

The ancient Greek Oneirology and the Muslim Interpretation

Historical Survey of Two Different Interpretations of Dreams

Oneirologi Purba Yunani dan Interpretasi Islam

Dua Kajian Sejarah Interpretasi Mimpi Yang Berbeza Menerokai

Ataullah Bogdan Kopanski*

Abstract

There is no agreement among psychologists on sources and outcomes of the dreams in human brain during sleep. Secularist scholars of Freudian school of psychoanalysis claim that human dreams reflect their highly subconscious libido. Jungian school of collective *Unbewusstes* disputes such extreme sexualized opinions and highlights the fact that rather large “collective unconscious” than sexuality is shared by representatives of all human cultures. But even without advanced studies, we can risk to believe that our dreams often predict coming events. Artemidoros Daldianus from Ephesus, the second century CE Hellenistic author of *Oneirokritikon* believed that dreams are human mind’s mirrors of the future. His magnum opus on the art of interpretation of dreams was translated into Arabic by famous Nestorian ophthalmologist Hunayn ibn Ishaq (Iohannitus) of *Bayt al-Hikmah* during the reign of Abbasid caliphs Maymun and Mutawakkil. The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) often interpreted his own and Sahabah’s dreams with perfect accuracy. In the Qur’an, especially in Surah 12: Yusuf, 36-37, 99-101, the dreams are vehicles of foretelling the future not only of individuals but also of whole nations and states. The paper is written from historical perspective of the Muslim interpretation of dreams which emphasizes the Islamic examination of human dreams in context of the primary sources to the ancient Greek oneirology, studied by the Muslim scholars in the early centuries of Islamic Civilization, and their contribution to development of modern oneirology.

* Professor in the Department of History and Civilization, IIUM

Keywords: Oneirology, Interpretation of Dreams, Artemidoros' *Oneirocritica*, Islamic *Ta'bir*.

Abstrak

Tidak ada sebarang persetujuan di kalangan ahli psikologi terhadap sumber dan hasil daripada mimpi di dalam otak manusia semasa tidur. Para sekular Sekolah Psikoanalisis Freud mendakwa bahawa mimpi manusia mencerminkan kesedaran libido. Sekolah Unbewusstes kollektive Jungian pertikaikan pendapat seksual melampau tersebut dan menyerlahkan bahawa kebanyakan kesedaran bukan daripada kesedaran libido dan didapati dalam semua budaya manusia. Tetapi walaupun tanpa kajian yang canggih, kita boleh mengambil risiko untuk mempercayai bahawa mimpi kita sering meramalkan peristiwa yang akan datang. Artemidoros Daldianus dari Efesus, pengarang Hellenistik Oneirokritikon abad kedua CE percaya bahawa mimpi mencerminkan masa depan manusia. Seni interpretasi mimpi beliau telah diterjemahkan ke dalam Bahasa Arab oleh pakar mata Nestorian terkenal Hunayn ibn Ishaq (Iohannitus) dari Bayt al-Hikmah pada zaman pemerintahan khalifah Abbasiyah Maymun dan Mutawakkil. Nabi Muhammad (s.a.w.) sering mentafsirkan mimpi sendiri dan sahabat secara tepat. Dalam Al-Qur'an, terutamanya dalam Surah 12: Yusuf, 36-37, 99-101, mimpi adalah kenderaan untuk meramalkan masa depan bukan sahaja seorang individu tetapi keseluruhan negara dan negeri. Kajian ini ditulis dari perspektif sejarah interpretasi mimpi Islam yang menekankan pemeriksaan mimpi manusia dalam Islam dalam konteks sumber utama oneiromancy purba Yunani yang dikaji oleh para ulama Islam di abad-abad awal tamadun Islam, dan sumbangan mereka kepada pembangunan oneirologi moden.

Kata Kunci: Oneirologi, Interpretasi mimpi, *Oneirocritica* Artemidoros, *Ta'bir* Islam.

