analyse for what specific reasons these understandings were developed in its socio-religious contexts. The study is qualitative in nature and is one in which the researcher will employ both descriptive and source-critical approaches. The study in its findings argues for the appropriateness of using 26:219 as reference to the Prophet’s genealogy. Its analysis proposes that it was the influence of his master that leads Ibn Sa‘d to invent the connection between the Prophet’s genealogy and the Qur’an. Furthermore, his approach to ‘Qur’ānic’ the nature of the narrative appears to be another reason that influence Ibn Sa‘d to create such connection.

Keywords: *Sīra Nabawiyya, The Prophet’s Genealogy, Ibn Sa‘d’s al-Ṭabaqāt.*

INTRODUCTION: GENEALOGICAL DISCOURSE IN THE WORKS OF SĪRA

In Sīra Nabawiyya, Prophet Muḥammad was described as sharing a line of pedigree with the other prophets. The presentation of this genealogical discourse in the works of sīra implies that Muslims believe that the final Prophet was chosen from the noblest ancestry. According to Islamic traditions, his line of descent can be traced back to Abraham, although the reliability of this has been much disputed (Ahmad, 1992; Al-Mubarakfūrī, 2006). This notion is believed to have been developed from the immense prophetic tradition that elaborated the Prophet’s genealogy. The traditions transmitted by Muslim ibn Hajjāj (d.261/874) comprise such witness. In the chapter entitled “The Merit of the Prophet’s Genealogy”, he records a narration that elucidates the Prophet’s lineage: the Prophet said, “Allah chose Ishmael from the children of Abraham and from the children of Ishmael He chose the children of Kināna, then from the children of Kinānah Allah chose the Quraysh and chose the children of Hāshim from the Quraysh, then Allah chose me from the children of Hāshim” (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1984). Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d.241/855) and al-Tirmīdhī (d. 279/892) provide a different tradition on this particular subject. According to them, Muḥammad is said to have been born into the noblest family of the noblest clan (Banī Hāshim), of the noblest tribe (Quraysh) (al-Shaybānī, 1995; al-Tirmīdhī, 1998; Azmi, 2018)

Even though the Quran has its specific setting of historical context (Azmi, 2017a; 2018), some scholars have employed it in order to support the rigour of the ideas of the Prophet’s nobility. Specific verses of the Qur’ān have been consulted. Al-Kharkūshī (d.407/1016) and Abū Nu‘aym al-Asbahānī (d.430/1038) cite 26:219 in their works (al-Kharkūshī, 2003; al-Asbahānī, 1986), even though Ibn Ishāq (d.151/768), the prominent biographer of the Prophet, does not make any specific reference to the Qur’ān in this regard. Chronologically, Ibn Sa‘d (d.230/844) seems to be the earliest Muslim historian to have connected this verse with this particular

¹ Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, E-mail: sanusiazmi@usim.edu.my

² Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak Branch, Tapah Campus, E-mail: norazmianas@uitm.edu.my

³ Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, E-mail: amranabdulhalim@usim.edu.my

⁴ Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, E-mail: mymnor.adzhar@usim.edu.my

⁵ Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, E-mail: wkhairulaiman@unisza.edu.my

subject, and other later scholars follow his step by quoting other hadith (with different wording, but conveying the same meaning (Ibn Sa'd, 1990). He quotes Ibn 'Abbās's (d.68/687) interpretation of the verse, which says: "and when thou turnest about among those who bow". According to Ibn 'Abbās, this verse refers to the Prophet's position in the lineage of prophets before him. Analysing Ibn 'Abbās's interpretation, the word *taqallubaka* ('your turn' or 'movement') and *al-sājidīn* (those who bow or prostrate) should not necessarily be taken literally; rather it should be grasped in the light of semantics. It is very unusual to find this verse being quoted with reference to the Prophet's genealogy in the early Muslim biographies of Muḥammad.

