

## Investigating the Synchronicity of Instantaneous or Gradual Revelation with *Bi'that*

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### Abstract

Some historians of the Qur'ān maintain that the *bi'that* (being chosen as God's messenger) of Prophet Muḥammad (s) synchronized with the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān while others deny this. In this regard, there is a difference of opinion among scholars as to whether the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān was instantaneous (*daf'i*) or gradual (*tadrījī*). Therefore, the authors of this article have tried to offer a new solution to this old problem in the history of the Qur'ān by putting these scattered answers into a comprehensive plan. To this end, all people and all useful reasons have been used logically in response to the problem. Then, it is shown that the date of *bi'that* synchronized with the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān and this revelation at the time of *bi'that* was instant. This instantaneous revelation, which has the quality of 'amr, preceded the gradual revelation of the Holy Qur'ān.

**Keywords:** History of the Qur'ān, instantaneous (*daf'i*) revelation, gradual (*tadrījī*) revelation, *bi'that*, beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān.

### Introduction

The main question of this study is synchronicity or non-synchronicity of the *bi'that* and the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān. However, since – according to some – the Qur'ān has two revelations, i.e., instantaneous and gradual, the main question that arises is that «Was the *bi'that* synchronized with the instantaneous revelation or the gradual one?»<sup>1</sup>

There are secondary questions in this regard, including the question about the time of the *bi'that* of the Prophet (s). Is it on the 27<sup>th</sup> of Rajab (the major Shī'a belief), 2<sup>nd</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> of Rabī' al-Awwal, or 17<sup>th</sup> of Ramaḍān? (Ḥujjatī, 2010: 38; Ma'rifat, 1996: 32; Rāmyār, 1983: 54; Zanjānī, 1984: 7).

There are also dates about the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān, including the 15<sup>th</sup> of Sha'bān (Ḥujjatī, 2010: 38; Khu'ī, 1981, vol. 1: 224; Ṭabrisī, 1986, vol. 9: 61), which from one point of view is the “Blessed Night” (Qur'ān 44:3); according to Ḥujjatī, one of the nights of the holy month of Ramaḍān, including the night of *Qadr* (Ḥujjatī, 2010: 39; Ṭabrisī, 1986, vol. 10: 518-520); or according to Suyūṭī, the 1<sup>st</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, or 27<sup>th</sup> of Ramaḍān. (Suyūṭī, 1991, vol. 1: 70; Ṭabrisī, 1986, vol. 10: 518)

Because the synchronicity or non-synchronicity of the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān with the *bi'that* is closely related to the age of the Prophet (s) when he was appointed as a prophet by God and also the period of gradual revelation, two questions will arise. First,

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1. Some articles and resources that have previously addressed similar questions include Rahbarī (2006), Nāṣihīyān and Jalā'īyān Akbarnā (2011), and Mu'addab and Yūnisī (2010).

what was the age of the Prophet (s) at the time of *bi'that* (40 or 43)? Second, how long was the period of revelation of the Qur'ān (20, 23, or 25 years)?

Because Muslim scholars disagree on the types of revelation, i.e., instantaneous or gradual revelation of the Qur'ān, the question arises as to whether the Qur'ān had a gradual revelation, an instantaneous revelation, or both?

### **Background of Discussion: Solutions Offered by other Historian scholars of the Qur'ān**

In the face of these questions, Muslim thinkers are divided into two groups. The first group does not believe in the synchronicity of the *bi'that* with the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān. In fact, this group acknowledges only the gradual revelation and denies the instantaneous revelation of the Qur'ān.

The second group, however, accepts the synchronicity of the *bi'that* with the beginning of the revelation. Nevertheless, this group believes that the revelation of the Qur'ān started as a gradual process and the instantaneous revelation was a much later event.

#### *The First category: Believers in the non-synchronicity of the Bi'that with the Beginning of the Revelation of the Qur'ān Denying the Instantaneous Revelation*

Some of scholars in this category claim that the revelation of the Qur'ān took place three years after the *bi'that*, and that in the first three years of the *bi'that*, when the invitation was made in secret, no book was revealed for Islam. Moreover, they hold that the Qur'ān could not have had an instantaneous revelation and there has been only a gradual revelation over twenty years. Accordingly, this group, firstly, do not believe in the synchronicity of the *bi'that* and the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān. Secondly, by denying the instantaneous revelation, they accept only the gradual revelation of the Qur'ān, that is, by omitting the two main parameters of instantaneous revelation and the non-synchronicity of revelation and *bi'that*, they have assumed that their stance could not be challenged.