Introduction

Peira, historia, and tou homoious metabasis (individual, communicated and analogical knowledge), the three fundamental empirical methods of obtaining of knowledge by Artemidoros' interpretation of dreams is conspicuous.¹ His ideas request a brief survey. He wrote that there are

¹ Papamichael, E. (1993) *Artemidorus Daldis – Interpretation of Dreams*, University of Athens: Medical School, Dept. of History of Medicine, pp.42-43. (These works quoted by Artemidoros had been collected by Italian historian Dario Del Corno in his valuable *Graecorum de re onirocritica scriptorum reliquia* (In Latin: "Vestige Greek writings on oniromancy"), published in Italy, 1969. The oldest copy of his manuscript is Laurentianus (MS L) from the 11th century CE, and the

two major types of dreaming: general foreseeing future genicos and specific *eidikos* of four categories—forecasting good events, prognosis of bad events, predicting bad omens with good results and foretelling good omens with bad results. He discusses also two kinds of dreams: non-prophetic *euphynia* which reflects passed day activities and *oneiroi*, and dreams envisaging future. Artemidoros divided *oneiroi* into prophetic, mantic, *chrismos*, *orama* and *phantasmata*. According to their meaning dreams are either allegorical or theomatic. The allegorical dreams are either *idioi* (in which somebody other than the sleeper is object of his/her dream) or *allotioi* (in which somebody other than dreamer plays leading role). All dreams have *esotericon* (dream's scenario) and *exotericon* (prognosis of the coming times). They are *koinoi* (in which scenario is shared with someone), *demosioi* (in which public spectacles are theme of the dream), and *kosmikoi* (in which natural phenomena are subject of dreaming). In his *Oneirocritica*, the *oneiros* is defined as a bizarre state of consciousness during deep sleeping, which takes many forms of dreams foretelling good and bad events that will occur in the coming times.² Artemidoros attached to his *Oneirocritica* a book-glossary of 90 interpreted symbols which were studied and sexualized by Sigmund Freud. Carl Jung collectivized many Artemidoros's elucidations in cultural milieus of the Occident and the Orient, bipolar global civilization described by Oswald Spengler as syzygies animated by "Faustian" and

others are from the Age of European Renaissance, i.e., from the 15th and 16th centuries of recovery (as well forgery!) of the ancient Greek and Latin heritage by the postmedieval western Christian Latinists all sects. Copies of his MS are catalogued as Marcianus (V), sg 267, 268 from the 15th century, Urbinas (U) in Greek language, sg.107, Cantabrigiensis C (Cambridge Lib), Ottobonianus (O), sg 89, and Borbonius (B).

² In my comparative study of Artemidoros' books I use the latest English critical translation of Daniel E. Harrig-McCoy (2012) *Artemidoros' Oneirocritica: Text, Translation and Commentary*, CA: Original Books, and the 17th century Latin text *Artemidori Daldiani et Achmetis Sereimi F. Oneirocritica Astremychi et Nicephori versus etiam oneirocritici* edited by N. Rigaltius, printed in Paris, 1603. Supportive secondary literature form; Blum, C. (1936) *Studies in Dream Book of Artemidoros*, Uppsala, Teubner, Rudolph H., (ed.) (1864) *Artemidori Daltiani Oneirokritikon*, Lipsiae (Leipzig). Libri V.

“Magian” *Zeitgeist*.³ Definitely, his analysis and epistemology of interpretation of dreams profoundly influenced the Muslim oneirologists in the 9th CE/3rd century AH, but the Muslims already developed their own interpretation of dreams based entirely on hadiths and opinions of *Ṣahābah*, *Tābi‘ūn* and *Ṭaba‘ Tābi‘īn*. Islamic oneirology was well-established discipline of psychology long before Hunayn ibn Ishaq’s translation of Artemidos’ only surviving Greek manuscripts, because Muslim archivists protected the Prophet’s Sunnah in many Islamic institutions of educations which formed a huge network of madrasah stretched from al-Andalus to Mā warā’ al-Nahr in the Central Asia.⁴ Even before the Prophet Muhammad’s Mission, the ancient Arabs of Roman-occupied *Arabia Petra* and *Arabia Deserta* developed their own oneiromancy which they discussed with the Hellenists. Gallen in his commentary on Hippocrates ethics (*De victu auctorum*) described discussion between Greek augur (fortune-teller) and his Arab friend who is quoting Artemidoros, son of Phocas of Ephesus.⁵ *Ta‘bīr* or the dream interpretation was considered by the early Muslims as an integral Tradition of Islam sanctioned by both the Qur’an and Sunnah. Like Artemidoros, the early Sunni Muslim author of *Kitāb al-Ta‘bīr al-ru’yā*, salafi polymath Abu Muhammad ‘Abd Allah ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah al-Marwazī al-Dīnawarī, (828-889CE/213-276H) identified three kinds of

³ In our Muslim opinion, Oswald Spengler erroneously classified Islam as the part of “Magian Semitic” multi-culture. Despite his deep and impressive morphological examination of the Decline of the West torn by modern clash of Money and Blood, his historical knowledge of Islamic civilization is poor copy of the 19th century Orientalists.

