

פִּרְקָנָא, but as little does it refer to revelation, so even if we agree that the borrowing was from Syr. we still have the problem of the double, perhaps triple, meaning of the word in the Qur'ān.

Sprenger thought we might explain this by assuming the influence of the Ar. root **فَرَقَ** on the borrowed word.¹ Schwally, however, has suggested that this is not necessary, as the word might well have had this double sense before Muḥammad's time, under the influence of Christian or Jewish Messianic thought,² and Lidzbarski, *ZS*, i, 91, points out that in Gnostic circles "Erlösung und Heil besonders durch Offenbarung vermittelt werden".³ There is the difficulty, however, that there seems to be no evidence of the use of the word in Arabic earlier than the Qur'ān, and Bell, *Origin*, 118 ff., rightly insists that we must associate the use of the word for revelation with Muḥammad himself. He links up the use of the word in the Qur'ān with the story of Moses, and thinks that as in the story of Moses the deliverance was associated with the giving of the Law, so Muḥammad conceived of his Furqān as associated with the revelation of the Qur'ān. Wensinck, *EI*, ii, 120, would also attribute the use of the word in the sense of revelation to Muḥammad himself, but he thinks we have two distinct words used in the Qur'ān, one the Syr. **ܦܪܩܢܐ** meaning *salvation* or *deliverance*, and the other a genuine Arabic word meaning *distinction*, which Muḥammad used for *revelation* as that which makes a distinction between the true and the false.⁴ Finally, Horovitz, *KU*, 77, would make a sort of combination of all these theories, taking the word as of Syriac origin, but influenced by the root **فَرَقَ** and also by the Heb. **פָּרַקִים** (cf. also *JPN*, 216–18).

In any case it seems clear that **فَرَقَان** is a word that Muḥammad himself borrowed to use as a technical term, and to whose meaning

¹ *Leben*, ii, 339, "Wenn Mohammed Forkan auch aus dem Aramäischen entnommen hat, so schwebte ihm doch die arabische Etymologie vor." See also Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, 39; Bell, *Origin*, 118; Noldeke, *Sketches*, 38.

² Noldeke-Schwally, i, 34: "in erster Linie und am wahrscheinlichsten unter Christen, in zweiter Linie in messianisch gerichteten jüdischen Kreisen."

³ He refers, for examples, to Liechtenhan's *Die Offenbarung im Gnosticismus*, p. 123 ff.; but as Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, 92, points out, this idea is not confined to Gnostic circles.

⁴ Wensinck seems to have been unduly influenced by the theories of the native Commentators.