Statement of the Problem

Even though specific verse of the Quran has been used to explain the Prophet's genealogy, from a literal point of view, this Quranic verse does not appear to have any bearing on the status of the Prophet's lineage. The surface meaning of the verse appears to be too wide to be related to this subject. It seems that the general context of this passage is a command and guidance from God to Muḥammad to deliver his message to his family members. To make the picture clear, the Quranic verse (26:214-219) begins with an order to Muḥammad to admonish his family: "And warn thy clan, thy nearest kin. Lower thy wing to those who follow thee, being believers; then, if they disobey thee, say, 'I am quit of that you do. Put thy trust in the All-mighty, the All-compassionate who sees thee when thou standest and when thou turnest about among those who bow. Surely, He is the All-hearing, the All-knowing.'" The passage is articulate and coherent. The main message seems to be a command to Muḥammad to reprimand his kin in a courteous manner, but if they do not accept this, he is asked to remind them that he disassociates himself from all that the wrongdoers have committed. God asks Muḥammad to put his trust in God because He always monitors his messengers. This is clearly the general meaning of the passage. It seems that the words were not intended to illustrate the apparent purity of Muḥammad's lineage; and it was only the interpretation of Ibn 'Abbās that initiated the idea of a connection between this verse and the Prophet's pedigree.

Analysis on the Muslim Exegetical Works

A review of exegetical commentaries carried out by second-century Muslim scholars shows that none of them offers this kind of interpretation, even though they were of the generation closest to the Prophet. Most of them were prominent pupils of the Prophet's companions and learned the Qur'an directly from them: therefore it is somewhat unusual that none of them, including Mujāhid ibn Jabr (d.103/722), the famous disciple of Ibn 'Abbās himself, connected this verse with the status of the Prophet's lineage. The other commentaries produced by other scholars in the same century, such as al-Ḍaḥḥāk (d.105/723), al-Suddī (d.128/745) and Ibn Jurayj (d.149/766) did not cover this verse in their works (Al-Baghawī, 1999, al-Daḥḥāk, 1999; al-Khāzin, 1995; al-Suddī, 1993; Ibn Jurayj, 1992). According to Mujāhid, the verse conveys two meanings. The first one shows how the Prophet prayed with the believers; the word *taqallubaka* "means his movement in the prayers" and the word *al-sājidīn* (the prostraters) should be understood as *al-muṣallīn* (those performing a prayer). In general, the meaning of this verse correlates precisely with the previous verses, where the meanings are, "And rely upon the Exalted in Might, the Merciful, Who sees you when you arise and your movement among those who prostrate". The second meaning is a little more obscure than the first. Mujāhid said that the verse could be interpreted as "the Prophet could see everyone who is performing a prayer behind him." In any event, neither interpretation makes any connection with the suggested nobility of the Prophet's lineage.

The same understanding is indicated by Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d.150/767) and Sufyān al-Thawrī (d.161/777) in their exegetical commentaries. Both of them believed that this verse actually refers to the appearance of the Prophet's movements when he prayed with the believers. Yaḥyā ibn Sallām (d.200/815) and al-San'ānī (d.211/826) (al-Ṣan'ānī, 1989) both third/ninth century scholars, also express a similar interpretation. Yaḥyā did not only shed light on the meanings of the words but also conflated his explanation with the tradition of the Prophet to support his interpretation (Al-Basrī, 2004). It is worth noting that, even al-Ṭabarī (d.310/922), who is greatly known as the compiler of the prevailing traditions, did not connect this verse with the status of the Prophet's lineage at all (al-Ṭabarī, 2000).

The first exegetical interpretation which relates this verse with the Prophet's genealogy can be traced in Ibn Abī Hātim's (d.327/928) works (Ibn Abī Hātim, 1999). He articulates three different interpretations, citing prophetic traditions to support each opinion. The first interpretation shows that this verse clearly illustrates the Prophet's connection with the previous prophets. By adducing the prophetic traditions narrated by Ibn 'Abbās, this notion appears to be rigorous. Ibn 'Abbās said that the meaning of the verse is "from prophet to prophet until you have been turned as a prophet". Another tradition, also reported from Ibn 'Abbās, says: "Still the Prophet remained moving in the backbone of prophets until his mother bore him." Ibn Abī Hātim was not the only fourth-century scholar who put forward this novel idea; it was also transmitted by Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī (d.373/983). Without quoting any prophetic tradition, al-Samarqandī confirms that this verse means "your movement in the back bones of the fathers and in the wombs of the mothers, from Adam to Noah, until Abraham and the prophets after him, may God's peace be upon them" (al-Samarqandī, n.d.). This notion was then transmitted to other scholars in later centuries and came to be included not only in exegetical works but also in biographies of the Prophet (al-Baghawī, 1999; al-Qurtubī, 1964; Al-Qushayrī, n.d; al-Tha'labī, 2002; Ibn al-Jawzī, 2001).