⁴ Hurd, Rayan, Bulkeley, Kelly, (2014) *Lucid Dreaming: New Perspective on Consciousness*, Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO 2vols, p.168. see also; Ostransky, Bronislav, (2005), “The Art of Muslim Oneirology”, *Archiv Orientalni*, vol.73, no.4, pp.406-427.

⁵ The Southern Arabia (today Yemen) known to the Roman as *Arabia Felix* and to the ancient Greeks as *Arabia Eudaimon* (Happy Arabia) was never occupied by the ancient Greeks and Romans.

dreams: defective, phantasmagorical and prognostic.⁶ These early Muslim oneirologists rejected sceptical views of kalamists (theologians), neo-Platonists and secretive lodges of esoteric *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*⁷ from Basra who claimed that human dreams were just illusions of the mind in state of sleeping. The *nafs* (Greek: *psyche*, English: *soul*)⁸ in deep sleeping enters the '*Ālam al-Mithāl* (the realm of images), an experience also had by other *Anfās*. The human mind stockpiles them in a collective sub-consciousness where concealed cultural symbols are "encrypted". If the *nafs* is projecting an accurate image of experienced truth (*baṣīrah*), it is able to recognize past, present and future events, but if the *nafs* is not spiritually developed, *baṣīrah* goes into memory as an opposition to *Ta'wīl* ("meaning"), a kind of post-historical "waste" – *cryptomnesia*, a forgotten information stored in brain, which leads to experience of *déjà vu et presque vu*⁹, sensation of memory which many secularist psychologists like J. Hughlinks-Jackson, E.Robert, N. Adachi, N.Akanuma, H.Ikeda, A.S. Brown, V.V. Gniezditsky, E.Wild, E.Marcovitz, C.Souchay, C.J.A. Moulin, A.R. O'Connor, N.A. Illman, C.R. Butler,

⁶ Lamoreaux, John (2002), *The Early Muslim Tradition of Dream Interpretation*, State University of New York: SUNY Press, pp.15-37.

⁷ Full name of this clandestine organization of Muslim-born "free-thinkers" was *Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafā' wa Khullān al-Wafā wa Ahl al-Ḥamd wa abnā' al-Majd* ("Brethren of Purity, Faithful Friends, Very Important People and Sons of Glory") Their four ranks were: "Craftsmen" – at least 15 years of age; their honorific was the "devout and concerned" (*al-abrār wa 'l-ruhamā*), "Political Leaders" – at least 30 years of age; their honorific was the "righteous and distinguished" (*al-akhyār wa 'l-fudalā*), "Kings" – at least 40 years of age; their honorific was the "excellent and honorable" (*al-fudalā' al-kirām*), "Prophets and Philosophers" – the highest rank of the Brethren, at least 50 years old; their honorific compared them to historical luminaries classified as Kings, they met secretly every 12 days to discuss control of Islamic education. They were propagators of Ismailicized "oriental Hermetism and Greek Pythagoreans". More details see in: Nasr, Seyyed Hossein *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines: Conceptions of Nature and Methods Used for Its Study by the Ikhwān Al-Ṣafā', Al-Bīrūnī, and Ibn Sīnā*, Edition: SUNY Press, 1993, p.34, Al-Fārūq'i, Ismail R. (1960), "On the Ethics of the Brethren of Purity", *The Muslim World*, 50: 109–121.

⁸ term which is delated from secularized vocabularies of "progressive" "Muslim academicians".

⁹ In French language; "already seen and almost seen".

