

Ḥaddithū ‘an banī isrā’īla wa-lā ḥaraja

A Study of an early tradition

This widely current tradition was variously interpreted by Muslim scholars. They differed in their opinions about the significance of the words of this *ḥadīth*, its intent and its implications. The core of the discussion lay in fact in the problem whether it was lawful to turn to Jewish and Christian sources for guidance, to study Jewish and Christian compilations and to incorporate certain aspects from them into the Muslim cultural tradition and belief. Scrutiny of some of these discussions may help to elucidate the tendencies of the various religious groups in Islam and assist us in gaining a deeper insight into the attitudes of Muslim scholars.

I

The tradition *Ḥaddithū ‘an banī isrā’īl* was considered by Goldziher as one which is opposed to the trend of Muslim orthodox scholars who watched with reluctance the influence of Jewish Aggada and of Christian legends on Muslim tradition.¹ The transmission of this *ḥadīth*, says Goldziher, serves as evidence of the controversy among the scholars of the second century about the transmission of Jewish lore. The earliest source in which this tradition is recorded is the *Risāla* of al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204).²

This tradition is also reported in the *Jāmi‘* of Ma‘mar b. Rāshid (d. 154),³ and in ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaḥ* with the following *isnād*: ‘Abd al-Razzāq > al-Auzā‘ī⁴ > Ḥassān b. ‘Aṭīyya⁵ > Abū Kabsha⁶ > ‘Abdallah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ. The Prophet said: “Transmit on my authority, be it even one verse (from the Qur’ān), narrate (traditions) concerning the Children of Israel and there

¹ *Muhammedanische Studien* (Halle, 1890), II, 137, note 3; and see G. Vajda, “Juifs et Musulmans selon le *Ḥadīth*”, *JA* CLXXIX (1937), 115–120; S. D. Goitein, *Banū Isrā’īl*, *EI*².

² *Mélanges Judéo-Arabes*, IX, “Isrā’īliyyāt”, *REJ* XLIV (1902) 64, note 2.

³ Ms. Feyzullah 541, fol. 59b, inf. (See F. Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 291).

⁴ See on him F. Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 516.

⁵ See on him Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb* (Hyderabad, 1327), II, 251, no. 460; al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-i’tidāl*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī (Cairo, 1382/1963), I, 479, no. 1809.

⁶ See on him Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, XII, 210, no. 974.

is nothing objectionable (in that); he who tells a lie on my authority — let him take his place in Hell.”⁷

In the *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal⁸ this tradition is recorded with the same chain of transmitters; it contains however a slight variant: *wa-man kadhaba ‘alayya muta‘ammidan*, “intentionally”.⁹

⁷ Ms. Murad Molla 604, fol. 113b: *ballighū ‘anni wa-lau āyatan wa-ḥaddithū ‘an bani isrā’ila wa-lā ḥaraja fa-man kadhaba ‘alayya kadhibatan fa-l-yatabawwa maq’adahu min al-nāri*. And see this tradition: al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu’jam al-ṣaḡhīr*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad ‘Uthmān (Cairo, 1388/1968), I, 166; al-Fasawī, *al-Ma’rifat wa-l-ta’rikh*, Ms. Esad Ef. 2391, fol. 162b; al-Nuwayri, *Nihāyat al-arab* (Cairo [reprint] 1964), XIV, 182; Abū Nu’aym, *Ḥilyat al-auliya’* (Cairo, 1351/1932), VI, 78.

⁸ Ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir (Cairo, 1953), XI, 127, no. 6888; cf. al-Bayhaqī, *Ma’rifat al-sunan wa-l-āthār*, ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr (Cairo, 1389/1968), I, 48–51.

⁹ See about the tradition *man kadhaba ‘alayya*: Ibn al-Jauzī, *Kitāb al-mauḍū’āt*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad ‘Uthmān (Cairo, 1386/1966), I, 55–98; and see *ibid.*, p. 63 the remark of Wahb b. Jarīr: *wa-llāhi, mā qāla “muta‘ammidan”, wa-antum taqūlūna “muta‘ammidan”*; cf. al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taqyīd al-‘ilm*, ed. Youssef Eche (Damascus, 1949), p. 29: *wa-man kadhaba ‘alayya; qāla hammāmūn: aḥsibuhu qāla “muta‘ammidan”... fa-l-yatabawwa’...;* cf. J. Goldziher, *Muh. St.*, II, 132 (see notes 3–4); and see Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *op. cit.*, IV, nos. 2675, 2976; V, nos. 3694, 3801, 3814, 3847; II, nos. 584, 629, 630, 903, 1000–1001, 1075, 1291; I, nos. 326, 469, 507; VI, nos. 4338, 4742; VII, nos. 5232, 5291; IX, nos. 6309, 6478; X, nos. 6592, 6593. And see an interesting setting of this utterance *ibid.*, VI, no. 4156: *jama’anā rasūlu llāhi (s) wa-naḥnu arba’ūna, fa-kuntu fi ākhiri man atāhu, qāla: innakum maṣūrūna wa-muṣībuna wa-maṣtūhun lakum, fa-man adraka dhālika fa-l-yattaqi llāha wa-l-ya’mur bi-l-ma’rūfi, wa-l-yanha an al-munkari, wa-man kadhaba ‘alayya muta‘ammidan...;* and see a remarkable version *ibid.*, V, no. 3025: *ittaḡū l-ḥadītha ‘anni illā mā ‘alimtum; qāla: wa-man kadhaba ‘alā l-qur’āni bi-ghayri ‘ilmin fa-l-yatabawwa’...;* cf. al-Daylamī, *al-Firdaus*, Ms. Chester Beatty 3037, fol. 27a: *ittaḡū l-ḥadītha ‘anni illā mā ‘alimtum, fa-innahu man kadhaba ‘alayya muta‘ammidan...;* cf. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *op. cit.*, IV, no. 2976: *...man kadhaba ‘alayya... wa-man kadhaba fi l-qur’āni...;* and see *ibid.*, III, no. 2069: *...man qāla fi l-qur’āni bi-ghayri ‘ilmin...;* and see Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt* (Beirut, 1957), II, 337: *...man qāla ‘alayya mā lam aqul fa-qad tabawwa’a...;* cf. al-Jarrāḥī, *Kashf al-khafā’ wa-muzil al-ilbās* (Cairo, 1352), II, 275, no. 2593; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāya*, ed. al-Zāwī-al-Ṭanāḥī (Cairo, 1963), I, 159; al-Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḡhīḥ* (Cairo, 1934), XIII, 167 where this utterance is connected with the story of *khāṣif al-na’l*; al-Qundūzī, *Yanābi’ al-mawadda* (Kāzimiyya, 1385), pp. 59, 209; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta’rikh Baghdād* (Cairo, 1349/1931), I, 265; al-Safārīnī, *Ghidhā’ al-albāb* (Cairo, 1324), I, 118; Yūsuf b. Mūsā al-Ḥanafī, *al-Mu’taṣar min al-mukhtaṣar* (Hyderabad, 1362), II, 261–262; al-Ṭabarānī, *op. cit.*, II, 55; al-Fasawī *op. cit.*, fol. 158a; al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak* (Hyderabad, 1342), II, 401; al-Dhahabī, *Mizān*, IV, 393 sup.; Abū Nu’aym, *op. cit.*, II, 369; cf. Abū ‘Ubayd, *Faḍā’il al-qur’ān*, Ms. Leiden, Or. 3056, fol. 3b: *...anna rasūla llāhi (s) ‘ahida ilaynā fi ḥajjati l-wadā’i fa-qāla: ‘alaykum bi-l-qur’āni fa-innakum sa-tarji’ūna ilā qaumin yashthāhūna l-ḥadītha ‘anni fa-man ‘aqila shay’an fa-l-yuḥaddith ‘anni bihi, wa-man qāla ‘alayya mā lam aqul fa-l-yatabawwa’ baytan au maq’adan fi jahannam...;* and see al-Suyūṭī, *al-Jāmi’ al-kabīr*, Ms. al-Jazzār, Acre, I, 351: *ḥaddithū ‘anni kamā sami’tum wa-lā ḥaraja, illā man akhbara ‘alā llāhi kadhiban muta‘ammidan li-yuḥdilla bihi l-nāsa bi-ghayri ‘ilmin fa-l-yatabawwa’ maq’adahu min al-nāri*; Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, ed.

Ḥaddithū 'an banī isrā'īla

The tradition *ḥaddithū 'an banī isrā'īl* forms, as we see, a part of a combined *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet bids the faithful to transmit verses (of the Qur'ān), urges them to narrate (traditions) concerning the Children of Israel and warns them not to lie while transmitting traditions on his authority. In some versions only two parts of the combined tradition are recorded: "Transmit on my authority be it even one verse and narrate concerning the Children of Israel and there is nothing objectionable (in that)."¹⁰

The same version as given in the *Jāmi'* of Ma'amar b. Rāshid, consisting of three parts, is recorded by al-Mu'āfā b. Zakariyya (d. 390) in his *al-Jalīs al-ṣāliḥ al-kāfi wa-l-anīs al-nāṣiḥ al-shāfi'*,¹¹ and is accompanied by a comprehensive comment by the author. The Children of Israel, al-Mu'āfā argues, were specified in this tradition because of the miraculous events which had happened to them, just as the sea was specified because of the miraculous features which are in it; the permission was granted to narrate about (the wonders of) the sea with keeping away from sin of lie.¹²

The tendency apparent in this tradition to emphasize the miraculous and wonderful aspect of the stories about the Children of Israel is reflected in an enlarged version of this saying: *ḥaddithū 'an banī isrā'īla fa-innahu kānat fihim a'ājibu*.¹³

Al-Mu'āfā records two views about the syntax of *wa-lā ḥaraja*. These views give two quite different interpretations of the expression. According to one opinion *lā ḥaraja* is a *khabar*, a predicate; the meaning of the expression is thus: there is nothing objectionable in telling these stories. As many people, argues Mu'āfā, are reluctant to listen to these stories, this *ḥadīth* grants permission to transmit them, for refraining from transmitting them might bring about the disappearance of wisdom and might cause the roads of thought to be closed up, the means of knowledge to be interrupted, the doors of consideration and exhortation to be shut. The other view considers the phrase *wa-lā ḥaraj* as denoting a prohibition. It is equivalent with *wa-lā taḥrujū*, do not commit sin by telling stories which you know are lies deceiving people by telling these stories.¹⁴

C. Torrey (New Haven, 1922), 273 inf.-274: *man kadhaba 'alayya kadhibatan muta'ammidan...* associated with: *alā, wa-man shariba l-khamra...*

¹⁰ Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi' bayān al-'ilm wa-faḍlihi* (Cairo, 1346), II, 40; al-Quḍā'i, *Shihāb al-akhbār*, Ms. Br. Mus., Or. 6496, fol. 39a.