Even though the main idea originated with Ibn 'Abbās, it sparks curiosity as the narration does not appear to have been recorded in the book of tafsīr till the fourth/tenth century. The major exegetical references of the early Islamic era appear as silent on this. The attribution of the narration to Ibn 'Abbās and his disciple 'Atā' (d.114/732) makes it seem very sound. An analysis of its chain of narrators does not raise any obvious doubts; but an examination of each of the transmitters indicates that one of the narrators was unable to be identified. According to Ibn Abī Hātim (Ibn Abī Hātim, 1999), 'Atā' narrated this tradition to his pupil named Sa'īd, while most other scholars believed that it was Sa'dān ibn al-Walīd (Al-Asbahānī, 1986; Al-Tha'labī, 2002). Even if we accept the opinion of the majority about Sa'dān ibn al-Walīd as the transmitter from 'Atā', this raises another problem. Sa'dān ibn al-Walīd has been labelled as majhūl (unknown) by scholars of biographical evaluation ('ilm al-rijāl), so, in terms of the tradition's status (the hadīth), it seems that this tradition or narration cannot be easily used to support the interpretation of this verse as applying to genealogy. The other narration that adduced by Ibn Abī Hātim in his Tafsīr is, however, recognised by al-Haythamī as acceptable. To enhance our understanding of the Qur'ān, one should provide only authentic and reliable information that can be used as a tool for better understanding the Qur'ān.

Another question to ponder is why this connection should only emerge in the works of tafsīr at early phase of the fourth/tenth century of Islam. It is quite interesting to note that Ibn Sa'd, the author of the Prophet's biography of the third/ninth century, appear as the one whose works preceded the works of tafsīr in delivering this narration. It is quite evident that there was no scholar before them connecting this verse with Muḥammad's lineage; and it seems that the reference made by later scholars was part of a gradual theological development in the Muslim understanding of the Qur'ān.

Ibn Sa'd and His al-Ṭabaqāt

According to Horovitz, before it was included as a part of al-Ṭabaqāt, the biography of Muḥammad that was written by Ibn Sa'd was actually a discrete work known as Akhbār al-Nabī (Reports of the Prophet's life). This work was then amalgamated and became the first part of the celebrated work, al-Ṭabaqāt, by Ibn Ma'rūf (Horovitz, 2002). Al-Ṭabaqāt is considered as a complete biography of the Prophet, following Ibn Ishāq's Sīra's renowned account. Ibn Sa'd was a creative muḥaddith who presented a biography of the Prophet, elucidating the events of his life with a novel and distinctive style and fresh overview. Horovitz identifies the crucial differences in the nature of the sīra's in Ibn Sa'd's al-Ṭabaqāt. He was not only delivering the sīra within the framework established by Ibn Ishāq, by focusing in particular on historical events in the life of the Prophet, but he also developed a new approach in the presentation of sīra. Ibn Sa'd in this way incepts a new emphasis upon Muḥammad's legal undertakings and accomplishments and presents an illustration in great detail of his moral deeds (Horovitz, 1997). The latter approach represents a hitherto unexplored and groundbreaking consideration of a new branch of ḥadīth literature known as al-Shamā'il, on which, according to Juynboll, Shamā'il of al-Tirmidhī, the first work in Shamā'il style, was modelled, based on Ibn Sa'd's al-Ṭabaqāt (Juynboll,

2015). The assertion of ethical values and elements of Shamā'il in the Prophet's biography is an innovative development in sīra literature of the ninth century. If Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Hishām and al-Wāqidī present the story of Muḥammad's life as a prophet, statesman and military commander, Ibn Sa'd evokes and emphasises Muḥammad's excellent moral qualities and physical perfections (Hadī, 2014). His innovative thought, however, is not confined only to style and content, but also the use of Qur'ānic references.