A.V. Charaykov, P.N. Vlasov, et alii, over-confidently define as anomaly of rumination associated with aphasia, amnesia, drug addiction, paranoia, schizophrenia and epilepsy.¹⁰ The popularity of Artemidoros' analysis in the intellectual circles of the "House of Wisdom" is today very well established historical fact, but the cryptic character of the Mu'tazilite multi-religious institute of Islamicized knowledge as well as the scale of horrific destruction of Baghdad's libraries during Hulagu-Khan-commanded massacres of Sunni Muslims in 1258 CE¹¹, do not allow us to estimate the scope of critical deconstruction of the "Yūnānī" oneirology in the time of Ash'arites' Islamic Counter-Reformation. Artemidoros' interpretation of dreams was based on earlier, almost obscure ancient works of Artemon of Miletus, Alexander of Myndros, Antiphon (probably) the Sophist, Aristander of Telmassus and Demetrios of Phalerum. Very strong influence of Epicureans, Stoics and Sceptics and especially Empirics on his cogitation makes his *Oneirokritikon* annoyingly eclectic. Equally ambivalent are earliest Muslim works on *ta'bir ar-ru'yā* studied by Muhammad ibn Sīrīn, Abū Muhammad 'Abd Allah ibn Qutaybah al-Dīnwarī, Abū Sulaymān Muhammad al-Sijistānī al-Manṭiqī and other authors of Sunni art of interpretation of dreams of Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates. The most informative dictionary of the early Shi'ite authors of *ta'bir* is Abū al-Faraj Muhammad bin Ishāq al-Nadīm's *Kitāb al-Fihrist*.

Artemidoros' *Oneirokritikon* was interpreted by famous member of the *Bayt al-Ḥikmah*, Nestorian "Sheikh of Translators" Abū Zayd Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq al-Ḥīrī in circa 877CE/264H, who lived during the reigns of Abbasid Caliphs Ma'mūn, Mu'taṣim, Wāthiq and Mutawakkil. He probably used his own three-volume Arabic and Syriac translation of

¹⁰ On secularist interpretation of *déjà vu* and *Presque vu* see; Scheider, Armin (2008) *The Confabulating Mind: How the Brain Creates Reality*, Oxford: University Press, also; Brown, A.S., (2003) "A review of *déjà vu* experience", *Psychological Bulletin*, 129: 394-413.

¹¹ During the American Sack of Baghdad (2003), the existing 13th century CE madrasah and maktabah of Bayt a-Hikma was plundered and destroyed. Thousands of precious manuscripts had been burned or robbed.

Artemidoros. Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq translated into Arabic and Syriac (with assistance of his son Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn, and nephew Ḥubayshī) 116 ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts, among them Galen, Apollonius, Archimedes, Euclid, Ptolemy (*Almagest*) Homer, Plato's *Republic*, *Physics*, *Magna Moralia*, *Categories*, Aristotle, et alii.¹²

Both Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung almost plagiarized (if this description sounds too extreme for psychoanalysts, so let say, “borrowed heavily”) Artemidoros’ concept and suggested that dreams should be understood *non verbis sed rebus*, but like a medieval heraldic canting arms in form *paronomasia* (hidden meaning of devices). For sure, Freud’s “complex of Oedipus is “heavily borrowed” from Artemidoros’ interpretation of dream about sex with mother (*Oneirokritikon*, I.79). Freud also “heavily borrowed” Artemidoros’ idea of *isopsepha* (the numerical values of dreamed words) and semiotic deconstruction of dreams.¹³

Muhammad ibn Sīrīn (653-728 CE) in his two well-known books of dreams *Ta’bīr al-Ru’yā* and *Muntakhab al-Kalām fī Ta’bīr al-Aḥlām* advised consultation of learned ‘*Ulamā*’ in interpretation of one’s

