

THE STUDY OF DREAM AUTHENTICITY OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD SAW AMONG MUSLIMS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

In Islam, having dreams of the Prophet Muhammad SAW are not impossible and that they are counted as true dreams based on authentic *hadiths*. Nevertheless, it is a necessity to assess the right physique of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in the dream setting. Thus, the objectives of this study are to assess the informants' knowledge of related *hadiths* on dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and to assess the authenticity of the informants' dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. A qualitative content analysis approach was utilized in this study, whereby informants were interviewed and the data was then transcribed for analysis. A total of four informants were obtained through a snowball sampling technique. The study discovers that the four informants' dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW is true as the description of their dream is in parallel with related *hadiths*.

Keywords: Dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, Malay, *hadiths* on dream

INTRODUCTION

Allah SWT may have bestowed the jinns and Satan the capability to deform in good or evil, to the extent of resembling any human (al-'Aziz, 2005), except the Prophet Muhammad SAW (al-Bukhari, 1422H). Notwithstanding the facts, many Muslims have claimed that they had dreamed of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, and some of them have even claimed that in their dreams, the Prophet Muhammad SAW had taught them of something new (al-Qaradawi, 2008).

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In Malaysia, for instance, the leader of *al-Arqam* group had claimed to have confronted the Prophet Muhammad SAW in his sleep and when he was awake, and that he believed that new teachings were conveyed to him by the Prophet Muhammad SAW, even though the Islamic Department of Selangor (JAIS) (2010) had considered such assertion as a deviation.

Previous studies have led to the method of assessing the authenticity of dreams on the Prophet Muhammad SAW as well as interpreting dreams in theory (al-'Utaibi, 2009). In Malaysia alone, there is an empirical study of the practitioners' practices on interpreting dreams. This study which was conducted by Halimah (2011) had focused on the practitioners living at the north region of Peninsular Malaysia. However, to date, an empirical study of the authenticity of dreams on the Prophet Muhammad SAW among Muslims, particularly in Malaysia remain as yet idle. Hence, this study attempts to fill in this knowledge gap.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Freud (2001), an Austrian neurologist claims that dreams have no function in predicting the future, as what was believed by the older generations, instead, one's dream results from past experiences or desires. His theory, since then, has been held by many philosophers and atheists (al-'Utaibi, 2009). This theory of dreams is distinctive to that of the Islamic perspective of dreams. In Islam, there are true dreams, where they connect the spiritual realm with the vast supernatural realm, and such dreams have been stated by the Prophet Muhammad SAW, as mentioned in the *hadith* (al-Bukhari, 1422H).

The Islamic perspective of dreams is more profound when compared to that of the Western scholars' because the Westerners' theory of dreams does not include the element of spirituality and supernatural, and thus, it is rigid and confined in terms of logical reasoning (Ahmad, 2001).

True dreams in Islam are based on the words of the Prophet Muhammad SAW which means, "A good dream (that comes true) of a righteous man is one of forty-six parts of prophetism." (al-Bukhari, 1422H) Meanwhile, al-'Utaibi (2009) claims that true dreams are a form of inspiration sent from Allah SWT. Hence, dreams of seeing and confronting the Prophet Muhammad SAW are counted as true dreams since none of the creatures created by Allah SWT can resemble the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

Ibn Hajar, al-Nawawi, Qadi 'Iyyad, Qurtubi, and Abu Bakr al-'Arabi stated three conditions in which the dreamer can be certain that the person who appeared in his or her dream was the Prophet Muhammad SAW, that is, firstly, when the person in the dream says, "I am the Messenger of Allah," or "I am Muhammad bin Abdullah," or "I am your prophet," or any

other word which presents similar meaning. Secondly, the dreamer was certain of the person being that of the Prophet Muhammad SAW without having been notified. Thirdly, in the dream, someone informs the dreamer that the person who the dreamer is seeing, talking to, or confronting is the Prophet Muhammad SAW – be it the dreamer only sees or hears the voice of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. If the dreamer experienced one or more of the circumstances mentioned above, then, his or her dream is proven as a true dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (al-‘Aziz, 2005). Nevertheless, it is insensible to associate dreams with the *Syarak* (Islamic law) as the *Syarak* has only been perfected after the deceased of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