Relying principally on the Qur'ān as his source of Muḥammad's biography, Ibn Sa'd alludes to a profusion of verses from the Qur'ān. Based on a comparative analysis between his contemporaries' works (including Ibn Hishām, al-Ya'qūbī, and al-Balādhurī), he clearly surpasses them in terms of his application of an abundance of Qur'ānic references to Muḥammad's early life. In citing a particular verse, Ibn Sa'd usually names his source and the whole isnād, which is a typical practice of ahl al-ḥadīth. This practice is intended to declare its authenticity and validate his source. In Ibn Sa'd's discussion of Muḥammad's early life, most of the Qur'ānic references he adduces are from Hishām ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbī and al-Wāqidī. In fact, these two masters, according to Horowitz, were identified as his primary sources in delineating the Prophet's biography. Using the Qur'ān as his reference, Ibn Sa'd is found to gather more than that which has been cited by his master. For example in his discussion about the specific genealogical connection between Muhammad and previous prophets, Hishām al-Kalbī cites only 25:38 as his Qur'ānic reference in his *Jamhara al-Nasb*; while Ibn Sa'd, apart from this verse, adduces numbers of verses, covering a wide discussion of genealogical topics including the Prophet's Arab origins, reference to the nobility of his lineage, and a few verses are gathered to expound his forebears as honourable prophets. It is worth noting here that verse 26:219, the main focus of our discussion here, is not derived from his well-known masters, al-Wāqidī and Hishām al-Kalbī, but rather from al-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Makhlad al-Shaybānī, the scholar from Basra. The authenticity of this source, however, appears ambiguous since most of the popular biographical dictionaries (*Kitāb al-Tarājum*) refrain from mentioning Ibn Sa'd as a pupil of al-Ḍaḥḥāk.

The way in which Ibn Sa'd delineates his introductory section to Muḥammad's life is noticeably different from Ibn Ishāq's *Sīra*. In the preliminary section of Muḥammad's biography, Ibn Ishāq's and al-Jahiz emphasis focuses specifically on the social, political, and geographical background and condition of Arabs before the birth of Muḥammad (Azmi, 2018a); while Ibn Sa'd seems to pay no attention to this and focuses more upon the genealogical connection between Muḥammad and the previous prophets. To strengthen his argument, several Qur'ānic verses were adduced to demonstrate a solid basis for the idea. The way in which Ibn Sa'd presents Qur'ānic verses is like the ahl al-ḥadīth method. This technique comprises mentioning a source and providing a full list of its transmitters. By declaring his sources, he indicates implicitly that the verses and their interpretation probably, but not necessarily, originated from his own thought but rather were a transmission of a past generation. Since he barely expresses a personal remark on this collection of traditions and Qur'ānic references, it is difficult to conclude his own notions about the use of Qur'ānic verses in outlining the Prophet's biography. The least that we can infer is that within his time, or even probably earlier than that, the Qur'ān had already been used and perceived as a reliable source of information to depict certain part of the Prophet's early life.

Analysing the Quranic Genealogy of the Prophet

In his *al-Ṭabaqāt*, Ibn Sa'd employs a few Qur'ānic verses as references to Muḥammad's early life. The introductory section of Muḥammad's biography already consisted of sixteen verses from the Qur'ān, which were employed primarily to illustrate information about the previous prophets. It is in this prologue that Ibn Sa'd employs 26:219 to demonstrate the genealogical connection between Muḥammad and the previous prophets. Since the content of the verse does not appear to bear any literal connection with the Prophet's lineage, it is necessary to examine closely selected works of sīra, tafsīr, ḥadīth and dalā'il literature in order to analyse whether the contemporary scholars of Ibn Sa'd's time hold a similar point of view. The works of scholars of sīra, tafsīr, ḥadīth and dalā'il, as discussed in previous chapters, bear at least some minor references to the Prophet's early life. However, based on our reading, not one of the biographical authors from a multiplicity of backgrounds has employed 26:219 to delineate the Prophet's lineage.