In their view, no portion of Qur'ān was revealed at the time of *bi'that*, which could be the 27<sup>th</sup> of Rajab, let alone of talking about its gradual or instantaneous revelation. They believe that the Prophet (s) received the Qur'ān three years after his *bi'that*, and this reception was only gradual and during the month of Ramaḍān.

Others in this category, such as Suyūṭī (Suyūṭī, 1991, vol. 1: 73), believe that the Prophet (s) was appointed as a prophet in dream and sleep in the month of Rabī' al-Awwal, that is, the month in which his birthday falls. Six months after this event, in the month of Ramaḍān, the Qur'ān was revealed to him upon awakening, because «communication with God has levels ... and ... the Prophet could not at first tolerate higher levels» (Subḥānī, 1972, vol. 1: 194). Therefore, it was first revealed to him in his sleep and later when he was awake.

Another group of this category has also cited traditions to prove the claim that it has been said that in the day of *bi'that*, only a voice was heard (with or without the image of an angel) and there was no mention of the revelation of the Qur'ān or its verses. On that day, the Prophet (s) saw an angel who told him: “O Muhammad, then the Messenger of God.” In some narrations, it has been narrated that he only heard, and there is no mention of seeing an angel. (Majlisī, 1992, vol. 18: 184-193)

### **Critique of this view**

Believers in this view have neglected an important and clear principle: showing a miracle is a prerequisite for proving the legitimacy of a prophetic mission. Since the holy Prophet of Islam

(s) is the last prophet, his main miracle should be able to be verified for future generations. As in our time, when the Prophet (s) is not present, his eternal miracle (i.e., the Qur'ān) is capable of being verified by researchers. That is, these researchers can study its miraculous aspects. Therefore, there is no doubt that because the Prophet (s) was the last prophet, his main miracle is the Qur'ān, because his other miracles cannot be verified today. Now, when a divinely appointed prophet announces his mission, the first request that is made to him is to prove this mission. Proving this mission is possible only by presenting a miracle. Since the skill of the people of that time was in literature, the literary miracle of the Qur'ān was the most important aspect of the miracle at that time, and as historical evidence has shown, the Prophet (s) offered those who asked him for a miracle to try challenging the Qur'ān (*taḥaddī*) by bringing a verse or chapter like it. Accordingly, if the Prophet (s) were appointed without the Qur'ān, then what were his miracles at the time of his appointment as a prophet? How could he prove that he had been appointed as a prophet? In the face of people, what external factor could he use to prove his connection to God?

In addition, denying the instantaneous revelation<sup>1</sup> of the Qur'ān, which has many intellectual and narrative supports (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 2: 628; Majlisī, 1992, vol. 18: 188; Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, 2000, vol. 5: 22), is a very difficult task, if not impossible.

The drawbacks of Suyūṭī's idea are as follows. First, he does not have a strong evidence to support his claim. Second, it is ineffective to differentiate between being asleep or awake during the beginning of revelation, because this relationship was through the heart: «With it came down the spirit of Faith and Truth - To thy heart»<sup>2</sup> (*Nazala Bihi al-Rūḥ al-Amīn 'Alā Qalbīk*) (Qur'ān 26:193-194). Moreover, the Prophet's (s) dream was not an ordinary dream, because he said: «My eyes are asleep while my heart is not sleeping» (Majlisī, 1992, vol. 79: 189; Rāmyār, 1983: 48). Third, being asleep is not necessarily always a lower stage of being awake (Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, 2000, vol. 1: 302). In other words, although hearing the voice of an angel while awake without seeing him is the fifth stage of abstraction and purity of spirit - from Ṣadra's point of view - which is reserved for *muḥaddath*,<sup>3</sup> seeing the angel in a dream and hearing his voice is a higher stage (that is, the fourth stage of abstraction). Thus, being asleep is not necessarily a lower stage than being awake, and its status changes according to the status of guardian, *muḥaddath*, prophet, and messenger. (*valī, muḥaddath, nabi and rasoul*)

In the narrations cited, there is some confusion between the time of the Prophet's preparation for communication with God up to the age of 40, and the time of the beginning of communication that led to the revelation of the Qur'ān to the Prophet. Also, in the narration of the first meeting in the cave of Ḥarā it is stated that «I was sleeping in the cave of Ḥarā when Gabriel came to me, **and I woke up**», obviously the interval between this sleeping and waking was not six months!