¹² More details on knowledge of the ancient Greek and Roman thinkers and medics in the Muslim Ummah (Ages of the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates) in O’Leary, De Lacy (1949) *How Greek sciences passed to the Arabs*, London: Routledge & K.Paul, *passim*. The problem of Hunayn ibn Ishaq’s authorship of Arabic translation of *Oneirocritica* ignited polemic among orientalists. See; Ullman, Manfred (1971) “War Hunain der Übersetzer von Artemidors Traumbuch?” *Der Welt des Islams*, vol.13, pp.204-211, and response to his doubt by Fahd, Taufic (1974) “Hunain Ibn Ishaq est-il le traducteur des Oneirocritica d’Artemidore d’Ephese?” *Arabica*, vol.21, pp.270-284. More old controversies in: Bland (Crumpe) Nathaniel, (1856) “On Muhammedan Science of Tabir or Interpretation of Dreams”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol.16, pp.169-71. Bland found that the Latin translation of “Achmet” by Leo Tuscus does not have this ascription in the Greek manuscript on which the Latin *editio princeps* based. Leunclavius, the author of Latin translation of this Greek manuscript attribute this “Achmet” to “Apomazares” (Abu Ma’shar)

¹³ See; Freud, Sigmund, (1983) *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, p.60, Artemidoros cites Aristander’s interpretation of Alexander the Macedon’s dream of satyr dancing on his shield, before the conquest of Tyre. Aristander forecasted a victory for Alexander by interpreting the Greek word “satyr” as sa Tyre (“Tyre is your”), vide; Papamichael, E. and Teochari, A., “Artamidorus’ *Oneirocritica*. Dream Analysis in Second Century A.D.”, in: *Hellenic Psychiatry*, vol.5, no.2 (2008), p.84

dreams. Al-Kindī, (801-873 CE) also studied dreams and he wrote treatise on activity of the human brain during deep sleep. Al-Fārābī (872-951 CE) wrote *On the Cause of Dreams*, which, as a chapter, was incorporated (24) into his much more popular *Book of Social Psychology and Opinions of the Citizens of the Ideal City*.

Ibn Sinā in his *Canon of Medicine*, also discusses the validity of dreams. And Ibn Khldūn in his famous *Muqaddimah* (1377 CE) suggested that "confused dreams" are distorted images of reality "stored inside the brain."¹⁴ The most debated is origin of "Achmet" and his original *Kitāb al-Ta'bir* transmitted to Christian audience of the medieval Europe via Greek translation. Ahmet ibn Seirim (in Greek language: Αχμέτ υιός Σερείμ), identified by orientalists as Abu Bakr Mohammed bin Sireen,¹⁵ an alleged author of *Oneirocriticon of Achmet* which exists only in a Greek manuscript consisting three-hundred-four chapters. Oneirological knowledge in this book is derived from similar lexicons of *ta'bir* composed by Persian, Egyptian and Indian-origin Muslim interpreters of dreams. It was translated from the Greek into Latin by Leo Tuscus, ca. 1160 CE, whose two-similar works are in Gasp. Barthii *Adversaria*. Five years later, Pascalis Romanus included it in his *Liber thesauri occulti*, a Latin compilation on dream interpretations. It was first published in eight volumes at Frankfurt, 1577. Leunclavius translated "Achmet" from very heavily interpolated Greek manuscript and entitled it manu secunda as *Apomasaris Apotelesmata, sive de Significatis et Eventis Insomniorum, ex Indorum, Persarum, Aegyptiorumque Disciplina*.¹⁶ Definitely, it is

¹⁴ Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, trans. into English by Franz Rosenthal

¹⁵ Muhammad ibn Shireen was meticulous collector of hadiths. Shiekh Muhammad ibn Sireen (653-729 CE) collected Abu Huraira's (ra) opinions and narrations of the Prophet Muhammad (saws) regarding dreams. Despite popular belief among Muslim oneirologists, he did not write any book on oneiromancy.

¹⁶ The name *Apomasares* is, of course, a corruption of the name of the renowned Abu Ma'shar (medieval name in the West; Albumasar) Leunclavius acknowledged that he wrongly attributed the work to him. It was published in Greek and Latin by Rigaltius and added to his edition of the