¹¹ Ms. Topkapi Saray, Ahmet III, 2321, fols. 3a-4a.

¹² Fol. 4a: *...wa-khaṣṣa banī isrā'īla bi-hādihā li-mā maḍā fihim min al-a'ājibi kamā khaṣṣa l-baḥra bimā fihī min al-a'ājibi...* (the allusion refers apparently to the well known utterance, or proverb: *ḥaddith 'an al-baḥri wa-lā ḥaraj*; see al-Jarrāḥi, *op. cit.*, I, 352, no. 117).

¹³ Al-Daylamī, *op. cit.*, fol. 72a; L 'A, s.v. ḥ r j.

¹⁴ Al-Mu'āfā, *op. cit.*, fol. 4a: *...wa-lā ḥaraja yattajihu fihī ta'wīlāni, aḥaduhumā an yakūna khabaran maḥḍan fī ma'nāhu wa-laḥẓihi, ka-annahu dhakara banī isrā'īla wa-kānat fihim*

The two grammatical constructions reflect in fact two conflicting interpretations of the tradition. Taking *lā ḥaraja* as *khavar* implies that there is no objection whatsoever to tell the stories about the Children of Israel whether true or invented. The motivation adduced for this permission is of interest: refraining from transmitting these stories would bring to a stop the transmission of the *ḥikma*, the wisdom, and of thoughtful scrutiny of stories concerning past people and prophets. Further it brings to light the fact that some orthodox circles disliked stories about the Children of Israel, which must have been widely current. On the other hand *lā ḥaraja*, taken as prohibition, implies an interdiction to transmit popular stories similar to those of the *quṣṣās*.

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādī records the same *ḥadīth* in a different context altogether. “Do not write anything on my authority except the Qur’ān” — says the Prophet. “Let one who writes anything else efface it. Narrate (traditions) concerning the Children of Israel and there is nothing objectionable (in that). He who tells lies on my behalf shall take his place in Hell.”¹⁵ In this version of the *ḥadīth* the permission to narrate stories about the Children of Israel is coupled with the interdiction to record in writing the utterances of the Prophet.

A certain difference is noticeable in the intent of a tradition recorded on the authority of Abū Hurayra. The Prophet, the tradition says, saw people writing his utterances. He rebuked them and forbade to write his *ḥadīth*. “Do you desire a book besides the book of God?” — the Prophet asked. “The only thing that led astray the peoples preceding you was the fact that they put down in writing (things) from books beside the Book of God.” Then people asked the Prophet: “Shall we transmit (traditions) on your authority?” “Transmit on my authority, said the Prophet, and there is nothing objectionable (in that); and he who lies about me intentionally let him take his seat in Hell.” Those present asked: “Shall we tell the stories about the Children of Israel?” The Prophet answered: “Narrate concerning them and there is nothing objectionable (in that). Whatever you tell about them, there are always

a’ajibu, wa-kāna kathirun min al-nāsi yanbū sam’uhum ‘anhā, fa-yakūnu hādihā maqā’atan li-man ‘indahu ‘ilmun minhā an yuhadditha l-nāsa bihā; fa-rubbamā addā hādihā ilā durūsi l-ḥikmati wa-nqītā’i mawāddi l-fā’idati wa-nsidādi tariqi i’ māli l-fikrati wa-ighlāqi abwābi l-itti’āzi wa-l-ibrati, fa-ka-annahu qāla: laysa fī tahadduthikum bi-mā ‘alimtumūhu min dhālika ḥarajun; wa-l-ta’wilu l-thāni an yakūna l-mā’nā fī hādihā l-nahya; fa-ka-annahu qāla: wa-lā tahrajū bi-an tatahaddathū bi-mā qad tabayyana lakum l-kadhibu fihī, muḥaqqiqīna lahu au ghārrīna aḥadan bihī.

¹⁵ *Taqyid al-‘ilm*, pp. 30–31: *lā taktubū ‘anni shay’an illā l-qur’āna, fa-man kataba ghayrahu fa-l-yamḥuhu, wa-ḥaddithū ‘an banī isrā’ila wa-la ḥaraja, wa-man kadhaba ‘alayya fa-l-yatabawwa’ maq’adahu min al-nāri.*

things which are more wonderful.”¹⁶ The permission to narrate stories about the Children of Israel is here put in opposition to the prohibition to record the traditions of the Prophet in a written form. It is however established as being on a par with the oral transmission of Prophetic traditions. Even the wording is identical: *ḥaddithū ‘anni wa-lā ḥaraja* and *ḥaddithū ‘an banī isrā’ila wa-lā ḥaraja*.

Of quite a different content is the tradition reported by Zayd b. Aslam and recorded in Ma‘mar b. Rāshid’s *Jāmi’*.¹⁷ The Prophet said: “Do not ask the people of the Book about anything, because they will not show you the right path having already led themselves astray.” We asked: “O Messenger of God, may we not narrate (stories) concerning the Children of Israel”? The Prophet answered: “Narrate, there is nothing objectionable (in that).” In this tradition the setting and the circumstances of the utterance are quite different. Here a clear line is drawn between the problem whether to consult the people of the Book in religious matters and the question whether to narrate stories from their history. It is forbidden to ask the people of the Book about problems of religion and belief; they cannot guide anyone because they themselves went astray. But it is permitted to narrate stories about them.

Ibn al-Athīr records¹⁸ some of the interpretations already mentioned, in which the miraculous character of the stories is stressed, and he further mentions some additional ones. *Ḥaraj* denotes narrowness¹⁹ and is applied to denote “sin” and “forbidden deeds.” *Lā ḥaraja* has to be glossed: *lā ithma, lā ba’sa*.²⁰ The expression indicates that there is no sin, there is nothing objectionable in narrating the wonderful events which happened to the Children of Israel, even if these events might not happen to the Muslims; this does not mean, however, that one is permitted to tell lies.

Slightly different is another interpretation quoted by Ibn al-Athīr that there is no sin or objection to narrate about the Children of Israel stories as they

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34: *kharaja ‘alaynā rasūlu llāhi (s) wa-naḥnu naktubu l-aḥādītha, fa-qāla: mā hādihā lladhī taktubūna? qulnā: aḥādīthu nasma’uhā minka. qāla: kitābun ghayru kitābi llāhi?, atadrāna mā [a] ḍalla l-umama qablakum? alā bi-mā ktatabū min al-kutubi ma’a kitābi llāhi ta’ālā? qulnā: a-nuḥaddithu ‘anka yā rasūla llāhi? qāla: ḥaddithū ‘anni wa-lā ḥaraja, wa-man kadhaba ‘alayya muta’ammidan fa-l-yatabawwa’ maq’adahu min al-nāri. qulnā: fa-nataḥaddathu ‘an banī isrā’ila? qāla: ḥaddithū wa-lā ḥaraja, fa-innakum lam tuḥaddithū ‘anhum bi-shay’in illā wa-qad kāna fihim a’jabu minhu...*

¹⁷ Fol. 59b; ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, Ms. fol. 113b: *bāb hal yus’alu ahlu l-kitābi ‘an shay’in... ‘an zaydi bni aslama anna l-nabiyya (s) qāla: lā tas’alū ahla l-kitābi ‘an shay’in fa-innahum lan yahdūkum, qad aḍallū anfusahum. qāla: yā rasūla llāhi, alā nuḥaddithu ‘an banī isrā’ila? qāla: ḥaddithū wa-lā ḥaraja.*

¹⁸ *Al-Nihāya*, I, 361.

¹⁹ See Rāghib al-Isfahāni, *al-Mufradāt fi gharib al-qur’ān* (Cairo, 1324), p. 111, s.v. *ḥ r j*.

²⁰ See al-Majlisī, *Biḥār*, IV, 495 (new ed.).

were told, whether these stories are true or not; the remoteness of time (i.e. between the period of the Children of Israel and the time of Islam — K) makes it impossible to verify the story and the transmitter cannot be responsible for its reliability. This is set in opposition to the traditions about the Prophet: a *ḥadīth* should only be transmitted after one has made sure about the soundness of the transmission and the righteousness of the transmitters.²¹

This interpretation was adopted by al-‘Azīzī (d. 1070) who is even more explicit in his comment. “Narrate concerning the Children of Israel” glosses al-‘Azīzī by “tell about them the stories and exhortations” (*ballighū ‘anhum al-qīṣaṣa wa-l-mawā‘iza*). *Lā ḥaraja* is explained by the statement that there is no sin incumbent upon a transmitter who records these stories without *isnād*. Because of the remoteness of time it is enough to make an assumption that the tradition concerns them (*fa-yakfī ghalabatu l-ḥanni bi-annahū ‘anhum*). This tradition is followed by a *ḥadīth*, which urges people to transmit traditions about the Prophet and warns against invention and lie in such traditions.²² Here the expression *ḥaddīthū ‘annī bimā tasma‘ūna* is explained by the recommendation to observe sound *isnāds* and to refrain from the transmission of *ḥadīths* with faulty *isnāds*.