In addition to what is mentioned in this story, «the angel said: 'Proclaim! (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created» (*'Iqra' bismi rabbika al-laḍi khalaq ...*) (Qur'ān 96:1) and I woke up from my sleep and it seemed as if a book had been written in my heart' (Ḥalabī, 2006, vol. 1: 272; Suhaylī, 1992, vol. 2: 392). These statements clearly show that it was an instantaneous revelation because he speaks of the book and the interval between sleeping and waking is not said to have been six months.

1. From our point of view in this article, the belief in having an instantaneous revelation for the Qur'ān is a previously proven principle. The fact that the Qur'ān has an instantaneous revelation is supported firstly based on the well-documented rational and narrative reasons, and secondly due to the substantiations of great people such as Mulla Ṣadrā (1989, 2000), Fayḍ (1996), Ṭabāṭabā'ī (1996), Zanjānī (1984) (for more information, q.v. Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 2: 612; Majlisī, 1992, vol. 18: 188; vol. 67: 333; Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, 2000, vol. 5: 22).

2. All translations are from Holy Qur'an translated by Yusufali: <http://www.parsquran.com>

3. *Muḥaddath* means the one to whom the angels speak, but he or she is not a prophet.

*The second category: Believers in the simultaneity of bi'that and the beginning of revelation assuming only the beginning of revelation to be gradual*

Some of the believers of this view have said that on the 27<sup>th</sup> of Rajab, a few verses of the Qur'ān 96 were revealed to the Prophet (s) (beginning with a gradual revelation), then the Qur'ān was revealed all at once in the month of Ramaḍān (instantaneous revelation), and the rest was gradually revealed until the end of the life of the Prophet (Subḥānī, 1972, vol. 1: 194).<sup>1</sup>

As can be seen, this group solves the problem by using the distinction of the instantaneous and gradual revelations of the Qur'ān and belief in the existence of both. In their view, the revelation of the Qur'ān was gradual at the beginning.

### **Critique of This View**

This idea has some weaknesses, which are discussed in the following lines.

The first problem is the precedence of the part over the whole (gradual revelation in Ramaḍān over instantaneous revelation in Rajab). According to Ṣadra, «The verses are first composed in the world of 'amr, then they take shape and form in the world of *khalq* and they are revealed so that the possessors of thought and remembrance, by studying the chapters of this book and observing its current verses ... are promoted to the world of 'amr, ... transferred from the tangible to the sensible world, from the part to the whole, and from the world of creation (*khalq*) to the truth (world of 'amr)...». (Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, 2000, vol. 5: 424-465) Accordingly, the world of 'amr is beyond and is ahead of the world of *khalq*. God's creations are first realized in the world of 'amr and are then transferred to the world of *khalq*. Because of this, the existence of the Qur'ān in the world of 'amr, which is general, precedes the gradual revelation of the Qur'ān as a partial phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the entire Qur'ān should have been revealed first on the twenty-seventh of Rajab, and then the verses would have been revealed gradually and partially in Ramaḍān<sup>3</sup> of the same year.

The second problem is that this view cannot interpret the phrase «as if a book had been written in my heart» (Ḥalabī, 2006, vol. 1: 272; Suhaylī, 1992, vol. 2: 392), in which the word *book* refers to the first revelation, which was instantaneous.

Given what has been said, each of the foregoing solutions is opposed by another group based on some evidences, but these answers are not convincing and enough. Thus, we need to look for a novel solution. This is given in the following section.

