

Life of Muhammad

Ibn Ishaq, Arab historian, from his *Life of Muhammad*, written around 750 CE

[A learned man] told me that some of the apostle's companions asked him to tell them about himself. He said: "I am what Abraham my father prayed for and the good news of [my brother] Jesus. When my mother was carrying me she saw a light proceeding from her which showed her the castles of Syria. While I was with a brother of mine behind our tents shepherding the lambs, two men in white raiment came to me with a gold basin full of snow. Then they seized me and opened up my belly, extracted my heart and split it; then they extracted a black drop from it and threw it away; then they washed my heart and my belly with that snow until they had thoroughly cleansed them. Then one said to the other, weigh him against ten of his people; they did so and I outweighed them. Then they weighed me against a hundred and then a thousand, and I outweighed them. He said, 'Leave him alone, for by God, if you weighed him against all his people he would outweigh them.

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