Even though verse 26:219 is barely found to be used as reference to the Prophet's genealogy, this does not mean that it has never been referred to at all. It is evident that the verse was cited widely in the works of ninth century scholars. Due to its wide-ranging and multifaceted nature, the verse has been employed in various contexts, including doctrinal, ascetical, and biographical discourse. In the doctrinal debate, Abū Sa'īd al-Dārimī (d. 280/893) cites the verse to refute al-Marīsī's argument in their dispute about the attributes of Allah. Al-Marīsī asserts that God's attributes have one important element: God's attributes are not the same as the attributes of other living beings; and the human intellect possesses no faculty to perceive God's attributes. Therefore, he describes God's attributes as all the same one, in which according to him, there is no different between God's attribute of All-Seeing and All-Hearing. Disagreeing with al-Marīsī, Abū Sa'īd adduces verses from the Qur'ān, the Word of God himself, that discern various features of God's attributes, including verses 26:218-219. The verses are adduced to elaborate upon the attributes of the All-Seeing Allah (al-ru'ya or al-baṣīr). Later, this doctrinal debate is recorded by Al-Jishumī. In his work, al-Baghdādiya is identified as the group that hold the same belief as al-Marīsī; and al-Jishumī refutes them using the same verse employed by Abū Sa'īd. Indeed, there is no indication of genealogical discourse in their discussion related to this specific verse.

On the other hand, the scholars of ḥadīth have widely different applications and perspectives on this verse. It was considered by some of them as illustrating Muḥammad's miracles (khuṣūṣiyya or mu'jiza) in which, according to them, the verse illustrates the Prophet's ability to observe prayer taking place behind him, even though he is not facing the congregation at prayer (ṣalā al-jamā'a). Al-Ḥumaydī (d. 219) in his Musnad recorded a ḥadīth of Mujāhid in describing the meaning of the verse. According to Mujāhid, the verse connotes that the Prophet has the ability to monitor prayer taking place behind him (al-Humaydī, 1996). A similar understanding is also held by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, a prominent scholar of ḥadīth. At one time, Ibn Ḥanbal, is asked about the meaning of an ambiguous ḥadīth. In the ḥadīth, the Prophet is reported as saying "Occupy (your saf, the line of congregation prayer), I can see you from the rear as I can see you between me." Uncertain about the meaning of the ḥadīth, someone has questioned Ibn Ḥanbal about it, and in response, Ibn Ḥanbal explains, and at the same time alludes to 26:219, indicating that the verse connotes a similar meaning to the ḥadīth. Al-Bukhārī and Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī are also among the scholars of ḥadīth that lend their interpretations of this verse. They, however, do not make a comment on the whole verse but focus on the meaning of the word al-sājīdīn (the ones who prostrate) in verse 26:219 (al-Ṣan'ānī, 1989). According to them, the word connotes 'the ones who pray (al-muṣallīn), a definition that is clearly not in agreement with the interpretation of Ibn Sa'd. These scholars and their understanding of verse 26:219 are evidently at variance with the ideas presented by Ibn Sa'd in his al-Ṭabaqāt. The disagreement between the different schools of thought might be one of the reasons why the scholars of ḥadīth refrain from using the verse as reference to the Prophet's genealogy as Ibn Sa'd did.

Discussion on the verse is also evident in works on sufism. As early as eight century, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī makes a commentary on the verse. In his view, the verse is interpreted as evidence that God is always monitoring the movement of Muslim prayer when they are performing al-khalwa (seclusion), one of the means by which sufis maintain solitary ascetic retreat (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1984). In a later period, the verse is employed as one of the foundations of the concept of al-Iḥsān, in which according to the sufis' viewpoint, Muslims must always feel the existence of God, and God should always be observed in every single movement of His servant's prayer. And again, according to this point of view, the verse is deemed as clearly related to the physical undertaking of prayer itself, not as presented by Ibn Sa'd in his specifically genealogical perspective.