Notwithstanding the facts, the Islamic clerics have their own opinion concerning the description of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in dreams. There is a consensus among the Islamic clerics that if the physical form and traits of the person (claimed as the Prophet Muhammad SAW) in one’s dream is precise with that of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, then, the dream is true because the Satan cannot resemble the Prophet Muhammad SAW. There were questions regarding this matter, that is, will the dream be considered true if it happens that the Prophet Muhammad SAW appeared in other physical properties and could it be possible to see the Prophet Muhammad SAW in another form (al-‘Utaibi, 2009). There are two views of the Islamic clerics in this matter, that is, firstly, the person who was claimed as the Prophet Muhammad SAW in one’s dream must be in the exact figure as the Prophet Muhammad SAW who is well known for his impeccable physical properties when he was still living. This view is in line with the opinion of ‘Abd Allah bin ‘Abbas based on an event that was delivered by ‘Asim bin Kulaib from his father, who said, “I asked Ibn ‘Abbas of my dream of meeting the Prophet SAW,” and Ibn ‘Abbas said, “Describe to me of the person who you dreamed of,” I replied, “I have characterized him with the physical properties of al-Hasan bin ‘Ali,” and Ibn ‘Abbas said, “You have seen him.” (Ibn Hajar, 1379H) Likewise, Ibn Sirin (2004), whereby he would have asked the dreamer to describe the Prophet Muhammad SAW and if the dreamer is able to do so, then, his or her dream is true. However, if the dreamer fails to do so or that the person described by the dreamer is not parallel with the traits of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, then the assertion is rejected. It was narrated from Anas bin Malik that the Messenger of Allah SAW said, “Interpret them (dreams) in accordance with the names of the things you see, and understand what is hinted at, and the dream is for the first interpreter (Ibn Majah, 2009).

Meanwhile, the second opinion is that if someone informs the dreamer that he or she is seeing the Prophet Muhammad SAW or that the dreamer believes that the person he or she sees or

hears talking is the Prophet Muhammad SAW without anyone informing him or her so, then, the dream is true, whether the person appeared in a close physical properties as the Prophet Muhammad SAW or vague. This opinion is based on the *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad SAW which means, “Whoever sees me (in a dream) then he indeed has seen the truth.” (al-Bukhari, 1422H) Ibn Hajar (1379H) claims that anyone who sees the Prophet Muhammad SAW in a variety of properties in his or her sleep, then, he or she is having a true dream. Meanwhile, al-Nawawi (1392H) claims that it is true for anyone who saw the Prophet Muhammad SAW in a dream, whether in a recognizable trait of the Prophet Muhammad SAW or vice versa. According to ‘Iyyad, some Islamic clerics claim that Allah SWT has it specialized for the Prophet Muhammad SAW, whereby all dreams of the Prophet Muhammad SAW are true because the Satan cannot resemble the Prophet Muhammad SAW and that Satan cannot purports to be the Prophet Muhammad SAW (al-‘Aziz, 2005).

Therefore, the most *rajih* (accurate) opinion is the second opinion since it is based on the opinion of the majority, whether from the past or present, and it is based on the common *hadith* that the Prophet Muhammad SAW may appear in a variety of images, whether in his physical form as mentioned in the *hadiths* or in the form of other images as mentioned by Ibn Hajar, al-Nawawi, Qadi ‘Iyyad, Qurtubi, and Abu Bakr al-‘Arabi (al-‘Aziz, 2005).

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the interview instrument was utilized to collect data, whilst the literature review was utilized to support the data analysis. A theoretical framework on the characteristics of the physical properties of the Prophet Muhammad SAW based on the authentic *hadiths* was discussed. A total of four informants were obtained through snowball sampling technique since only a small number of people have had dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Rohana, 2004). The interview questions of this study include 1) when the dream took place, 2) the scene of the dream, 3) practices which led to the dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, 4) the existing knowledge about the physical properties of the Prophet Muhammad SAW before the event of the dream, and 5) the impacts of the dream to the informants. The interview data was transcribed for analysis in order to identify the parallelism of the informants’ dream with the Islamic theory of dreams.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Each informant in this study was identified as ‘D’ for the word ‘dreamer’, that is, D1, D2, D3, and D4. The informants were interviewed face-to-face with an average of one hour per

person. Dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW had taken place in the month of Shawwal for D1 (year 2016) and D2 (year 2013), whereas D3 had experienced it in year 2015, and D4 had experienced it in year 2009 and 2015.