### **Authors' Solution**

In our view, all of these statements can be combined, and each is a piece of a puzzle that must be put in its place. In short, having a miracle is a prerequisite for a mission to prove

1. Of course, another group of scholars such as Suyūṭī (Suyūṭī, 1991, vol. 1: 39) and Fakhr Rāzī (Fakhr Rāzī, 2003, vol. 5: 85) believe that the Qur'ān was first sent to the sky of the world and then was placed in the *Bayt al-Izza*, but the opponents believe this statement is unlikely (Ma'rifāt, 1996: 40). For more information about the revelation to the *Luwhi mahfūz*, *Bayt al-Ma'mūr*, the Fourth Sky, etc., q.v. Zarkashī, n.d., vol. 1:229; Hākim Nayshābūrī, 2000, vol. 2: 222; Ibn Kathīr, 1996, 6; Ṭabarī, 1992, vol. 1:84; Qurtebī, 1997, vol. 2: 297; abu Shāma, 2004, 24.

2. Instantaneous revelation means revelation at once, one which does not have the element of time. This revelation that the Qur'ān defines as *inzāl* precedes gradual revelation (Rāmyār, 1983: 90).

3. Especially because the revelation of the Qur'ān in Ramaḍān is for the guidance of the people and this is totally consistent with the gradual revelation: "Ramadhan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an, as a guide to mankind" (*Shahr al-Ramaḍān alladī unzela fihe al-Qur'ān hudan li al-nās*) (Qur'ān 2:185).

legitimacy.<sup>1</sup> This issue will be explained in two ways, i.e., briefly and in detail. In the brief explication, we might note that it is necessary to prove the simultaneity of these two issues first by determining the 27<sup>th</sup> of Rajab through narrative evidences and a strong Shī'a path on the one hand and not having the suspicion of confusion with other periods of the Prophet's life such as his birth time and gradual revelation in Ramaḍān on the other hand. The second issue is how the Qur'ān was revealed in the beginning. This issue becomes possible by believing in two types of instantaneous and gradual revelation and also considering the necessity of the precedence of instantaneous revelation over gradual revelation. Adopting this view helps us easily accept the multiplicity of nights of *Qadr* and consider the first verses of the Qur'ān 96 as the beginning of revelation. In the following lines, this subject will be examined in detail.

### *Determining the Exact Time of the Bi'that*

As it has been said, considering the various differences regarding the time of *bi'that*, the situation of this day should be clarified first. Considering that comments made about the birth of the Prophet (s)<sup>2</sup> on Rabī' al-Awwal and *al-Furqān* day on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Ramaḍān, it can be claimed that the person who considered the *bi'that* as the first of Rabī' al-Awwal confused it with the birth date of the Prophet.<sup>3</sup> In addition, considering the *bi'that* date to be the 17<sup>th</sup> of Ramaḍān<sup>4</sup> was probably because the believer of this idea did not see the beginning and the kind of the revelation compatible with *bi'that*;<sup>5</sup> therefore, the multiplicity of ideas was used and the *bi'that* was taken to the 17<sup>th</sup> of Ramaḍān to remove the problem without solving it.<sup>6</sup>

1. When a prophet is sent and announces his mission, the first request that is made to him is to prove this mission, which is possible only by performing a miracle. How can one distinguish between true and false prophets without proving the mission?
2. Maqīzī has brought all the available reports about the day, month, and year of the birth of the Holy Prophet (s). The popular report among Shī'a narrators is the 17<sup>th</sup> of Rabī' al-Awwal, after dawn, while Sunnī scholars take it to have been on the 12<sup>th</sup> of Rabī' al-Awwal (Maqīzī, 1999: 3).
3. Since the Shī'as consider themselves the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet (s), regarding the determination of the day of *bi'that* they follow the sound narration quoted from Ahl al-Bayt (a), which says *bi'that* was on the 27<sup>th</sup> of Rajab (Subḥānī, 1972, vol. 1: 190).
4. Ma'rifat explains that Abū Ja'far Ṭabarī 'Āmulī (224 - 310 AH) has a narration which maintains that according to the Qur'ān 8:41, the beginning of the *bi'that* was on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Ramaḍān because this date is in harmony with the battle of *Badr*. This view has apparently been confirmed by Zanjānī (Zanjānī, 1984: 7), but this verse only refers to verses about Anfāl and matters related to the Prophet's war, and does not mention the beginning of revelation (Ma'rifat, 1996: 32).
5. The famous time for *bi'that* among Sunnī scholars is the month of Ramaḍān, and the proof of this narration is the interpretation of the verses: «Ramadhan is the (month) in which the Qur'ān was sent down, as a guide to mankind» (Qur'ān 2:185); «By the Book that makes things clear, We sent it down during a Blessed Night» (Qur'ān 44:2-3) and «We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the Night of *Qadr*» (Qur'ān 97:1). However, the existence of instantaneous and gradual revelations for the Qur'ān and the allocation of gradual revelations to the people mentioned in the verse “sent down the Qur'ān, as a guide to mankind» (Qur'ān 2:185) shows that this interpretation is unjustified. Some scholars (Subḥānī, 1972, vol. 1: 193) believe that the whole Qur'ān was revealed in the month of Ramaḍān from *Luwḥi mahfūḍ* to the *Bayt al-Ma'mūr* and only five to six verses were revealed on the day of *bi'that*, but from our point of view this is not correct, because the Prophet said: “It is as if a book was written in my heart,” and this is more like an instantaneous revelation. In addition, there are opposing views to the consideration of the Qur'ān as the referent of the pronoun “*hu*” in “*Innā anzalnāhu fi laylat al-Qadr*,” which distorts the argument due to the existence of another possibility. Attempts have also been made to link the *laylat al-Qadr* to the *bi'that*, which is mentioned in the narrations as one of the blessed nights.
6. Confirming the greatness and importance of the night and day of 27<sup>th</sup> of Rajab, many points have been offered in narrations, e.g., the month of Rajab is the month of God or the 27<sup>th</sup> night of Rajab is blessed. Imām Jawād (a) says Rajab is a night that is better than what sun shines at, and in it is the 27<sup>th</sup> of Rajab, at the dawn of which the Prophet (s) was sent. (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 1: 9)