The reasons for the permission to narrate stories about the Children of Israel as opposed to consulting them concerning their religious tenets is expounded by al-Munāwī (d. 1031). There is no contradiction between the *ḥadīth* which allows the transmission of stories and the one which interdicts the transmission of tenets and rules, al-Munāwī argues. The transmission of their religious law is in fact forbidden because their rules were abrogated.²³

Al-‘Alqamī (d. 969) considers the permission to narrate stories in the light of the changes which took place in the Muslim community. The Prophet, al-‘Alqamī argues, disapproved of studying the books of the Children of Israel and deriving knowledge from them. Later the situation improved and the prohibition was lifted. The prohibition was issued when the prescriptions of Muslim law and the foundations of the Islamic religion had not been firmly established, out of fear of a *fitna* (allurement). When that which was apprehended ceased, permission to narrate was granted, because listening to accounts of past events

²¹ *Al-Nihāya*, I, 361; and see al-Jazarī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* (al-Najaf, 1964), p. 522 (quoting Ibn Athīr); and see *ibid.*, p. 522 supra, a Shī‘ī permission to transmit the stories of the Children of Israel.

²² *Al-Sirāj al-munīr* (Cairo, 1957), II, 223: *ḥaddīthū ‘annī bimā tasma‘ūna wa-lā taqūlū illā ḥaqqaṅ, wa-man kadhaba ‘alayya buniya lahu baytun fī jahannama yarta‘u fīhi*.

²³ Al-‘Azīzī, *op. cit.*, II, 145: *...wa-idhnuhu lā yunafī nahyahu fī khabarin ākhara li-anna l-ma’dhūna fīhi l-taḥdīthū bi-qīṣāṣihim wa-l-manhiyyu ‘anhu l-‘amalu bi-ahkāmihim li-naskhihā*.

entails edification.²⁴ Al-‘Alqamī seems thus to consider the saying *ḥaddithū ‘an banī isrā’īla* as an utterance abrogating an earlier prohibiting utterance.

Al-Jarrāḥī (d. 1162) quotes this interpretation among other interpretations recorded by him. As proof of the prohibition to narrate stories concerning the Children of Israel al-Jarrāḥī mentions the story of ‘Umar who was forbidden by the Prophet to copy from the Torah. Later, says al-Jarrāḥī, the permission to narrate such stories was granted, and this is why the utterance was issued.²⁵

Some of the interpretations reflect a tendency to limit this permission or even to cancel it. The *lā ḥaraja*, “there is nothing objectionable”, may be complemented by a phrase: “if you do not narrate”.²⁶ The *ḥadīth* thus stresses the obligatory character of the transmission of a tradition of the Prophet, but leaves it to the discretion of the faithful whether to narrate about the Children of Israel.

A restricting interpretation asserts that the term Banū Isrā’īl refers to the sons of Jacob; the *ḥadīth* urges their story to be narrated together with that of Joseph. This interpretation is rejected by al-‘Azīzī with the remark: *wa-hādhā ab’adu l-aujuhi*.²⁷ A peculiar interpretation explains the reason for this permission by stating that the stories about the Children of Israel contain some distasteful expressions and therefore it was necessary to stress that their transmission was not objectionable.²⁸

But these restricting interpretations were not effective. The saying *ḥaddithū ‘an banī isrā’īla wa-lā ḥaraja*, attached to various other traditions, became widely current among Muslims in the first half of the second century. This permission to narrate stories about the Children of Israel caused the door to be opened widely to Jewish lore and traditions transmitted by Muslim scholars.

II

The themes covered by the stories about the Children of Israel are very extensive. They include stories about prophets and their warnings, about sins committed by the Children of Israel and the punishment inflicted on them,

²⁴ *Ibid.*,: ...*wa-qāla l-‘alqamiyyu: ay lā ḍiqa ‘alaykum fi l-taḥdīthi ‘anhum li-annahū kāna taqaddama minhu (s) al-zajru ‘an al-akhdhi ‘anhum wa-l-naẓari fi kutubihim thumma ḥaṣala l-tawassu‘u fi dhālika; wa-kāna l-nahyu waqa‘a qabla istiqrāri l-aḥkāmi l-islāmiyyati wa-l-qawā‘idi l-dīniyyati khashyata l-fitnati; thumma lammā zāla l-maḥdhūru waqa‘a l-idhnu fi dhālika limā fi simā‘i l-akhbāri llatī kānat fi zamanihim min al-‘tibāri.*

²⁵ Al-Jarrāḥī, *op. cit.*, I, 353.

²⁶ Ibn al-Athīr, *op. cit.*, I, 361: ...*wa-ḥaddithū ‘an banī isrā’īla wa-lā ḥaraja, ay: lā ḥaraja ‘alaykum in lam tuḥaddithū ‘anhum; and see al-Jarrāḥī, op. cit.*, I, 353, ll. 11–12; al-‘Azīzī, *op. cit.*, II, 145.

²⁷ *Al-Sirāj al-munīr*, II, 145.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

about the sufferings of the righteous and pious and the reward granted to them by God, about utterances and sayings of sages and wise men, about supplications of prophets and pious men, about speeches and wills of nobles, saints and martyrs. These stories usually called “*Isrā’iliyyāt*” included predictions of the early prophets about the appearance of the Prophet and descriptions of the Muslim community, about Caliphs and rebels, about decline of dynasties, about the Mahdī and the signs heralding the Day of Judgement. This lore was transmitted by Jews and Christians or by members of these two religions who studied their Scriptures and embraced the faith of Islam.

In the widely current tradition about the supplications of Moses,²⁹ he implored the Lord to grant his people, the Children of Israel, the excellent qualities and merits which were enumerated in the Torah; God preferred however to choose the Muslim community and to grant them these qualities and merits.³⁰ The Torah also contains the description of the Prophet.³¹ God revealed to Moses that the Prophet would be sent and bade him inform the Children of Israel to obey him and embrace his faith.³² God also disclosed in the Psalms to David the appearance of the Prophet and recorded the qualities of his people.³³ Isaiah predicted in his prophecy the appearance of Jesus and Muḥammad.³⁴ God bade Jesus urge his people to embrace the faith of Muḥammad and told him about the latter’s personality.³⁵ Accordingly, it is evident that Muḥammad is the heir of the preceding prophets and that the Muslim community inherited the rank and position of the Chosen People.

A Shi’i tradition tells a story about a talk of the Prophet with a Jew in which the Prophet said that the first passage in the Torah stated: Muḥammad is the Messenger of God; in Hebrew it is *Ṭāb* (Ṭov — K); the Prophet then quoted other passages in which the *waṣiyy* ‘Alī, his children Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (*Shubbar* and *Shubbayr*) and Fāṭima were explicitly mentioned.³⁶ It may be

²⁹ See Miskawayh, *al-Ḥikmatu l-khālīdatu*, ed. ‘Abd al-Rahmān Badawī (Cairo, 1952), p. 133 (*munājāt mūsā*).

³⁰ Abū Nu’aym, *op. cit.*, V, 385–386; Ibn Zafar, *Khayru l-bishar bi-khayri l-bashar* ([n.p.], 1280), pp. 25–34; Ibn al-Jauzī, *al-Wafā bi-ahwāl al-muṣṭafā*, ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Wāḥid (Cairo, 1386/1966), I, 38–42; al-Tha’labī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* (Cairo [n.d.]), p. 27; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥawī li-l-fatāwī*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyi l-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo, 1387/1959), II, 281, 282 ult.-283; Ibn Kathīr, *Shamā’il al-rasūl*, ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Wāḥid (Cairo, 1386/1967), 114–115; al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā’il al-nubuwwa*, Ms. Br. Mus., Or. 3013, fol. 64b.

³¹ See Abū Nu’aym, *op. cit.*, V, 387; Ibn Kathīr, *Shamā’il*, pp. 111–115; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥawī*, II, 282–283.

³² Abū Nu’aym, *op. cit.*, VI, 33–35; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār*, XIII, 332–333, 340–341 (new ed.).

³³ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥawī*, II, 281 inf.-282; Ibn Kathīr, *Shamā’il*, p. 115.

³⁴ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, II, 32.

³⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥawī*, II, 114; Ibn al-Jauzī, *al-Wafā*, I, 60.

³⁶ Al-Majlisī, *op. cit.*, XIII, 331–332 (new ed.).

mentioned that the names of the two sons of ‘Alī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, were given by the Prophet himself. The angel Gabriel revealed to the Prophet the names of the two sons of Aharon, Shubbar and Shubbayr, which are written in the Torah and ordered him to give these names to the two children of ‘Alī. The rendering of these names is al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn³⁷ (probably Hebrew: Shefer and Shafīr — K). Taking into account the fact that at first the name intended to be given to the children was *Ḥarb* and that the Prophet stated in the well known *ḥadīth* that ‘Alī was in relation to the Prophet like Aharon to Moses, one can assess the political implication of the story.