Muslim *ta'bir* Hellenized and Latinized by Christian translators for the Latin-knowing medieval Christian readers. Educated Muslim public opinion in the frontier Al-Andalus was outraged by massive translations and pirating of the Muslim scientific books in Toledo, from where the Mozarabic plagiarists smuggled their Latin copies of books written by Muslim scholars to the hostile Christianized Far West. Certain Ibn 'Abdūn, an Andalusian *'Ālim* warned the Muslims and called them from intellectual embargo of the Islamophobic medieval West: “you must not sell books of science to local Jewish and Christian vendors because they translate these scientific books written by Muslim authors and attribute them to own men and bishops.”¹⁷ The most desirable Muslim scientific books in the medieval Christian universities of France, England, Italy, Bohemia, Germany, and Poland were not philosophical or oneirological works, but were pragmatic knowledge of Muslim botanists, physicians, astronomers, cartographers, engineers, pyrotechnics and hydrologists. Sadly, Muslim collaborators hired or confined by the Christian warlords in the Muslim Lost Territories (like Sicily, Catalonia), participated in the illegal transfer of Muslim science and technology to the still very regressive occidental Christendom. In Palermo, Toledo, Madrid, Salerno, the Muslim scientific knowledge was pirated by Christian, Jewish and greedy Muslim “translators” and turned into “the earliest European scientific discoveries” without acknowledgment of the original Muslim polymaths. In this way, two Silesian-origin Christian scientists, Nicolaus Copernicus and Vitellus “revolutionized” astronomical and optical knowledge of emerging re-Romanized European *res publica Christiana* and its *antemurale Christianitatis*. And the enigmatic gynecologist 'Trotula' (or Trocta de Salerno) from the 12th century CE Gulf of Amalfi, copied massively from the Muslim medical knowledge of cosmetic sur-

Oneirocritica of Artemidorus, Lutet. Paris. 1603. In 17th, 18th and the 19th century, Rigaltius' and Leunclavius' texts had been translated into Italian, French, and German.

¹⁷ Cited by Benson, Robert Louis, Constable, Giles, Lanham, Carol Dan, Hashing, Charles, Homer (1982) *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelve Century CE*, Harvard University Press, p.440

gery, menstrual disorder, infertility, snakebites and gastric illnesses of women in “her” *De curis mulierum* (*On [medical] treatment of Women*). Research on “her” existence and magnum opus is almost totally dominated by feminist American historian Monica H. Green. For sure, the Catholic cleric Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543CE) “integrated” advanced Muslim astronomical researches of Nasīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (1201-1274 CE) and Ibn Shāṭir in his celebrated *De Revolutionibus orbium coelestium* without copyright. So, pirated Friar Erasm Ciolek Witelon Vitellus (1230-probably 1281) in his *De Perspectiva* al-Haytham’s (962-1040CE) 10th century *Kitāb al-Manāzir*. In defense of these “European” secondary discoverers of scientific horizons, I must say that the open quotation of Islamic scientists in the medieval West, policed by the nefarious papal Inquisition, was an act of auto-da-fe; ensured death in flames at stake. Even in the less restricted Protestant North in the Age of Reformation, acceptance of Muslim sciences by the Christian scholars was like declaring the American cybernetics a science in the Stalinist Soviet Union, or quoting Albert Einstein’s Theory of Gravity in the University of Heidelberg between 1934 -1945. Both John Calvin and Martin Luther firmly believed that Copernicus tried to put the Heavens upside down and that Biblical mass killer Joshua halted the sun and the moon during his genocidal march into Canaan.

The Qur’an is revelation from Allah, the Creator, the Sustainer, the Provider, the Controller of the entire universe. Each and every single statement therein is but the truth (*al-haqq*). It is simply because Allah is All-Knowing (*al-‘Aīm*), All-Wise (*al-Ḥakīm*). The Qur’an has mentioned several incidences of dreams: (1) dream of Prophet Ibrāhīm—he saw that he was slaughtering his own son, Ismā‘īl: “*When he (son) reached the age of striving with him (Ibrāhīm), he said, “O my son, I see in sleep that I offer you in sacrifice; so look, what is your view?” The son said, “O my father, do as you are commanded, you will find me, if Allah so decides, among the patient.”* [the Qur’an, 37:102], (2) dream of the Last Prophet: “*Truly did Allah fulfil the dream of His Messenger: You will enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills, secure, heads shaved or hair cut short, and without fear. For He knew what you knew not, and He granted, be-*