D1 recalled that his dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW had taken place in an open desert with a high hill. He saw a man riding a horse up the hill and he was impressed with the ability of the man in maneuvering the horse to climb the high hill. Then, all of a sudden he was somewhere else, and there was the horse rider that he saw earlier. This time, the horse rider glanced at D1 and smiled. The next thing he knew is that he was in a conversation with someone beside him. Unhesitatingly, he asked, “O *Rasulullah* (Messenger of Allah), who is that rider who glanced at me and smiled?” The person beside D1 replied, “That is Sayidina Umar.” D1 exclaimed, “O Allah, it is Sayidina Umar!” D1 recounted that when the conversation took place, he did not take a glance at the person beside him, but he was certain by his gut feeling that the person beside him was the Messenger of Allah. The dream proceeded with the invitation of the Prophet Muhammad SAW to the house of Sayidina Umar. D1 walked side by side with the Prophet Muhammad SAW without glancing at the Prophet Muhammad SAW (D1 was in tears when he recounted this). When they reached Sayidina Umar’s house, the Prophet Muhammad SAW greeted with the pronouncement “*Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh*” (May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be with you) at the front door. Umar opened the door, replied the greeting, and glanced at D1 and then at the Prophet Muhammad SAW with a smiling face. D1 was hugging Sayidina Umar tightly when he awoke from sleep at 5.00 A.M. D1 remembered that he had performed a *tahajjud* (a voluntary, night prayer) at 3.00 A.M. before the dream took place.

D1’s dream had met two of the conditions given by the Islamic clerics to authenticate dreams of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Firstly, in the dream, the Prophet Muhammad SAW had implicitly admitted that he is the Prophet Muhammad SAW, that is, when D1 had called the person beside him by the name of *Rasulullah* before asking a question; “O *Rasulullah*, who is that person who glanced at me and smiled?” Then, the person beside D1 had answered to the question; “That is Sayidina Umar.” This seems to indicate that the person beside D1 was indeed the Prophet Muhammad SAW as D1 had begun the conversation with the call ‘*Rasulullah*’ and that the person beside him had responded to the conversation. Secondly, D1 had wanted to talk to the person beside him and that deep down in his heart he believed that the person beside him was the Prophet Muhammad SAW even though he did not glance at the person (al-‘Aziz, 2005). Besides that, D1’s dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW is considered true since in the dream, the Messenger of Allah did not talk much with D1 except

what is absolutely necessary, and this is indeed a trait of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, as Hasan bin Ali said, “*Rasulullah* was mostly silent.” (al-Tirmidhi, 1988) Even though D1 did not exactly look at the Messenger of Allah in his dream, a majority of Islamic clerics had considered hearing the Prophet Muhammad SAW speak in a dream as a true dream (al-‘Aziz, 2005).

D1 had held firmly to the obligatory practices and he had consistently practised the *sholawat* (supplication, laudation), whereby he aimed at 1,000 times of *sholawat* every day. D1 had regularly performed *tahajjud* prayer between 2.30 A.M. to 3.00 A.M. and supererogatory prayers such as *sunat wudhu* (the prayer after ablution) and *solah taubah* (the prayer of repentance). D1 had also not forgotten to add in those practices with *dhikr* (remembrance of God). More interestingly, D1 had always whispered to the angels on his right and left, asking them to write good records of him only. According D1, by doing that, he was able to become a humble person, and it had automatically made him feel afraid to be immoral or to abandon the obligatory practices. It is indeed true that there is an angel on the right and left of every human, and that these angels have been assigned by Allah SWT to record the good and bad deeds of every human (Surah Qaf [50]: 17-18).

D1 had claimed to have read many books about the physical properties and history of the Prophet Muhammad SAW even before the event of his dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

After having had a dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, D1 felt that his life is in the care of Allah SWT, and thus, he is determined to practice the *sunnah* (verbally transmitted record of the teachings, deeds and sayings, silent permissions (or disapprovals)) of the Prophet Muhammad SAW throughout his life, while submitting himself to all of the provisions of Allah SWT.

In brief, the practices performed by D1 conform to the *syarak* and there is no form of *bid'ah* (heresy). D1 had also asserted that when he practices something, he will make sure that it is accompanied with his sincerity. Therefore, the practices performed by D1 and the impacts of the dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW had perfected the pillar of faith and Islam, whereby D1's practices increased alongside his confidence. Thus, the Prophet Muhammad SAW's statement that a true dream is good news from Allah SWT and a sign of a believer makes sense.