Discussion on Ibn Sa'd's Perspective

As suggested by Rosenthal, genealogy plays a central role in historiography. An account of genealogy serves as an instrument to legalize kinship in the Arab tribal world (Raven, 2006; Rosenthal, 2015). To prove the authentic lineage of the final Prophet, the authors of sira gather all accessible information, including verses from the Qur'ān (Azmi, 2018; 2017a). In genealogical discourse, Ibn Sa'd derives his knowledge from Hishām ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbī, a prominent Arab genealogist. Ibn Nadīm lists around 150 titles of Hishām's work in his Fihrist, in which most of these works are devoted to genealogical exposition. According to Yaqut, Hishām even composes a special genealogical work, entitled al-Farīd fī al-Ansāb (The Unrivalled in Genealogy) which is

dedicated to al-Ma'mūn, the eminent Abbasid ruler. Another work, known as *al-Mulūkī fī al-Ansāb*, was presented to Ja'far ibn Yaḥyā al-Barmakī, the Khurasan ruler. Gaining his factual basis from Hishām, Ibn Sa'd seems to follow some of Hishām's method. His particularity of style in using the Qur'ān in the context of genealogical discourse might, indeed, be the legacy of his master. In fact, of sixteen verses of the Qur'ān related by Ibn Sa'd in his preliminary genealogical discourse in Muḥammad's biography, seven of these derive from Hishām al-Kalbī. Hishām's use of the Qur'ān to confirm the connection of Muḥammad's lineage with the previous prophets might well have influenced Ibn Sa'd to follow his approach. The quotation of 26:219 may be seen as his effort in gathering all Qur'ānic verses related to the Prophet's lineage as the result of what he learns from his master.

Besides his master's influence, the debate taking place among Muslims about the status of Muḥammad's ancestry also seems to inform Ibn Sa'd's intellectual background. In this early period, some Sunni scholars believed that the Prophet's father, Abdullah, was a non-believer. This is based on few ḥadīth narrated by Sunni scholars, such as the ḥadīth narrated by Muslim ibn Ḥajjāj, in which, according to Muslim ibn Ḥajjāj, the Prophet himself conceded that his father would be punished in hell because he was a non-believer (Muslim, n.d). In contrast with this belief, other Shī'ite sources suggest the opposite. The Shī'ite sources provide arguments confirming the purity of Muḥammad's pedigree. It is in this quarrel that the verse 26:219 is employed to confirm that all of Muḥammad's ancestors were the sājidūn (the ones who prostrate, i.e., the believers); and Muḥammad's gene originate from and move in (taqallub) the vessel of pure blood and backbones (aṣlāb) of the sājidūn. According to Muḥammad al-Kāzīm, three of the Twelve Imams of Shī'ite, al-Bāqir (d. 114/732), al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765) and al-Kāzīm (d. 185/799) maintained this particular interpretation of the verse for centuries (al-Kūfi, 2000; al-Tabrisi, 2006). Believing in the teaching of their Imams, Abū Ḥayān, while commenting on this verse, state that, the Rafidi use this interpretation in order to authenticate the Prophet's ancestors as pure believers (mu'min). Such intellectual concepts and notions were nurtured in the early centuries of Islam and have resulted in a reverence for the Prophet's descendants. It is therefore quite possible that a similar line of reasoning reached the receptive understanding of Ibn Sa'd. Moreover, according to Brockleman, al-Wāqidi, his major source of knowledge, is actually a Shī'ī Muslim (al-Qummī, 1387H; Brockelmann, n.d). If this is true, the strong bond between Ibn Sa'd and his master al-Wāqidi might have become a firm conduit to the transference of Shī'ite doctrine, especially their particular perspective on the interpretation of 26:219. Appearing to have connection with the Prophet's genealogy, it quite probably leads Ibn Sa'd to include the recitation in his *al-Ṭabaqāt*.