Scholars of the Holy Scriptures, Jews and Christians, were supposed to have the ability to foretell future events: they were thought to derive their knowledge from the Torah or other Holy Books. Ka‘b standing at Şiffīn put his leg on a stone and said: “Woe to you Şiffīn! The Children of Israel fought here with each other and left on the battle-field seventy thousand killed; so it will be with the Muslims.” It really happened at the battle of Şiffīn between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya. “There is no space on earth the events of which were not recorded in the Torah” — said Ka‘b.³⁸ In a talk with ‘Umar, Ka‘b is stated to have said: “Were it not for a sentence in the Qur‘ān (Sūra xiii, 39), I would foretell to you everything which will happen until the Day of Judgement.”³⁹ Ka‘b was accordingly able to tell ‘Umar that the description of his personality is given in the Torah as *qarn min ḥadīd*, and he could further predict that ‘Umar would be killed; then the following Caliph will be killed by an unjust faction; afterwards disasters will prevail.⁴⁰ A bishop consulted by ‘Umar could assert that he found ‘Umar’s description in his Scriptures as *qarn min ḥadīd* (glossed

³⁷ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a‘lām al-nubalā’*, ed. As‘ad Ṭalas (Cairo, 1962), III, 165; *Yawāqūt al-siyar*, Ms. Br. Mus., Or. 3771, fol. 141a; al-Ṭabarī, *Dalā’il al-imāma* (al-Najaf, 1383/1963), pp. 63, 73; Ibn Mākūlā, *al-Ikmāl*, (Hyderabad, 1381/1962), IV, 378; al-Ṭūsī, *Amālī* (al-Najaf, 1384/1964), I, 377; *Rijāl al-Kashshī* (al-Najaf [n.d.]), p. 26; al-Majlisī, *op. cit.*, XII, 113; XXXIX, 63; XLIII, 237–242 (new ed.).

³⁸ Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, *al-Ishrāf fī manāzil al-ashrāf*, Ms. Chester Beatty 4427, fol. 69a; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī‘āb*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥ. al-Bijāwī (Cairo [n.d.]), III, 1287; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥāwī*, II, 283–284; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Tadhkira*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥ. Mursī (Cairo [n.d.]), p. 543; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba* (Cairo, 1325/1907), V, 250, no. 7157; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Khaṣā’iṣ al-kubrā*, ed. Muḥammad Khalīl Harās (Cairo, 1386/1967), I, 80.

³⁹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥ. Shākir (Cairo, 1969), XVI, 484, no. 20485; al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ifīsh (Cairo, 1387/1967), IX, 330; a Shī‘ī source (al-‘Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr*, II, 215, no. 54) attributes this saying to ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn.

⁴⁰ Al-Haythamī, *Majma’ al-zawā’id* (Beirut, 1967), IX, 65 infra.-66; cf. Abū Nu‘aym, *op. cit.*, V, 387 ult.-388 supra.; Muḥ. b. Yaḥyā al-Ash‘arī al-Mālaqī, *al-Tamhīd wa-l-bayān fī maqāt al-shahīd ‘uthmān*, ed. Maḥmūd Yūsuf Zāyid (Beirut, 1964), p. 21; Ibn Ra’s Ghanama, *Manāqil al-Durar*, Ms. Chester Beatty 4254, fol. 23a; Nu‘aym b. Ḥammād, *Kit. al-ḥitan*, Ms. Br. Mus., Or. 9449, fol. 22a–b; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Khaṣā’iṣ*, I, 77.

by him as *qawīyyun*, *shadīdun*) and predict that he will be followed by a man, who has nothing objectionable in him (*lā ba'sa bihi*), but he will prefer his relatives; 'Umar recognized forthwith that it would be 'Uthmān. Afterwards, said the bishop, there will be "a crack in the rock" which he explained as "a sword drawn and blood shed." Later there will be a united congregation (*jamā'atun*).⁴¹ 'Abdallah b. Salām reported that the description of 'Uthmān in the Book of God was: "the Commander of those who forsake and kill,"⁴² and foretold that he would be murdered.⁴³ Ka'b foretells the rule of Mu'āwiya.⁴⁴ 'Abdallah b. al-Zubayr stated that everything foretold by Ka'b about his rule really happened to him.⁴⁵ It is a Jew who foretells the just rule of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz;⁴⁶ and it is from the Torah that the prediction that heaven and earth will bewail the death of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz is quoted.⁴⁷ Ka'b foretells the appearance of the black banners of the 'Abbasids,⁴⁸ gives the names of the descendants of 'Abbās who will rule the Muslim community⁴⁹ and emphasizes in a separate statement: *al-manṣūru manṣūru banī hāshimīn*.⁵⁰ It is, of course, an utterance with important political implications. Who was the person the Yemenis believed to be *al-Manṣūr*, can be gauged from the refutation of 'Abdallah b. 'Amr (b. al-'Āṣ): *yā ma'shara l-yamani, taqūlūna inna l-manṣūra minkum, fa-lā; wa-lladhī nafsi bi-yadihi, innahu la-qurashīyyun abūhu, wa-lau ashā'u an ansibahu ilā aqṣā jaddīn huwa lahu fa'altu*.⁵¹ Tubay', the stepson of Ka'b, quoted from the Torah the name of Saffāh and predicted that he would live forty years.⁵² 'Abdallah b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ quoted from the Books which he found after the battle of Yarmūk the names of the 'Abbasid Caliphs who would rule the Muslim community: Saffāh, Manṣūr, al-Amīn etc.⁵³ Ka'b

⁴¹ Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *op. cit.*, fol. 28a; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Khaṣā'is*, I, 78–79.

⁴² Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *op. cit.*, fol. 41b; but al-Mālaqī, *al-Tamhīd*, p. 113 has instead of "amīrun 'alā l-khādhil wa-l-qātil" "amīrun 'alā l-qātil al-āmīr" (erroneous) and "amīrun 'alā l-qātil wa-l-āmīr" (correct); al-Suyūṭī, *al-Khaṣā'is*, I, 78–79.

⁴³ Al-Mālaqī, *op. cit.*, p. 113, 135–136, 176–177; al-Qurtubī, *Tadhkira*, p. 534; al-Haythamī, *op. cit.*, IX, 92–93.

⁴⁴ Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *op. cit.*, fol. 28b.

⁴⁵ Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *op. cit.*, Ms. Atif Ef. 602, fol. 4a, l. 5 from bottom; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Khaṣā'is*, I, 80 ult.-81.

⁴⁶ Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *op. cit.*, Ms. Br. Mus., Or. 9449, fol. 28a; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Khaṣā'is*, I, 81.

⁴⁷ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Hāwī*, II, 284.

⁴⁸ Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *op. cit.*, Ms. Br. Mus., fol. 53a.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 27b: ...*'an ka'bin qāla: yamliku thalāthatun min wuldi l-'abbāsi al-manṣūru wa-l-mahdiyyu wa-l-saffāhu*.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 27a.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 27a. ⁵² *Ibid.*, fol. 27a.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, fol. 25b; and see about the books and these traditions Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, II, 298 infra.- 299 supra.

predicts the signs which will announce the end of the ‘Abbasid rule,⁵⁴ gives details about civil wars which will occur in the different provinces of the Muslim Empire,⁵⁵ and foretells the appearance of the Sufyānī.⁵⁶ Farqad al-Sabakhī predicts from the Holy Scriptures cruel battles in Judda.⁵⁷

Jews and Christians predicted the appearance of the Prophet⁵⁸ and it was Jews and Christians who knew the exact date of his death: two Jewish scholars from Yemen informed Jarīr b. ‘Abdallah al-Bajalī on the day of the death of the Prophet about the sad event.⁵⁹ A monk could fix precisely the date of the death of the Prophet for Ka‘b b. ‘Adiyy according to what he found in his Book.⁶⁰ A Jew from ‘Umān informed ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ on the day of the death of the Prophet about this; ‘Amr recorded the date, checked it later and found it accurate.⁶¹

The opinion that the Holy Books of Jews and Christians include information about the life and actions of prophets of the period preceding Islam, about the Prophet and the fate of his community and the events which will occur became widely accepted.⁶² It was further a common belief that the contents of the Qur’ān are included in the Books of the prophets preceding Muḥammad.⁶³ The Qur’ān, on the other hand, includes the contents of the Books revealed to the earlier prophets. “What is contained in the Qur’ān is contained in the earlier Books”, formulates it al-Suyūṭī.⁶⁴

⁵⁴ Nu‘aym b. Ḥammād, *op. cit.*, fol. 56a–b, 57a–b, 58b, 60b, 61b.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, fols. 34b, 61b, 62a, 63a–b, 65a–b, 69b, 71a–b, 72a–b.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, fols. 74a–b, 81a.

⁵⁷ Al-Fākihī, *Ta’riḫ Makka*, Leiden, Or. 463, fol. 414a.

⁵⁸ See e.g. al-Nuwayrī, *op. cit.*, XVI, 136, 143, 149–153; al-Haythamī, *al-Ni‘ma l-kubra* (Ḥalab [n.d.]), pp. 28–29, 52–53, 62.

⁵⁹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, V, 278.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, V, 278–279.

⁶¹ Ibn Ḥubaysh, *al-Maghāzī*, Ms. Leiden, Or. 343, p. 24.