D2 recalled that her dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW had taken place in front of the Kaaba (a building at the center of Al-Masjid al-Haram, in Mecca, Saudi Arabia). In the dream, her husband and three children were with her and the place was not crowded. D2

walked towards *Hajar al-Aswad* (the black stone set in the eastern corner of Kaaba) as she wanted to kiss it. Subsequently, an Arab man came and said to D2, "Go into the Kaaba as the Messenger of Allah is in the Kaaba." D2 replied, "Alright." However, D2 did not know where the stairs were to enter the Kaaba, and thus, she walked around the Kaaba before finally found the stairs leading inside the Kaaba. D2 remembered holding the hand of her youngest child at that moment. D2 saw a light shining in the Kaaba when she entered it. D2 had also discovered that there were valances, three poles, and a podium when she was observing the inside of the Kaaba. Thereafter, D2 saw someone lying behind the valances. At that very moment, D2's conscience was telling her that the person behind the valances is probably the Messenger of Allah. Thus, D2 greeted, "*Assalamualaika Ya Rasulullah*" (Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah). The Messenger of Allah got up and sat beside one of the walls in the Kaaba, and then, replied D2's greeting. D2 was very convinced that the person is the Messenger of Allah that she had asked her little child to shake hands with the Messenger of Allah, "Child, extend your hand to shake. This is the Messenger of Allah." The Messenger of Allah took D2's child to a corner of the Kaaba and gave a small green prayer rug with Arabic script and verses from the Quran on it to D2's child. After that, D2 had openly expressed to the Messenger of Allah of her dream and desire to go to Mecca again along with other pilgrims to perform *umrah* (pilgrimage). The Messenger of Allah replied, "You will come here again next year to lead a large group of pilgrims."

D2 described that the Messenger of Allah she encountered in the dream was not tall and was not too short as well as not young and not old. D2 also recounts that a few months after she had dreamed of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, a documentary about the Kaaba was aired on *TV al-Hijrah*, and as she was watching it, she finds that everything that was shown about the Kaaba was familiar to her. Then, the following year, D2 and her husband were given the opportunity to perform *umrah*, as well as to lead a large group of congregation, that is, totalling up to 200 people.

D2's dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW is true based on three conditions, that is, 1) the Prophet Muhammad SAW had implicitly admitted that he is the Messenger of Allah when he replied D2's greeting, 2) D2 was informed by an Arab man that she was about to meet the Messenger of Allah, and 3) D2's gut feeling which constantly told her that the person whom she was seeing is the Messenger of Allah (al-'Aziz, 2005). Besides that, D2's description that the Prophet Muhammad SAW in her dream was not too tall and not too short is in line with the *hadith* narrated by Al-Bara; "He (the Messenger of Allah) had hair that would flow on his shoulders, having broad shoulders, not too short and not too tall." (al-Bukhari, 1422H)

Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad SAW's knowledge of the future that is inspired by Allah SWT through dreams is real and can be traced back in the *hadiths* of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (see Sahih al-Bukhari no. 4081, 7035, 7039) about events to come (al-'Adawi, 1991).

D2 had always practised supplications in Arabic and understood their meaning. Among the supplications was 'O Allah our God, make us among the members of the intercession of the Prophet SAW'. D2 had practised the supplication most of the time, particularly during prostration and after the greeting of *salam* (peace) of prayer. In general, D2 had done a good practice because supplicating while understanding its meaning will add absorbability in prayer and avoid the rejection of a prayer (al-Nawawi, 1988). In addition to that, based on the words of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, supplicating during prostration and after prayer is among the efficacious supplications (Muslim, 2006).

D2 claimed that she had read a lot of books on the physical properties and the history of the Prophet Muhammad SAW even before she had experienced the dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Hence, the dream had added to her determination in making the Prophet Muhammad SAW as a role model in her life.

D3 recalled her dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW had taken place in a ceremony, whereby there were a lot of people present and sitting around in a circle. Suddenly, someone appeared in a robe, with a turban on his head. His face was clean and he was not too tall, not too short, and he was carrying a baby. There were several men following behind him who were also wearing robes and turbans. D3's conscience was asking, "Who is that person with followers in tow?" D3 then asked her husband who was sitting next to her, "Dear, who is that?" D3's husband replied, "That is the Messenger of Allah." D3 was surprised, and she asked, "Is it not that the Messenger of Allah had deceased?" D3's husband said, "Eh! No, the Messenger of Allah is still around. Try reading this newspaper." Then, D3 read a news report about the Messenger of Allah donating a big part of his property for good purposes.

D3 assumed that the dream took place during an *aqiqa* (sacrificial feast ceremony) event because the Prophet Muhammad SAW had carried a baby. D3 was even more certain about it since she had read about the Prophet Muhammad SAW performing *tahnik* (an Islamic ceremony of touching the lips of a newborn baby with honey, sweet juice, or pressed dates). D3 had also read about the history of the Prophet Muhammad SAW living modestly as his assets were used to help other Muslims. These information including information on the physical properties of the Prophet Muhammad SAW were obtained by D3 through various sources such as books, lectures, and the internet.