### *Determining the synchronicity of Bi'that and the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān*

Since it became clear that the *bi'that* was in our view on the 27<sup>th</sup> of Rajab, we now need to clarify whether the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān<sup>1</sup> was on the 27<sup>th</sup> of Rajab or not? We previously asked «What does *bi'that* really mean?» and «Is it possible for a messenger to be sent to the people while he does not have any miracles or signs for the legitimacy of his claim?»<sup>2</sup> The answer to the second question is absolutely negative. Now, the question that arises is that «What was the miracle of the Messenger of God (s)?» the answer is that it was certainly the Qur'ān. Therefore, the *bi'that* of the Prophet (s) must be synchronous with the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān, which is also the miracle of the Prophet (s). This idea is behind the notion that the word *iqra'* is related to the instantaneous revelation of the Qur'ān, which is confirmed by the narrations related to *bi'that*.

### *How did the Revelation of the Qur'ān Begin?*

Now it should be clarified, «What was the beginning of the revelation that synchronized with the *bi'that* (27<sup>th</sup> of Rajab)?» Was it gradual, instantaneous, or both? In the latter case, which preceded the other? To answer these questions, we must pay attention to the distinction between two kinds of creation, i.e., *'amr* (command) and *khalq* (creation). (Qur'ān 7:54) Because when it comes to creation by *khalq*, there is always the issue of time, but if God wills it and it comes to creation by *'amr*, its creation does not require time.<sup>3</sup>

When God addresses the Prophet (s) and says *'Iqra'* (read), that's a creation by *'amr*, so *'Iqra'* means «*khudh al-Qur'ān*», (Receive the Qur'ān) «*akhadh al-Qur'ān*» (take the Qur'an) and «*kun Qāri'an*», (be a reader or read it!) that is, with this command, the spirit of the Qur'ān is revealed to the heart of the Prophet (s), «and thus have We, by Our Command, sent inspiration to thee» (*kadhālika awḥaynā rūḥan min 'amrinā*) (Qur'ān 42:52)<sup>4</sup> and he (s) receives everything with his heart. This perception is initially hidden and then appears externally. This is the same as what happened in the case of the burning of Abraham (s) when God says, «O Fire! be thou cool, and (a means of) safety for Abraham!» (*yā nār kūnī bardan va salāmā*) (Qur'ān 21:69) and the burning fire suddenly cools down. God's command is not a word; it is a sudden creation, as Shaykh Mufīd explains, «God's will for the deeds of His servants is to command them to do these deeds». (McDermott, 1978: 198; Muṭahharī, 1998: 51)