⁶² See al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥāwī*, II, 283: ...*wa-waradat al-āthāru aydan bi-anna llāha bayyana li-anbiyā’ihi fi kutubihim jamī’a mā huwa wāqī’un fi hādhihi l-ummāti min aḥdāthih wa-fitanin wa-akhbāri khulafā’ihā wa-mulūkihā...* And see ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbit dalā’ili l-nubuwwa*, ed. ‘Abd al-Karīm ‘Uthmān (Beirut, 1966–68), II, 413: *innamā lam yatammanau l-mauta li-anna l-yahūda wa-l-naṣārā kānū yu’minūna bi-mūsā wa-ghayrihi mimman kāna yadda’i l-nubuwwata, wa-qad akhbāra hā’ulā’i fi kutubihim bi-nubuwwati muḥammadin (s) fa-lam yuqdimū ‘alā l-tamanni li-hādihā...*

⁶³ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥāwī*, II, 284: ...*wa-qad u’turiḍa ‘alayya fi hādihā l-ṭariqi bi-annahu yalzamu ‘alayhi an yakūna kullu mā fi l-qur’āni muḍammanan fi jamī’i l-kutubi l-sābiqati; wa-aqūlu: la māni’a min dhālika, bal dallat al-aḍillatu ‘alā thubūti hādihā l-lāzimi...*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 285: ...*wa-qad naṣṣa ‘alā hādihā bi-‘aynihi l-imāmu abū ḥanifata ḥaythu stadalla bi-hādhihi l-āyāti ‘alā jawāzi qirā’ati l-qur’āni bi-ghayri l-lisāni l-‘arabiyyi, wa-qāla: inna l-qur’āna muḍammanun fi l-kutubi l-sābiqati, wa-hiya bi-ghayri l-lisāni l-‘arabi, akhdhan bi-hādhihi l-āyati* (i.e. Sūra xxvi, 197–98), *wa-mimmā yashhadu bi-dhālika waṣfuhu ta’ālā li-l-*

The idea of identity of contents led consequently to the identification of some passages of the Holy Books with those of the Qur'ān. The beginning of the Torah is identical with the beginning of *Sūrat al-An'ām*, the end of the Torah is identical with the end of *Sūrat Hūd*.⁶⁵ The *Sūrat Yā Sīn* is called in the Torah *al-Mu'amma*.⁶⁶ God urged Moses to read the verse of the Throne (Sūra ii 256) after every prayer and mentioned the reward for this reading.⁶⁷ Muḥammad b. Ka'b al-Quraẓī could identify a quotation from some Holy Books mentioned by Abū Sa'īd al-Maqburī with Sūra ii 204.⁶⁸ The first sentence in the Torah was Sūra vi 152: "Say: Come, I will recite what your Lord has forbidden you... etc."⁶⁹ "*Hādihā*" in Sūra lxxxvii, 18: *inna hādihā lafi l-ṣuḥufi l-ūlā, ṣuḥufi ibrahīma wa-mūsā* was interpreted as referring to the whole *sūra*; the whole *sūra*, the commentators maintained, was included in the Holy Books of the earlier prophets.⁷⁰ Another tradition states explicitly that the *sūra* was copied from the Books of Moses and Abraham.⁷¹ Some commentators tried to limit the extent of *inna hādihā*... to some verses (*āyāt*) of the *sūra*.⁷² The Prophet is said to have given an utterance about the *ṣuḥuf* of Ibrāhīm and Mūsā: the *ṣuḥuf* of Ibrāhīm were proverbs, the *ṣuḥuf* of Mūsā were exempla (*'ibar*).⁷³ Quotations from these *ṣuḥuf* are in fact uttered by the Prophet.⁷⁴

A very early compilation containing wise sayings, stories and exhortations of Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, Ayyūb, Dāwūd, Sulaymān, 'Isā, Yahyā b. Zakariyya and Luqmān is the *Kitāb al-mawā'iz* of Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224).⁷⁵ The numerous traditions, sayings and stories, provided with chains of *isnād* and recorded by one of the greatest scholars of the second century of the Hijra, attest that in this period knowledge of Jewish and Christian tradition

qur'āni fi 'iddati mawāḍi'a bi-annahū muṣaddiqun (text vowelled: musaddaḡun) li-mā bayna yadayhi min al-kutubi; fa-lau-lā anna mā fihī maujūdun fihā lam yaṣīḡha hādihā l-waṣfu...

⁶⁵ Abū Nu'aym, *op. cit.*, V, 378.

⁶⁶ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-La'ālī al-maṣnū'a*, I, 234.

⁶⁷ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-La'ālī al-maṣnū'a*, I, 232–233; *idem*, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, I, 325; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, I, 546.

⁶⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, IV, 231–232, nos. 3964–65; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr*, I, 238.

⁶⁹ Al-Mauṣilī, *Ghāyat al-wasā'il ilā ma'rīfati l-awā'il*, Ms. Cambridge Qq. 33, fol. 41a; al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XII, 227, no. 14157 (and see nos. 14158–59); Abū Nu'aym, *op. cit.*, V, 383.

⁷⁰ Al-Shaukānī, *Faṭḥ al-qadīr* (Cairo, 1383/1964), V, 427; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr*, VI, 341.

⁷¹ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr*, VI, 341; al-Shaukānī, *Faṭḥ al-qadīr*, V, 427: *nusikhat hādihī l-sūratu min ṣuḥufi ibrahīma wa-mūsā*; Cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥāwī*, II, 285: *hādihī l-sūratu fi ṣuḥufi ibrahīma wa-mūsā*; al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr*, XX, 24: *inna hādihā... qāla: hādihī l-sūratu*.

⁷² Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr*, VI, 341; al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr*, XX, 24: *min qaulihī qad aflaha ilā ākhiri l-sūratī*; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, VII, 273.

⁷³ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr*, VI, 341.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Ms. Hebrew University, Collection Yahuda, Ar. 95.

was widely current and was without serious opposition incorporated into the Muslim religious tradition. "It is written in the Torah", says Khaythama b. 'Abd al-Rahmān, "O man, exert yourself in My service and I shall fill up your heart with sufficiency and I shall supply your want; but if you do not do it, I shall make your heart busy and shall not supply your wants."⁷⁶ "God revealed to Ibrāhīm," Wahb b. Munabbih reports, "O king who undergoes trials, I did not send you in order to collect the goods of this world, nor to erect buildings; I sent you in order to answer on My behalf the call of the oppressed, because I shall not drive it back, even if it comes from an unbeliever."⁷⁷ This utterance is recorded by al-Suyūṭī as a *ḥadīth*.⁷⁸ Ka'b quotes from the Torah, according to the early *Jāmi'* of Ibn Wahb, a commandment to obey one's parents.⁷⁹ A saying about the disobedience of sons to their fathers is transmitted by Ka'b from the "Book of God."⁸⁰ Ka'b asserts that the invocation of 'Abdallah b. 'Amr in connection with augury is found in the Torah.⁸¹ From the Torah Ka'b also quotes a saying about the contemptuous attitude towards the wise on the part of his own people.⁸² The final sentence in the Torah, says Ka'b, is: *al-ḥamdu li-llāhi lladhī lam yattakhidh waladan wa-lam yakun lahu sharīkun fī l-mulki*.⁸³ Maymūn b. Mihrān states that on the Tablets of Moses was written: "Do not covet the possessions of your neighbour, nor his wife."⁸⁴ The Children of Israel asked Moses to choose for them a sentence of the Torah, which they could learn by heart. He said: "In the same way you would like people to treat you, treat them." Al-Zamakhsharī remarks: "This phrase is the one chosen best from the Torah."⁸⁵ Sa'īd b. abī Hilāl⁸⁶ records two commandments in the Tablets of Moses written by God on the tablets "with His own hand" and His injunction: "Like for the people what you like for yourself and dislike for them what you dislike for yourself."⁸⁷ In the first tablets given to Moses by God there was written: "Thank Me and thank your parents, then I shall keep you from danger of decay and I shall

⁷⁶ Abū 'Ubayd, *op. cit.*, f. 9b; al-Majlisī, *op. cit.*, XIII, 357, l. 1 (new ed.); al-Āmilī, *al-Jawāhir al-saniyya*, al-Najaf 1384/1964, p. 48.

⁷⁷ Abū 'Ubayd, *op. cit.*, fol. 6b; Ibn Qutayba, *'Uyūn al-akhbār* (Cairo, 1346/1928), II, 263.
⁷⁸ *Al-Durr*, VI, 341.

⁷⁹ Ibn Wahb, *Jāmi'*, ed. J. David Weill (Cairo, 1939), p. 12, l. 11.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, page 11, l. 10.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, page 98, l. 4.

⁸² 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Khaulānī, *Ta'rikh Dārayyā*, ed. Sa'īd al-Afghānī (Damascus, 1369/1950), p. 107.

⁸³ Abū Nu'aym, *op. cit.*, VI, 30.

⁸⁴ Abū 'Ubayd, *op. cit.*, fol. 9b, l. 9.

⁸⁵ Al-Zamakhsharī, *Rabī' al-abrār*, Ms. Br. Mus., Or. 6511, fol. 132b, *infra*.

⁸⁶ See on him Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, IV, 94, no. 159.