D3's dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW is true because the impression given by D3 of the Prophet Muhammad SAW whom she saw in her dream is precise with the physical properties of the Prophet Muhammad SAW based on a *hadith* narrated by Al-Bara that the Messenger of Allah is not too short and not too tall (al-Bukhari, 1422H). Besides that, a dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW is considered true when someone in the dream informs the dreamer that he or she is actually seeing the Prophet Muhammad SAW (al-'Aziz, 2005). Moreover, the *tahnik* mentioned by D3 is indeed from the *sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (al-Bukhari, 1422H). Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad SAW is indeed well known for his generosity based on the *hadith* narrated from Hammad bin Zaid from Thabit that the Prophet SAW was mentioned before Anas bin Malik and he said; "He was the best of people, the most generous of people, the most courageous of people." (Ibn Majah, Book 24, *Hadith* 2877)

D3 had obediently performed the obligatory prayers and she had always tried to be sincere in her prayers. She had also often read the Qur'an and recited *dhikr*. D3 felt very grateful to be endowed the dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, whereby she was able to see the Prophet Muhammad SAW as she is certain that it is good news from Allah SWT.

In D4's first dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, he recalled talking about *shahadah* (the testimony) with his foster brother who is staying in Muar, Johor, and as they were talking about it, suddenly, they were at the home of their foster father in Malacca. Before they had the chance to inquire about it from their foster father, the scene had changed again, and D4 was suddenly at the front of a cave. When he was standing at the cave entrance, he saw a woman hiking the hill while carrying food. At that moment, he heard someone saying that the woman is Siti Khadija. Then, he saw someone meditating in the cave that has been covered with a yellow curtain. The person in the cave flicked the curtain and introduced himself as the Messenger of Allah, and mentioned the word 'worship' three times. D4 recounts that not long after he had the dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, he saw a picture of the Cave Hira that was pasted at a pole of a mosque in Penang when he went there to perform a Friday prayer. The Cave Hira in the picture looked exactly like the one he saw in his dream, and thus, he was certain that the dream he had is true.

In D4's second dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, he recounted that he saw someone at his grandmother's cemetery and then, he heard someone saying that the person he was looking at is the Messenger of Allah. D4 recounts that the dream had taken place a week after the deceased of his beloved grandmother, whereby he was always thinking and worrying about his grandmother's condition in the other realm. However, after having had the dream,

D4 felt very relieved and he was convinced that the recitation of *dhikr* which his grandmother used to practice when she was still living have made her in the constant love and care of Allah SWT.

D4's first dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW is true based on three conditions, that is, 1) the Prophet Muhammad SAW had introduced himself as the Messenger of Allah, 2) D4 heard someone saying that the person who was hiking the hill is Siti Khadija, and 3) D4 was certain that the person in his dream is the Messenger of Allah (al-'Aziz, 2005). Based on the Islamic history, Siti Khadija had always been supportive of her husband, the Prophet Muhammad SAW, and it was at the Cave Hira that the Prophet Muhammad SAW had received the revelation from Allah SWT through the Angel Gabriel (al-Bukhari, 1422H, Book 1, *Hadith* 4). D4's second dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW is also true since it fulfilled one of the conditions given by the Islamic clerics, that is, the dreamer was informed by someone that the person he is looking at is the Messenger of Allah (al-'Aziz, 2005).

D4 had performed the obligatory practices as well as practised *dhikr* regardless of time. According to al-Nawawi (1988), *dhikr* is a practice that is very rewarding, easy to be done, and it brings a servant closer to Allah SWT. D4 had always read the *hadiths* related to the physical properties of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The dreams he had of the Prophet Muhammad SAW have added his determination to maintain his relationship with Allah SWT and increase his *dhikr*.

CONCLUSION

Although dreams of the Prophet Muhammad SAW are possible for the Muslims, it can be exposed to slander if the dreamer claims that the Prophet Muhammad SAW had conveyed new teachings (which are unfamiliar in Islam) to him or her. In fact, this has been the case throughout the history of Islam. Aimed at overcoming this problem, the researchers of this study have analyzed the informants' dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW based on the opinions of Islamic clerics and *hadiths*, and discovered that all four of the informants' dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW are true. For future research, the researchers suggest that the study should be expanded with more informants and that it should be studied from the angle of practices and impacts of dream of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, so that other Muslims may also come to benefit from it, increasing the probability for them to experience it themselves in the future.

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