The words of Qur'ān are related to the world of *'amr*; therefore there is no way for renewal and contradiction in it, «and Our Command is but a single (Act),- like the twinkling of an eye». (*va mā 'amr unā illā wāhidah*) (54:50) (Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, 2000, vol. 7: 110), Ṣadra also believes that Qur'ān expresses' the revelation of the Qur'ān with the past tense verb «*Unzila*»,

1. The first descent of Gabriel is also said to be on the 27<sup>th</sup> of Rajab (Ibn As'ad, 1991, vol. 1: 193, as cited in Rāmyār, 1983: 50; Ḥalabī, 2006, vol. 1: 272; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, n.d. vol. 1: 88; Ibn Kathīr, 1996, vol. 3: 6; Ya'qūbī, n.d. vol. 2: 15; Zaynī Daḥlan, 2001, vol. 1: 92; Majlisī, 1992, vol. 18: 190; Shams Shāmī, 1993, vol. 2: 303).

2. The various verses of the Qur'ān show that there was an expectation that the prophets should have a sign and a miracle: «Let him then bring us a Sign like the ones that were sent to (Prophets) of old!» (*fal ya'tinā bi āyatin kamā ursil al-āwwalīn*) (Qur'ān 21:5), «Then bring us a Sign, if thou tellest the truth!» (*Fa'ti bi 'āyatin 'in kunta min al-ṣādiqīn*) (Qur'ān 26:154), «It shall come forth white (and shining), without harm (or stain),- as another Sign» (*Takhruj bayḍā'a min ghayri sū' āyatan ukhrā*) (Qur'ān 20:22), «that there may be for us - for the first and the last of us - a solemn festival and a sign from thee» (*Takūna lanā 'idan li-awwalīnā va ākharīnā va āyatan minka...*) (Qur'ān 5:114)

3. «Verily, when He intends a thing, His Command is, "be", and it is!» (*Innamā 'amruhū Idā 'arāda shay'an 'an Yaqūlū lahu kun fa yakūn*) (Qur'ān 36:82; 2:117; 3:47; 6:73; 16:40; 19:35; 40:68).

4. According to the verse: «*Qul al-rūhu min 'amr e rabbi*» (Qur'ān 17:85), rūḥ (spirit) is from the world of *'amr*, and its creation does not need time.

(was sent down) (Qur'ān 2:185) although some words of the Qur'ān will be revealed after this, because the objects that appear in this world gradually are fixed and presented in the world of truth at once (Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, 2000, vol. 1: 294, 298). Also in *Al-Asfār al-arba'a*, Ṣadra explains that the world of 'amr is the sudden existence, while the world of *khalq* is gradual existence; The Qur'ān belongs to the world of 'amr, and the *Furqān* belongs to the world of *khalq* (Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, 1989, vol. 7: 10). Despite the fact that not all of the Qur'ān was revealed (for ordinary people «as a guide to mankind» (*Hudan li al-nās*) (Qur'ān 2:185)), Ṣadra believes that its revelation can be described as *unzila* (in past tense) because although parts of it had not been sent at the time, due to the objective and collective existence of the Qur'ān in the world of 'amr, such an interpretation could be used. The instantaneous revelation of the Qur'ān is related to the abstract truth of Qur'ān that already exists.

The fact that the command 'Iqra' (recite) means to receive the whole Qur'ān at once and that is to say the revelation (the revelation related to the world of 'amr) on the heart of the Prophet (s) is a statement that is also confirmed by some narrations, for example: the Prophet (s) after the descent of Gabriel and concluding the revelation of the Qur'ān in the first meeting, relying on the word «book», said: «It is as if a book was written in my heart». Therefore, the beginning of the revelation in *bi'that* was certainly instantaneous. As Fayḍ Kāshānī explains, «The fountains of wisdom flow from the heart to the tongue of every Servant who purifies himself for forty days for the Almighty God» (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1996: 9). These traditions generally show that the Qur'ān was revealed at once, as if the meaning of it was to reveal the meaning to the heart of the Prophet (s), as he said: «With it came down the spirit of Faith and Truth - To thy heart»<sup>1</sup> (*Nazala Bihi al-Rūḥ al-Amīn 'Alā Qalbīk*) (Qur'ān 26: 193-194). Then, over twenty years, Qur'ān gradually was descended from his heart into his tongue whenever Gabriel came to him with revelation. With this explanation, we managed to combine the gradual and instantaneous revelation of the Qur'ān. In a clearer sense, a gradual revelation can be interpreted as the transformation of spirit and light into words or coming from the unconscious to the conscious.