⁸⁷ Ibn Wahb, *op. cit.*, page 20, l. 18.

lengthen your life and I shall give you a good life and transfer you into a better one.”⁸⁸ Tha‘laba b. abī Mālik⁸⁹ says that ‘Umar invited Jewish scholars and asked them to discuss (religious subjects — K). With them came Tha‘laba’s father, Abū Mālik, who was a Jewish convert to Islam.⁹⁰ He came with a book, opened it and put his hand on a passage of it. When he lifted his hand and the Jewish scholars read: “he who shows filial piety to his father, God will lengthen his life” they admitted that it was revealed by God. People did not know it until that day.⁹¹ Al-Tha‘labī records the Ten Commandments revealed to Moses.⁹² Al-Nuwayrī quotes al-Tha‘labī; he remarks that God revealed to the Prophet the contents of the Ten Commandments in eighteen verses of the Qur‘ān, which he records.⁹³ The maxim that as a part of filial piety one has to be beneficent to the friends of one’s father after his death is quoted from the Torah.⁹⁴ A *faqīh* quoted from the Torah: “Woe to the man who sins, then asks forgiveness from Me...”⁹⁵ “In the Torah it is written”, a Shī‘ī tradition says, “O man, remember Me when you are angry, then I shall remember you when I am angry and I shall not annihilate you among those whom I shall annihilate; if you are unjustly treated be satisfied with My help to you, as My help is better for you than your help for yourself.”⁹⁶ “In the Torah it is written: he who sells landed property or (rights on) water not investing the sum gained in land or water (rights), the money (gained) will be squandered.”⁹⁷ It may be remarked that a similar tradition is reported on the authority of the Prophet: *lā bāraka llāhu fī thamani arḍin au dārin lā yuj‘alu fī arḍin au dārin*.⁹⁸ Some quotations from the Gospel and “other Books” are transmitted by Thaur b. Yazīd.⁹⁹ He read in the *taurāt* that Jesus said to the Apostles: Converse much with God, converse with people a little”. They asked: “How should we converse with God”? He said: “Be in solitude with Him in your invocations and supplications”.¹⁰⁰ Ka‘b states that the well

⁸⁸ Al-Majlisī, *op. cit.*, XIII, 358, no. 63.

⁸⁹ See on him Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba*, I, 209, no. 948; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *op. cit.*, I, 212, no. 277

⁹⁰ Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba*, VI, 169, no. 998.

⁹¹ Ibn Wahb, *op. cit.*, page 15, ll. 9–14.

⁹² *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*, p. 270.

⁹³ *Nihāyat al-arab*, XIII, 215–217.

⁹⁴ Ibn Wahb, *op. cit.*, page 14, ll. 14–15; cf. al-Sulamī, *Ādāb al-ṣuḥba* (Jerusalem, 1954), p. 83, nos. 248–249 (and see *ibid.*, the references of the editor).

⁹⁵ Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, *Kit. al-tauba*, Ms. Chester Beatty, 3863, fol. 20b.

⁹⁶ Al-Majlisī, *op. cit.*, XIII, 358, no. 66.

⁹⁷ Al-Majlisī, *op. cit.*, XIII, 360, 73.

⁹⁸ Mughulṭāy, *al-Zahr al-bāsim*, Leiden Or. 370, fol. 120b; al-Ṭabari, *al-Muntakhab min dhayli l-mudhayyal* (Cairo, 1358/1939), p. 59.

⁹⁹ See on him Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, II, 33, no. 57.

¹⁰⁰ Abū Nu‘aym, *op. cit.*, VI, 94.

Ḥaddithū ‘an banī isrā’īla

of Zamzam is mentioned in “some Books.”¹⁰¹ “I found in the Torah”, states Ka‘b, that he who prays the five prayers in the mosque of Mecca (*al-masjid al-ḥarām*) God will record for him (the reward of) twelve million and five hundred thousand prayers.¹⁰² Even the verse of al-Ḥuṭay’a

man yaf‘al al-khayra lā ya‘dam jawāziyahu:

lā yadhhabu l-‘urfu bayna llāhi wa-l-nāsi

was stated by Ka‘b to be a sentence from the Torah.¹⁰³

Additional quotations “from the Torah” could easily be multiplied.¹⁰⁴ Only few of these quotations are in fact derived from that source.¹⁰⁵ The majority of the flow of these quotations was derived from popular Jewish and Christian stories, legends, wise sayings and traditions which were introduced by Jewish and Christian converts to Islam and gained wide popularity. The Muslim scholars were however aware of the fact that the expressions “I found in the Torah”, “it is written in the Torah”, “it is recorded in the Torah” do not necessarily refer to the Pentateuch, or even to the Bible. Al-Jāḥiẓ remarks that the expression “*maktūbun fī l-taurāti*” as told on the authority of Ka‘b refers in fact to things found in the Scriptures of the Jews like the books of the prophets and the books of Salomon.¹⁰⁶ In a report given by Abū l-Aswad¹⁰⁷ the *Ra’s al-Jālūt* explains that Ka‘b lied when he said that his predictions were derived from the Torah; the Torah is a Book like the Qur‘ān; Ka‘b was in fact quoting from the books of the prophets and their companions, exactly as the Muslims narrate stories of the Prophet and his Companions.¹⁰⁸

The sources are often referred to in a vague manner: “*maktūbun fī l-kutubi*”, “*qara’tu fī ba‘ḍi l-kutubi*”, “*fī kitābi llāhi*”;¹⁰⁹ often the sources are not mentioned at all.

¹⁰¹ Al-Fākihī, *op. cit.*, fol. 342a.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, fol. 453a.

¹⁰³ Usāma b. Munqidh, *Lubāb al-ādāb*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥ. Shākir (Cairo, 1353/1935), p. 424 ult.; and see al-Ḥuṭay’a, *Diwān*, ed. Nu‘mān Amin Ṭāhā (Cairo, 1378/1958), pp. 291–292.

¹⁰⁴ See e.g. al-Dhahabī, *al-‘Uluww li-l-‘aliyy l-ghaffār*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥ. ‘Uthmān (Cairo, 1388/1968), p. 95; Abū Nu‘aym, *op. cit.*, IV, 48, 38, 58; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr*, IV, 182; Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, *al-Ishrāf*, fol. 76a–b; al-Majlisī, *op. cit.*, XIII, 331, 342, 348, 357, 340; al-Ṭūsī, *Amālī* (al-Najaf, 1384/1964), I, 233; al-‘Āmilī, *al-Kashkūl*, ed. Ṭāhir Aḥmad al-Zāwī (Cairo, 1380/1961), II, 132, 153.

¹⁰⁵ See J. Goldziher, “Über Bibelcitate in muhammedanischen Schriften,” *ZATW* XIII (1893), pp. 315–316.

¹⁰⁶ *Al Ḥayawān*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām Hārūn (Cairo, 1385/1966), IV, 202–203.

¹⁰⁷ See on him Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhib al-tahdhib*, IX, 307, no. 506.

¹⁰⁸ Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba*, V, 324.

¹⁰⁹ See e.g. Abū ‘Ubayd, *op. cit.*, fol. 16b; Abū Nu‘aym, *op. cit.*, IV, 27, 32, 33, 57; VI 16, 55.

From “*Ḥikmat āl Dāwūd*” Abū ‘Ubayd quotes the following passage: “It is incumbent upon a wise man not to be neglectful about four hours: an hour in which he exerts himself for his God, an hour in which “he makes accounts for his soul”, an hour in which he talks with his friends who speak to him frankly about his vices and bad behaviour and an hour devoted to his lawful pleasures; this (latter) hour is a recreation for his heart and should help him to carry out the obligations of the three (former) hours. It is incumbent upon a wise man to know his time and to set about his matters. It is incumbent upon a wise man to set out on his journey with provision taken only for his life to come, approving the means of life and lawful pleasure”.¹¹⁰ In some other sources these utterances are quoted from the *Ṣuḥuf Ibrāhīm*.¹¹¹

From the *Ḥikmat āl Dāwūd* the following saying is quoted: “Good health is a hidden good”.¹¹² Some quotations from *Ḥikmat āl Dāwūd* are given by al-‘Āmilī¹¹³ and al-Majlisī.¹¹⁴ Abū Nu‘aym records some quotations from “*Mas’alat Dāwūd*”.¹¹⁵ Al-‘Āmilī quotes “*Akhbār Dāwūd*” twice.¹¹⁶

The Psalms of David seem to have been in wide circulation. Qatāda and Rabī‘ b. Anas state that the *Zabūr* contains only invocations and praises of God; there are no commandments, no rules of penal-law, no statements about what is lawful or forbidden.¹¹⁷ The first verses of the Psalms are often quoted. Two translations of these verses are recorded by al-Suyūṭī,¹¹⁸ a third one by Ibn Abī l-Dunyā.¹¹⁹ Ibn Ṭāwūs copies from the *zabūr* the following *suwar*:

¹¹⁰ *Al-Mawā‘iz*, fol. 10b; cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr*, IV, 189, l. 10; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādī-*Mūḍīh auhām*, I, 457 (*fi ḥikmati āl dāwūda*); Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, II, 15 (*fi ḥikmati āl-dā‘ūda*).

¹¹¹ Al-Majlisī, *op. cit.*, XII, 71; al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr*, XX, 25; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr*, VI, 341.

¹¹² Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, *al-Ishrāf*, fol. 93a (*al-‘āfiyatu l-mulku l-khafīyyu*).

¹¹³ *Al-Jawāhir al-saniyya*, p. 90, l. 3 from bottom, p. 95.

¹¹⁴ *Bihār*, XIV, 36, 41 (new ed.).

¹¹⁵ *Al-Ḥilya*, VI, 56–57; and see Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, II, 14 inf.

¹¹⁶ *Al-Jawāhir al-saniyya*, p. 94.

