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Bahira's Meeting with Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and Argumentative Muslim Scholarship: A Critical Assessment

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ABSTRACT

Bahira's meeting with Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), during his childhood journey to Syria, has remained a hot-button debate not only in Orientalist scholarship but among Muslim Sirah writers also. There is a deep-sighted division of opinions between the traditional Muslim Sirah writers, who stick to the roots of this incident and modern Muslim Sirah writers, who, seemingly being under the influence of modern scientific and rationalistic approaches, present an outward new trend in Sirah writing which they deem acceptable to both the orientalist and rationalistic Muslims. If Orientalists have manipulated this incident according to their own bias, some Muslim Sirah writers, besides refuting the erroneous claims of orientalist, have themselves doubted in the authenticity of this incident. Keeping all this scholarly provocative and engaging incident to the fore, the present paper attempts to inquire into the incident with reference to the primary sources, highlighting the modern Muslim scholars' approach. A critical investigation will be attempted, within the parameters of the sciences of Sirah and Maghāzi, to explore the authenticity of this Incident. The study methodology will be of a qualitative type based on a thorough comparative content-analysis of the concerned works of Muslim scholarship to draw an argumentative and all-inclusive conclusion.

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