sides this, a victory in near future.” [the Qur’an, 48:27], (3) dream of a boy (Yūsuf): “Behold, Yūsuf said to his father: “O my father, I saw (in sleep) eleven stars, sun and the moon prostrating before me.” [the Qur’an, 12:4], (4) dream of prisoners: “And with him (Yūsuf) entered the prison two young men. Said one of them: “I see myself (in sleep) pressing wine.” And said the other: “I see myself (in sleep) carrying bread on my head, and birds are eating thereof.” “Tell us (they both said to Yūsuf) the real meaning thereof: for we see you as among those who always do good.” [the Qur’an, 12: 37], and (5) dream of a king: “The king said: “I see (in sleep) seven cows fat being eaten by seven lean cows; and seven green ears of corn, and seven dry. O chiefs, explain to me my dream, if you can interpret dream”. [the Qur’an, 12: 43). Dreams of two co-prisoners as well as that of the king were interpreted by Prophet yūsuf, as the Qur’an itself describes those interpretations. The dream of pressing wine means the person who dreamt it would be freed from prison and reemployed by the king to serve him wine (the Qur’an, 12: 41). The dream of carrying bread on head with the birds eating thereof means that the person who saw it would be hanged (the Qur’an, 12: 41). As for the dream of the king, it meant that for seven years there would be good crops, but after that period for seven years would be acute famine; Yūsuf suggested to the king to store as much as possible for seven years during good crops so as to use the stored grains during seven years of famine [the Qur’an, 12: 47-49]. The dream of boy Yusuf has been interpreted by Muslim scholars. Eleven stars referred to eleven half-brothers of the boy, the sun referred to his father, Prophet Ya‘qub, and the moon meant the step-mother of the boy; their prostration meant that they would one day after a long time would bow down to young Yusuf in his position of the king’s trustworthy aid.¹⁸ The last Prophet’s dream came true as he along with his selected Companions performed minor pilgrimage even before the conquest of Makkah.¹⁹

¹⁸ Syed Mawdūdī, Abū al-A‘lā, *Tafhīm al-Qur’an* (Lahore: Idara Tarjaman al-Qur’an, 1997), vol. 2, p. 384.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 61-62.

The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) often interpreted his own as well as Ṣaḥābah's dreams with perfect accuracy.²⁰ But His Companions succeeded only partially in deconstruction of their own dreams. In opinion of Muhammad ibn Sīrīn, dreams are a fraction (one-forty-sixth) of prophecies. He wrote that *Tābi 'ūn* (successors of the *Ṣaḥābah*) had been able to interpret their own dreams properly, but the authenticity of such opinion attributed to him is nowadays disputed among Muslim historians. The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) said: "Lo! The worst lie is when a person dishonestly claims to have a dream".²¹ He classified what one views in the state of sleep into two general categories: true dreams from Allah (*al-ru'yā*), and scenes fabricated by Satan (*ḥulum*).²² He is reported to have said: "Dreams are of three kinds: self-imagination, terror scene made by Satan, and good news from Allah. Whoever sees in dream what he dislikes should not share it with others; he should rather offer prayer".²³ He advised his followers: "If one sees something despicable in sleep, he/she should spit out at the left side, and seek refuge with Allah from that, it will then never harm him/her".²⁴ He refers to dream as one of the fourteen parts of Allah's Apostleship (*nubūwwah*): "Good dreams seen by pious man is like one of the fourteen parts of Apostleship".²⁵

Selected Examples of Muslim Ta'bīr of Dreams

Muhammad ibn Sīrīn (653-733 C.E.) is the most prominent scholar in the Muslim history in the field of dream interpretation. He is known to

²⁰ Vide, Al-Bukhārī, Muhammad ibn Ismā'īl, *Al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Cairo: Dar al-Taḳwa, 2003), chapter *kitāb al-ta' bīr*, pp.445-462.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 461, Report No. 6521.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 446, Report No. 6469.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 455, Report No. 6499.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 452, Report No. 6488.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 446, Report No. 6468.

have derived interpretation of dreams on the basis of generally the Qur'anic statements. Some examples of such interpretations are given here below:

1-Lowering the Bucket of Water in the Water Well: If one sees in his sleep that he lowered the bucket of water to draw water, it means that his sick young child would be cured; his imprisoned young one would be freed; and he would get married in case he was unmarried. Ibn Sīrīn derived this interpretation from the verse: “*And there came travellers who sent their water drawer; when he lowered his bucket, he said: Good news! Here is a young boy...*” (12:19).²⁶