CONCLUSION

To arrive at an authentic understanding of the actual meaning of verse 26:219 would seem to present almost insurmountable difficulties; but implicit within the verse, Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt* shows us how Muslims of the ninth century were, in fact, informed about the exegetical meaning of the passage. Ibn Sa'd, as has been mentioned before, is not an author to always include personal remarks in *al-Ṭabaqāt*. His decision to include the verse at all implies, at the very least, an initial connection of this verse with the Prophet's genealogy within the *sira* framework. Since his predecessor and contemporaries in *sira* scholarship, such as Ibn Ishaq, al-Wāqidi, Ibn Hishām and al-Ya'qubi, refrain from linking the verse with Muḥammad's lineage, it is therefore reasonable to suggest that Ibn Sa'd has conceived an insightful foundation for the connection of Muḥammad's lineage with that of previous prophets. The connection that is based on the Quranic verse would have been accepted at the time as an established fact within Islamic scholarship (Azmi, 2018b). Furthermore, in a multi-religious society, and since the status of Muḥammad as a prophet would have been debated and argued within this period, Ibn Sa'd's effort would have, at the same time, provided a steady and well-founded image of the last prophet, who is perceived among Muslims as an actual inheritance of the previous prophets sent by God. There might also have been the influence of other forms of literature in Ibn Sa'd's milieu. Rubin, in his analysis of 26:219 and the concept of the pre-existence of Muḥammad, argues for the existence of fragments and reminiscences of some pre-Islamic texts. The notion of the 'pre-existence' of Muḥammad in the being or existence of previous prophets has a resonance with and follows a similar pattern to Jewish and Christian traditions. He suggests, furthermore, that the resulting concept that emerged in Ibn Sa'd's work might have had its origin in Islam's polemic with Christianity. Within the diverse theological environments of this debate, this