¹¹⁷ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr*, IV, 188.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, IV, 188: *a ...ṭūbā li-rajulin lā yasluku ṭariqa l-khaṭṭā‘ina wa-lam yujālis al-baṭ-ṭālīna wa yastaqīmu ‘alā ‘ibādati rabbīhi ‘azza wa jalla, fa mathaluhu ka mathali shajaratīn nābitatīn ‘alā sāqiyatīn lā tazālu fihā l-mā‘u yaḥḍulu thamaruhā fi zamāni l-thimāri wa lā tazālu khaḍrā‘a fi ghayri zamāni l-thimāri*; (cf. Abū Nu‘aym, *op. cit.*, IV, 62 penult.), p. 189: *b ...ṭūbā li-man lam yasluk sabīla l-athamati wa-lam yujālis al-khaṭṭā‘ina wa-lam yafi‘ fi hammi l-mustahzi‘ina wa-lakinna hammahu sunnatu llahi wa-iyyāhā yata‘allamu bi-l-layli wa-l-nahāri, mathaluhu mathalu shajaratīn tanbutu ‘alā shaṭṭīn tu‘tā thamaratahā fi ḥīnihā wa-lā yatanātharu min waraqihā shay‘un, wa-kullu ‘amalihi bi-amri, laysa dhālika mithla ‘amali l-munāfiqīn...*

¹¹⁹ *Kitāb al-tauba*, Chester Beatty, 3863, fol. 15b: *sallām b. miskīn: sa‘altu naṣrāniyyan mā awwalu l-zabūri, qāla: ṭūbā li-‘abdīn lam yasluk sabīla l-athamati wa-lam yujālis l-mustahzi‘ina wa-l-khāṭī‘ina; fa-dhakartu dhālika li-māliki bnī dinarin fa-qāla: ṣadaqa.*

2, 10, 17, 23, 30, 36, 46, 47, 65, 67, 68, 71, 84, 100.¹²⁰ The last thirty lines of the *zabūr*¹²¹ and a short passage from this source are given by Wahb.¹²² These translations are however not accurate; sometimes no similarity with the text can be detected.

The wise sayings attributed to Salomon¹²³ can be traced to Ecclesiastes and Proverbs.¹²⁴

Al-Muḥāsibī quotes from *Ḥikmat ‘Isā* a saying about the love for worldly goods¹²⁵ and a saying from *Risālāt ‘Isā*.¹²⁶ Lengthy chapters from *Ṣaḥā’if Idrīs* and *Sunan Idrīs* are recorded by Ibn Ṭāwūs.¹²⁷

It would be needless to add quotations from the prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Habaquq or from the *Injil* of Jesus. The compilation of Abū ‘Ubayd may serve as the best proof for the flow of Jewish and Christian traditions which poured into Muslim circles and were gladly taken up by Muslim scholars.

Reading the Torah was made lawful by the Prophet’s permission. ‘Abdallah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ told the Prophet about his dream. He saw that he had on one of his fingers honey and on the other one butter. The Prophet explained the dream and said: “You will read the two Books: the Torah and the Furqān (i.e. the Qur’ān — K)”. He read in fact both these Books.¹²⁸ This tradition, transmitted by Ibn Lahī’a,¹²⁹ was vehemently attacked by al-Dhahabī in the eighth century AH: nobody was allowed to read the Torah after the Qur’ān had been revealed. The Torah, argues al-Dhahabī, had been changed and tampered with; truth and falsehood are mixed in this book. It is permissible to read this book for one purpose only: to answer the Jews.¹³⁰ But opinions about the study of the Torah were quite different in the first century. Ibn

¹²⁰ *Sa’d al-su’ūd* (al-Najaf, 1369/1950), pp. 47–63; a great part of the quotations of Ibn Ṭāwūs were copied by al-Majlisī, *op. cit.*, XIV, 43–48; and see *ibid.*, pp. 36–37.

¹²¹ Abū Nu’aym, *op. cit.*, IV, 46–47.

¹²² *Ibid.*, IV, 67 inf.

¹²³ Usāma b. Munqidh, *op. cit.*, p. 444: “*wa-min kalāmi sulaymāna bni dāwūda ‘alayhi l-salām*”.

¹²⁴ Proverbs xxvii 1, 2, 10; xxix 19; Ecclesiastes xi 1.

¹²⁵ *A’māl al-qulūb wa-l-jawāriḥ*, ed. ‘Abd al-Qādir Aḥmad ‘Aṭā (Cairo, 1969), p. 45.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹²⁷ *Sa’d al-su’ūd*, pp. 32–40; cf. al-Majlisī, *op. cit.*, XI, 120–121, 151–152, 269, 282–283 (new ed.).

¹²⁸ Al-Dhahabī, *Ta’riḫ al-islām* (Cairo, 1367), III, 38; Abū l-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf b. Mūsā al-Ḥanafī, *al-Mu’taṣar min al-mukhtaṣar* (Hyderabad, 1362), II, 265; cf. al-Mauṣilī, *Ghāyat al-wasā’il*, Ms. Cambridge Qq 33 (10) fol. 42 inf.

¹²⁹ See on him Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, VI, 242 ult. (*ḍa’i’*); al-Tibrizī, *Mishkāt al-maṣābiḥ* (Karachi, 1350), p. 160, l. 5 (*ḍa’if*); al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-i’tidāl*, I, 479, ult.; *ibid.*, III, 267 (*wa-bnu lahī’ata mimman qad tabarra’nā min ‘uhdatihi*); *ibid.*, II, 475–483, no. 4530; al-Fasawī, *op. cit.*, fol. 84a, inf.; Mughulṭāy, *al-Zahr al-bāsim*, Ms. Leiden, Or. 370, fol. 116a.

¹³⁰ *Siyar a’lām al-nubalā’*, ed. As’ad Ṭālas (Cairo, 1962), III, 57.

Sa'd records a story about 'Āmir b. 'Abd Qays and Ka'b sitting in a mosque: Ka'b read the Torah and explained some interesting passages to 'Āmir.¹³¹ Abū l-Jald al-Jaunī used to read the Qur'ān and the Torah. He used to celebrate each conclusion of reading of the Torah (he read it during six days) summoning people (for this purpose) and used to quote a saying that Mercy descends at each conclusion of the reading of the Torah.¹³²

Shī'i tradition explicitly stressed the link between the Torah and the true knowledge of the Prophet, 'Alī and the succeeding Imāms. The Tablets of Moses reached the Prophet and he handed them over to 'Alī.¹³³ The Tablets of Moses, the Gospel, the *Ṣuḥuf Ibrāhīm* and the *Zabūr* are in the possession of the Shī'i Imāms.¹³⁴ The *White Jafr* contains the Torah, the Gospel, the *Zabūr* and the first Books of God.¹³⁵

The idea that there was identity of contents between Jewish revelation and Islam was followed by the idea which established identity of fate between these two peoples. Ibn 'Abbās stated that everything which happened among the Children of Israel will happen to the Muslim community.¹³⁶ The Children of Israel were righteous until the sons of their captive women grew up. They championed *ra'y*¹³⁷ and therefore went astray and led other people astray, said the Prophet.¹³⁸ This tradition is recorded by al-Fasawī and after it comes the following remark: "Sufyān said: 'We examined it and found that the first person to champion *ra'y* in Medīna was Rabi'a, in Kūfa Abū Ḥanīfa, in Baṣra al-Battī; they were the sons of captive women'."¹³⁹ The Prophet predicted that the Muslim community would follow a path identical with that of the Children of Israel and of the Christians.¹⁴⁰

These points of resemblance refer, of course, to pejorative aspects of Jewish history; they are used to point out dangers which the Muslim community is facing. Sometimes, however, the identification is done in a laudatory spirit.

¹³¹ *Ṭabaqāt*, VII, 110.

¹³² *Ibid.*, VII, 222.

¹³³ Al-Majlisī, *op. cit.*, XIII, 225 (new ed.); and see al-Ṣaffār al-Qummi, *Baṣā'ir al-darajāt*, ([n.p.], 1285), pp. 37–38 sup.; al-'Ayyāshī, *op. cit.*, Ms. India Office 4153, fol. 127b.

¹³⁴ Al-Majlisī, *op. cit.*, XXVI, 180–189 (new ed.).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, XXVI, 18.

¹³⁶ Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *op. cit.*, fol. 4b: *lam yakun fī banī isrā'īla shay'un illā wa-huwa fikum kā'inun*.

¹³⁷ Cf. "Aṣḥāb al-Ra'y", *EI*² (Schacht).

¹³⁸ Ibn Mājah, *Sunan* (Cairo, 1349), I, 28; al-Bayhaqī, *Ma'rifat al-sunan*, I, 110 (and see the references of the editor).

¹³⁹ *Al-Ma'rifa wa-l-ta'rikh*, fol. 271a.

¹⁴⁰ Al-Muttaqī l-Hindī, *Kanz*, XI, 123, nos. 555–556; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāya*, IV, 28; Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Sa'd*, pp. 64, 65, 116, l. 3; al-'Ayyāshī, *op. cit.*, Ms. fol. 93a–b; and see M. Talbi, "Les Bida", *Studia Islamica*, XII, 50.

The Aus and the Khazraj, says a tradition recorded by Ibn Ishāq, are descendants of four hundred scholars from among the Children of Israel, left by *Tubba’* in Medīna. Abū Ayyūb was the descendant of the scholar whom *Tubba’* entrusted with the keeping of the letter for the Prophet; Abū Ayyūb indeed handed it over to the Prophet.¹⁴¹ A late compilation recording the story remarks that this genealogy of the Anṣār is a Jewish plot.¹⁴²

The Prophet states, according to a Shī‘ī tradition, that his name is Aḥmad and Isrā’īl and that the obligations laid by God upon Isrā’īl are incumbent on him as well.¹⁴³ By Children of Israel the (‘Alid — K) *Āl Muḥammad* are meant.¹⁴⁴ The ‘Alids in the Umayyad period complained that they were “like the *Āl Mūsā* in the time of *Āl Fir‘aun*”.¹⁴⁵ Ibn Ṭāwūs records many passages from the Torah about Aaron¹⁴⁶ in order to stress the importance of the utterance of the Prophet, that ‘Alī is in relation to the Prophet in the position of Aaron in relation to Moses.¹⁴⁷ The role of ‘Alī as *waṣiyy* in relation to the Prophet corresponds to the role of Joshua b. Nūn in relation to Moses.¹⁴⁸

But the feeling of affinity or identity which Muslims experienced with regard to the righteous from among the Children of Israel did not detract from the latter’s faults, sins and vices. The *sunna* of the Children of Israel should not be followed. In many traditions the Faithful are warned of these *sunan* and ordered to act contrary to them.¹⁴⁹

Even their strictness in observing religious rites was criticized. “Do not be like the Children of Israel; having been strict with themselves, God imposed strictness on them.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴¹ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā’ al-wafā*, ed. Muḥ. Muḥyī l-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo, 1374/1955), I, 188–189; Mughulṭāy, *op. cit.*, fol. 194a; Ibn Ḥayyā, *al-Jāmi’ al-laṭīf*, (Cairo, 1357/1958), pp. 51–54; al-Ṣāliḥī, *al-Sira al-shāmiya*, Ms. Atif 1753, fol. 69a.