2-Shutting the Door: One who sees himself entering a house and shutting its door behind him, he is saved from committing sins. This is on the basis of the part of the verse: “*And she closed the doors...*” (12:23).²⁷

3-Becoming Ironsmith: If one sees that he becomes ironsmith in sleep, he will get important authoritative position. This is on the basis of the verse: “*And We made the iron pliant to him...*” (34:10).²⁸

4-Copper and Brass: If one sees that he melts copper, he will be involved in the dispute over worldly matters. Copper and brass also means evil talk and false accusation. Its basis is the verse: “*And they made of their ornaments a calf which gave mooing sound...*” (7:148).²⁹

5-Praying: Seeing oneself observing prayer signifies: (1) achieving status of being pious, (2) holding some higher position, (3) paying off the debt, and (4) returning the trust. The basis of all these interpretation is the

²⁶ Ibn Sīrīn, Muhammad, *Muntakhab al-Kalām fī Tafsīr al-Aḥlām* (Dar al-Maʿrifah, Beirut, 1998), P. 17.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, P. 21.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, P. 107.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, P. 218.

verse: “*Surely, prayer keeps one away from indecency and evil...*” (29:45).³⁰

6-Chained Feet: Seeing chained feet means firmness in one’s faith. Its basis is the verse: “*And hold fast by the covenant (rope) of Allah...*” (3:103).³¹

7-Taking off Shoes: If one sees that he has taken his shoes off, it means he will experience peace and honourable position. It is on the basis of Allah’s advice to Moses to take off his shoes (20:12).³²

Al-Ḥusayn ibn Ma‘ūd al-Baghawī (1044-1122 C.E.) was a renowned scholar of *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth*. In the 12th volume of his famous masterpiece “*Sharḥ al-Sunnah*” he has devoted full chapter on “Dream”. Some examples from that chapter are quoted here below:

1-Dreaming of oneself **bathing** in cool water may refer to Allah’s acceptance one’s repentance, a cure from sickness and/or the lifting of a calamity. One of the bases of this interpretation is the verse: “*Here is a cool washing-place and drink...*” (38:42).³³

2-Seeing oneself flying high in the sky means setting out on a journey and achieving honorable position. Its basis is the verse: “*And We raised him high in the heaven*” (19:57).³⁴

3-Clothing or a cover in a dream refers to a husband or wife according to the metaphoric statement in the Qur’an: “*The women are apparel for you and you are apparel for them...*” (2:187).³⁵

³⁰ Ibid., P. 218-219.

³¹ Ibid., P. 289.

³² Ibid., P. 366.

³³ Al-Baghawī, Al-Ḥusayn ibn Mas‘ūd, *Sharḥ al-Sunnah* (al-Maktab al-Islāmī, Beirut, 1983), Vol. 12, kitāb al-Ru’yā, p. 235.

³⁴ Ibid., P. 220.

³⁵ Ibid., P. 221.

4-Calling for prayer (*adhān*) may have two different meanings based on the nature of the person who dreams that: (1) getting opportunity to perform *hajj* on the basis of the verse: “*And proclaim among them pilgrimage...*” (22:27); and (2) being recognized as thief on the basis of the verse: “*Then a crier cried out: O caravan! You are most surely thieves*” (12:70).³⁶

Conclusion

Oneiromancy (Greek *ὄνειρος* *oneiros*, dream, and *μαντεία* *manteia*, prophecy) developed in the ancient Greece is not the source of the Islamic *Ta'bīr*. Neither examination of the earliest Muslim primary sources and translations of Artemidorus Daldianus of Ephesus into Arabic language, nor the method of interpretations of dreams by the ancient Greeks and the Muslims of the first generation of Islam, give any evidence of their similarities. Oneiromancy and *Ta'bīr* belong to two different religious, “collective unconscious”, and cultural patterns. It seems Greek interpretation of dreams is based on imagination and speculation, whereas the bases of dream interpretation (*ta'bīr al-ru'yā*) for the Muslim scholars are the Qur'an, the revelation from Allah, the Creator, the Sustainer, the Provider, the Controller of the universe, traditions of the Last Prophet (s.a.w.). It may be said here that Muslim bases for dream interpretation is of divine nature and the sources of ancient Greco-Roman interpretation of dreams were of speculative nature.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, P. 224.