notion would serve as an instrument to validate Muḥammad's prophetic predecessors as pre-ordained Muslims.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, M. Y. A. (1992). *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah fi Daw'al-Masadir al-Asliyyah. Markaz al-Malik Faysal li al-Bubuth wa al-Dirasah al-Islamiyyah*, at, 115-116.
- Al-Asbahānī, A. N. A. A. (1986). *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*. ed. Muḥammad Rawwās. Bayrūt: Dār al-Nafā'is.
- Al-Baghawī (1999). *Ma'ālim al-Tanzīl fi Tafsīr al-Qur'an/Tafsīr al-Baghawī*. Bayrūt: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī.
- Al-Basrī, Y. S. (2004). *Tafsīr Yahyā ibn Sallām*. Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya.
- Al-Dahhāk ibn Mazāhim (1999). *Tafsīr al-Dabbak*, ed. Muhammad Shukrī. al-Qāhira: Dār al-Salām.
- Al-Dārimī, U. S. (1998). *Naqd al-Imām Abū Sa'id Uthmān Ibn Sa'id 'Alā al-Marīsī al-Jahmī al-'Anid Fī Mā Iftarā 'Alā Allah Azza Wa Jalla Min al-Tawbīd*. Beirut: Maktaba al-Rushd.
- Al-Humaydī, A. B. A. A. (1996). *Musnad al-Humaydī, Hasan al-Dārānī*. Sūriyā: Dar al-Saqā.
- Al-Kharkūshī, A. A. M. (2003). *Sharf al-Muṣṭafā*. Makka: Dār al-Basha'ir.
- Al-Khāzin (1995). *Lubab al-Ta'wil fi Ma'ani al-Tanzīl*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya.
- Al-Kūfī, F. I. (2000). *Tafsīr Furāt al-Kūfī*. Tehran: Wizāra al-Thaqāfa wa al-Irshād al-Islāmī.
- Al-Mubarakfurī. S. A. R. (2006). *al-Rahiq Al-Makbtūm*. Bayrūt: Dār al-Hilal.
- Al-Qummī, A. A. A. I. (1984). *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, ed. al-Sayyid al-Jazā'iri. Matba'a al-Najf.
- Al-Qurtubī, A. A. M. A. (1964). *al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Quran*. Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Misriyya.
- Al-Qushayrī, A. A. H. (n.d). *Latā'if al-Ishārāt*. Cairo: al-Hai'a al-Misriyya al-'Ammā li al-Kitāb.
- Al-Samarqandī, A. A. N. M. (n.d). *Baḥr al-'Ulūm*. n.p.
- Al-Ṣan'ānī, A. A. H. (1989). *Tafsīr 'Abd al-Razzāq*, ed. Muṣṭafā Muslim. al-Riyad: Maktaba al-Rushd.
- Al-Suddī, I. (1993). *Tafsīr al-Suddī*. Mansura, Dār al-Wafā.
- Al-Shaybānī, A. A. A. H. (1995). *Musnad*. Ed. al-Arna'ūt. Mu'assasa al-Risāla.
- Al-Ṭabarī, A. J. M. J. (2000). *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*. al-Qahira: Muassasa al-Risāla.
- Al-Tha'labī (2002). *al-Kashf wa al-Bayan 'an Tafsīr al-Quran*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī.
- Azmi, A. S., Ismail, M. Y., Ahmad, H., Nor, Z. M., & Sobali, A. M. (2018b). Statistical Frequency of Quranic References in the Works of Hadith: An Analytical Study of the Narratives of the Prophet's Early Life. *International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology*, 9(5), 686-693.
- Azmi, A.S. (2017). Narratives of the Prophet's Early Life in Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Buḥārī: An Analytical Study of Qur'anic References in Sira Nabawiyya. *Al-Bayan: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies*, 15(2), pp.193-212.
- Azmi, A.S. (2018). The Development of Dalail Nubuwwa Literature: An Emblem of Interreligious Dialogue in Early Islam. *The Social Sciences*, 13(5), pp.1072-1078.
- Azmi, A.S. (2018a). The Birth of Prophet Muḥammad in the Qur'an: A Critical Analysis of al-Jāhiz's Thought in his Kitāb al-Ḥujja fi Tathbit al-Nubuwwa. *KEMANUSLAAN: The Asian Journal of Humanities*, 25.
- Azmi, A.S., Nor, Z.M., Sobali, A.M., Ismail, M.Y. and Halim, A.A. (2017). From Christianity to Islam: An Analysis of Ibn Rabban's Approach towards Sira Nabawiyya. *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, 11, (1): 1-6.
- Brockelmann, C. (n.d). *Tārīkh al-Adab al-'Arabī*. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif.
- Hadī, R. (2014). Ibn Sa'd wa manhajihī fi al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr Dirāsa fi al-Sira al-Nabawiyya. *Journal of College of Islamic Science*, 198-230.
- Horovitz, J. (2002). *The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet and Their Authors*. ed. Lawrence Conrad. New Jersey.
- Hurvitz, N. (1997). 'Biographies and Mild Asceticism: A Study of Islamic Moral Imagination', *Studia Islamica*. n.p.
- Ibn Abī Hātim, A. A. (1999). *Tafsīr Al-Quran Al-Azim*. Saudi: Maktaba Nizār Mustafā al-Bāz.
- Ibn al-Jawzī (2001). *Zād al-Masīr fi 'Ilm al-Tafsīr*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī.
- Ibn al-Jawzī, A. A. R. (1984). *Nuzḥa al-A'yūn al-Nawāzīr Fī 'Ilm al-Wujūb wa al-Nawāzīr*. Beirut: Muassasa al-Risāla.
- Ibn Jurayj, A. A. M. (1992). *Tafsīr Ibn Jurayj*. Cairo: Maktaba al-Turath al-Islami.
- Ibn Sa'd (1990). *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*. Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya.
- Juynboll, G. H. A. (2015). 'al-Tirmidhī', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. ed. P. Bearman, et al. Brill Online.
- Muslim (n.d). *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turath al-'Arabī.
- Raven, W. (2006). 'Sira and the Qur'an', in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Georgetown University, Washington DC. Brill, (5) pp.29-49.
- Rosenthal, F. (2015). 'Nasab', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. ed. P. Bearman, et al, Brill Online.
- Rubin, U. (2015). 'More Light On Muḥammad's Pre-Existence: Qur'anic And Post-Qur'anic Perspectives', in *Andrew Rippin and Roberto Tottoli, eds., Books And Written Culture Of The Islamic World: Studies Presented To Claude Gilliot On The Occasion Of His 75th Birthday*. Brill, Islamic History and Civilization, pp.288-311.
- Tabrisī, A. A. A. A. (2006). *Majma' al-Bayān fi Tafsīr al-Qur'an*. Bayrūt: Dār al-Murtaḍā.
- Tirmidhī, A. I. M. I. (1998). *al-Jami' al-Kabir*. Bayrūt: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī.

Zarzūr, A. M. (n. d.). *al-Hākīm al-Jishūmī wa Manbajībī fī al-Tafsīr*. Beirut: Muassasa al-Risāla.
_____ (n.d). *Ṭabaqāt*. ed. ‘Umar ‘Alī Muḥammad. al-Qāhira: Maktaba al-Khanjī.