Now, if we agree with some commentators, such as Fayḍ in *Al-Ṣāfi*, that the gradual revelation is «the delivery of Qur'ān from the heart of the Prophet to his tongue» and that we necessarily prioritize the instantaneous over the gradual<sup>2</sup> - as it was argued - according to the verses «was sent down the Qur'ān» (*Unzila fīhi al-Qur'ān*) (Qur'ān 2:185), which is followed by «as a guide to mankind» (*Hudan li al-nās*) (Qur'ān 2:185), we can consider the month of Ramaḍān<sup>3</sup> as the beginning of a gradual revelation. If one says that according to «We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the Night of Power» (*Innā anzalnāhu fī laylat al-Qadr*) (Qur'ān 97:1) the revelation was in the month of Ramaḍān, how can we solve the problem? In response we might maintain that first, the pronoun «hu» in «anzalnāhu» (revealed this

1. All translations are from Holy Qur'an translated by Yusufali: <http://www.parsquran.com>

2. Therefore, the Prophet (s) said: «I was asleep [which refers to the world of 'amr]. He said, "Iqra'." So I read it and it ended and he went away and I woke up [which refers to the world of *khalq*] and it seemed that a book in my heart was written» (Rāmyār, 1983: 54). Regarding the state of 'Ighma' (coma or swoon) of the Prophet, they said: «That state of 'Ighma' (coma or swoon) was when God spoke to him without an interpreter» ('Ayyāshī, 1961, vol. 1: 388). The Prophet (s) fell into such a state of 'Ighma' (coma or swoon) and anesthesia; whenever a revelation was made to the Prophet, he would fall asleep for an hour like a person who was drunk and unconscious. (*Ibn As'ad*, 1991, vol. 1: 131).

3. Others have said that the meaning of «was sent down the Qur'an» (*unzila fīhi al-Qur'ān*) (Qur'ān 2:185) is revealed to show the high status and grace of the Qur'ān (Fakhr Rāzī, 2003, vol. 5: 80). In addition, some scholars have said: «Most of the verses of the Qur'ān were revealed in the holy month of Ramaḍān» (Quṭb, 2005, vol. 2: 79). Finally, the third group believes that the meaning of the month of Ramaḍān and *Laylat al-Qadr* is not one Ramaḍān and one *Laylat al-Qadr*, but rather all months of Ramaḍān and all the nights of Qadr are meant.

Message) does not necessarily refer to the Qur'ān; there is a possibility that it refers to others,<sup>1</sup> in which case «if there is a possibility, the argument is invalid». Moreover, «the Night of Power» (*Laylat al-Qadr*) was not only in the month of Ramaḍān, as some believe it was on the 15<sup>th</sup> of *Sha'bān* (Hujjatī, 2010: 38). Finally, the instantaneous revelation means to reveal at once, and at once does not necessarily means only once. In other words, multiplicity in the revelation (revelation for several times) from the point of view of the Qur'ān<sup>2</sup> and traditions<sup>3</sup> is acceptable. That is, even if we take the pronoun «*hu*» in «*anzalnāhu*» to be referring only to the Qur'ān, and relate night of *Qadr* only to the month of Ramaḍān, it can still have many instantaneous revelations in Ramaḍān, and having instantaneous revelations in Ramaḍān does not prevent instantaneous revelations in Rajab, especially since Rajab precedes Ramaḍān.<sup>4</sup>

### *Enumeration of the causes of disagreement in this field*

From what has been said, perhaps the main factors that have caused the foregoing disagreement in this field are two things: first, lack of proper understanding of the distinction between instantaneous and gradual revelations and second not deeming these two types of revelation as compatible. Accordingly, it can be said that some historians of the Qur'ān have not grasped the truth of the revelation, which is the sending of the essence of the Qur'ān to the heart of the Prophet (s), which takes place in the atmosphere of world of '*amr*', thus making a mistake. Moreover, the majority have not paid close attention to the difference between instantaneous and gradual revelation, which is the conversion of essence and light into words. They have limited the difference between these two revelations in repetition or non-repetition and have not realized that one (instantaneous revelation) is the reward of the Prophet's (s) action with high quantity and quality, and the other (gradual revelations) is related to the people: one to the heart of the Prophet (s) and world of creation by '*amr*' and the other to the people and to the world of creation by *khalq*.<sup>5</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The *bi'that* of the Prophet was synchronous to the revelation of the Qur'ān, because every messenger needs a miracle to prove his connection with God. Although the Holy Prophet (s) had other miracles, too, but considering that he is the last Prophet and should have an eternal miracle that can be verified in future generations, his main miracle is the Qur'ān. Moreover, according to the main skill of the people living at the time of the Prophet (s) which was

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1. The late Shāhābādī attributed the pronoun «*hu*» in «*anzalnāhu*» to «Absolute Identity» and «Divine Essence» (Āli Rasūl, 2007). Moreover, by interpreting this verse with the help of verses of the Qur'ān 89 and 97, including «Peace!...This until the rise of morn!» (*salāmun hiya ḥattā maṭla' al-fajr*) (Qur'ān 97:5) and «By the break of Day \* By the Nights twice five \* By the even and odd (contrasted)» (*wal-fajr \* va-layālin 'ashr \* va Sh-Shaf' e- va al-vatr*) (Qur'ān 89:1-3), it can be shown that there is a strong possibility that the pronoun «*hu*» in «*anzalnāhu*» refers to «the perfect human being», a «confident spirit», or its fourteen examples that are fourteen infallible Imāms. (notes from Dr. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Burūmand classes in Tehran and Yazd university, 2007-2022)
  2. «We shall make thee read [O Muḥammad] so that thou shalt not forget» (Qur'ān 87:6)
  3. Majlisī quoted from Imām Sādiq (a) about the Prophet's ascension to heaven one hundred and twenty times. (Majlisī, 1992, vol. 9: 168)
  4. That is, first instantaneous revelation happened in Rajab, according to the command of “*'Iqra'*”, and then gradual revelation happened in the month of Ramaḍān, which is after Rajab. According to the verse “Ramaḍhan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an, as a guide to mankind” (*Shahr al-Ramaḍān alladī unzela fihe al-Qur'ān hudan li al-nās*) (Qur'ān 2:185), gradual revelation is to guide people.
  5. *Khalq* and '*amr*' as two kinds of creation. *Khalq* has the element of time, but '*amr*' is the sudden creation without the element of time.



proficiency in literature, the miracle that was appropriate for his time, was related to the literary aspect of the Qur'ān.

With regard to the instantaneous revelation of the Qur'ān, we might maintain that since the verses of the Qur'ān were first created in the world of *'amr* (a world in which creation does not require time) and with the command of *'Iqra'* which means "*kun Qārian*" and then in the world of *khalq* (the world in which creation requires time), instantaneous revelation takes precedence over gradual revelation. According to the phrase "as if a book had been written in my heart," the first instantaneous revelation occurred at the same time as the *bi'that* of the Prophet and in the form of the essence of the Qur'ān in the world of *'amr* to the heart of Prophet (s). This instantaneous revelation was at once, and at once does not necessarily mean only once.

Instantaneous revelation is the revelation of the transcendental truth of the Qur'ān in the form of the spirit to the heart of the recipient, and its denial is the denial of the world of *'amr*. Because time is not involved in the instantaneous revelation, it takes precedence over the gradual revelation, which took place during Ramaḍān and was done to guide the people (*«Hudan li al-nās»* (Qur'ān 2:185)), with the first revelation happening at the beginning of the Prophet's *bi'that* on the 27<sup>th</sup> of Rajab. Just as instantaneous revelation takes precedence over gradual revelation, so does the month of Rajab over Ramaḍān. The results of the study are summarized as follows.

1. The date of *bi'that* synchronized with the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān, because every messenger needs a miracle to prove his relationship with God, and the most important miracle of the Prophet of Islam (s) is the Qur'ān.
2. The revelation of the Qur'ān in *bi'that* was instantaneous.
3. Instantaneous revelation means to reveal at once, and at once does not necessarily mean only once. Multiplicity in the revelation is possible.
4. Denying instantaneous revelation is denying the world of *'amr*, the transcendental truth of the Qur'ān, and the revelation of Qur'ān to the heart.
5. Instantaneous revelation is in the world of *'amr* and precedes gradual revelation which is in the world of *khalq*.

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