¹⁴² ‘Abd al-Ḥāfiz b. ‘Uthmān al-Qāri’ al-Ṭā’ifī, *Jalā’ al-qulūb wa-kashf al-kurūb bi-manāqib abī ayyūb*, (Istanbul, 1298), pp. 14–15.

¹⁴³ Al-‘Ayyāshī, *op. cit.*, I, 44, no. 45 (and see *ibid.*, note 6).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 44, nos. 43, 44 (refers to Sūra ii 48).

¹⁴⁵ Furāt, *Tafsīr* (al-Najaf [n.d.]), p. 47, l. 1.

¹⁴⁶ *Sa’d al-su’ūd*, pp. 43–46; Ex. xxix 5, 27, 31, 44, 13; Num. xvii 17.

¹⁴⁷ *Sa’d al-su’ūd*, pp. 43–46 (and see p. 43: *i’lam anna qaula l-nabiyyi (s) li-maulānā ‘aliyyi bni abī fālibin (‘a) anta minnī bi-manzilati hārūna min mūsā yashtamilu ‘alā khaṣā’iṣa ‘aẓimatīn naḥwi l-khilāfati; wa-qad wajadtu fi l-taurāti min manāzili hārūna min mūsā mā yaḍṭiq mā qaṣadnāhu bi-ḥuṣūli hādha l-kitābi mimma yanfa’u bi-ma’rifatihā dhawū* (text: *dhawī*) l-albābi.

¹⁴⁸ Furāt, *op. cit.*, pp. 65–68.

¹⁴⁹ Furāt, *op. cit.*, p. 42: *wa-lā ta’khudhū sunnata banī isrā’īla kadhdhabū anbiyā’ahum wa-qatalū ahla baytihim*.

¹⁵⁰ Al-‘Āmilī, *al-Kashkūl*, I, 221: *inna llāha yuḥibbu an yu’khadha bi-rukhaṣhi kamā yuḥibbu an yu’khadha bi-‘azā’imihi, fa- qbalū rukhaṣa llāhi wa-lā takūnū ka-banī isrā’īl ḥina shaddadū ‘alā anfusihim fa-shaddada llāhu ‘alayhim*; and see Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, I, 193–194; cf. Samau’al la-Maghribī, *Ifḥām al-yahūd*, ed. M. Perlmann (New York, 1964), pp. 71–85.

III

Contrary to the permission to transmit traditions about the Children of Israel concerning their history or stories about their prophets and saints, the early sources point clearly to the tendency of the orthodox circles to prevent the Faithful from learning or copying the Holy Scriptures of the People of the Book, and especially of legal chapters or chapters concerning the tenets of faith. 'Umar, says a tradition, walked past a Jew from Qurayza and asked him to copy for him summary chapters from the Torah. When he came to the Prophet and begged his permission to read these chapters, the face of the Prophet became changed (scil. with anger — K). 'Umar was frightened by this and exclaimed: "I am satisfied by Allāh as God, by Islām as religion and by Muḥammad as Prophet." When the rage of the Prophet had gone, he remarked: "I swear by Him Who keeps in His hand the soul of Muḥammad: were Moses among you and if you followed him, leaving me, you would have gone astray; you are my lot among the peoples and I am your lot among the prophets".¹⁵¹

It is interesting to note that the Jew in the story is referred to in a favourable manner: *marartu bi-akhin lī min qurayzata*.¹⁵² It is also of interest that the Prophet emphasizes the adherence of Moses to his faith. According to a tradition on the authority of Anas, the Prophet met Jesus¹⁵³ and al-Dhahabī considered Jesus as one of the Companions of the Prophet.¹⁵⁴ An utterance of the Prophet similar to the one about Moses is recorded in the story of Ḥaḥṣa. She brought to the Prophet a shoulder-bone on which was written the story of Joseph. The Prophet became angry, the colour of his face changed and he said: "Were Joseph to come while I am amongst you and were you to follow him, you would have gone astray".¹⁵⁵

Slightly different is the utterance of the Prophet as recorded in another tradition. 'Umar asked the Prophet whether he would be permitted to write down traditions (*aḥādīth*) heard from Jews, by which he was pleased. The

¹⁵¹ *Al-Jāmi'*, fol. 60a; 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, fol. 114a; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr*, II, 48; cf. another version of this tradition 'Abd al-Razzāq, *op. cit.*, fol. 114a with the utterance: *innamā bu'ithu fātiḥan wa-khātaman wa-u'ītu jawāmi'a l-kalimi wa-fawātiḥahu wa-khtuṣira lī l-ḥadīthu ikhtisāran*. And see Abū Dā'ūd, *Marāṣil* (Cairo, 1310), p. 48; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādī, *Taqyīd*, p. 52.

¹⁵² See another version of this tradition in Muttaqī al-Hindī's *Kanz*, I, 334, no. 1629: 'Umar visited Khaybar and was pleased by some sayings of a Jew. The Jew dictated the sayings to 'Umar upon his request and 'Umar wrote them down on a skin which he brought to the Prophet. When 'Umar read it to the Prophet, he became angry and erased the writing. He said: "Do not follow these people because they got confused".

¹⁵³ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥāwī*, II, 288.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 289, sup.

¹⁵⁵ Ma'mar b. Rāshid, *al-Jāmi'*, fol. 133b; 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, fol. 114a.

Prophet said: "Are you following the Jews and Christians in their confusion? I brought it (i.e. the religion, or the Qur'ān — K) white and pure; if Moses were alive he would have to follow me".¹⁵⁶

A special *āya* was revealed in connection with this problem. Some Muslims, the tradition asserts, brought to the Prophet certain books which they had copied from the Jews. The Prophet said: "It is an error grave enough when people prefer a thing brought by someone else to another people over that which their own Prophet brought to them". Then *āya* 51 of *Sūra* 29 was revealed: *a-wa-lam yakfihim annā anzalnā 'alayka l-kitāba yutlā 'alayhim...* etc.¹⁵⁷ The Prophet finally gave his decisive utterance when asked by 'Umar about studying the Torah: "Do not learn the Torah, you have to learn what has been revealed to you (i.e. the Qur'ān — K) and believe in it".¹⁵⁸

In fact 'Umar forbade copying or reading the Books of Jews and Christians. According to a tradition a man came to 'Umar and informed him about a wonderful book which he had found in Madā'in when the Muslims had conquered the city. "Is it from the Book of Allāh"? (i.e. the Qur'ān — K) 'Umar asked. "No", said the man. 'Umar began to beat him with his whip, reciting the first four *āyas* from *Sūrat Yūsuf* and said: "What caused the peoples who lived before you to perish was that they devoted themselves to the study of books of their scholars and bishops and abandoned the Torah and the Gospel until those two Books became effaced and knowledge of them disappeared".¹⁵⁹ In another story a similar case is told. 'Alqama and al-Aswad came to Ibn Mas'ūd and showed him a scroll (*ṣaḥīfa*) containing a story which they found pleasing. 'Abdallah b. Mas'ūd ordered to efface the script. "These hearts are vessels (of knowledge — K); engage them with the Qur'ān, not with anything else", he said.¹⁶⁰

'Umar seems to have been especially concerned about the *Book of Daniel*. The book is said to have been found in a grave in Tustar when the Muslims conquered the city. It is said to have been Daniel's grave.¹⁶¹ The book was brought to 'Umar and he sent it to Ka'b who rendered it into Arabic. It is

¹⁵⁶ Al-Zamaksharī, *al-Fā'iḳ*, ed. 'Alī Muḥ. al-Bijāwī — Muḥ. Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1367/1948), III, 218; Abū 'Ubayd, *Gharīb al-ḥadīth* (Hyderabad, 1385/1966), III, 28–29; cf. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāya*, s.v. *h w k*; al-Majlisī, *op. cit.*, VIII, 211 (lithogr. ed.).

¹⁵⁷ Al-Suyūṭī, *Lubāb al-nuqūl* (Cairo, 1373/1954), p. 170; al-Qurtubī, *Tafsīr*, XIII, 355; Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib āl abī ṭālib* (al-Najaf, 1376/1956), I, 48; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi' bayān al-'ilm*, II, 40–41.

¹⁵⁸ Al-Muttaqī l-Hindī, *op. cit.*, I, 333, no. 1627.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 335, no. 1632.

¹⁶⁰ Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, Ms. Leiden, Or. 3056, fol. 4a–b. Abū 'Ubayd remarks: "We think that this scroll was taken from a man who belonged to the People of the Book, therefore 'Abdallah b. Mas'ūd disliked it".

¹⁶¹ See *EI*², s.v. "Dāniyāl" (G. Vajda).

said to have contained information about strifes (*fitan*) which will happen.¹⁶² Abū l-‘Āliya¹⁶³ says about the book: “I was the first Arab to read this book the way I read the Qur’ān.” It contained, says Abū l-‘Āliya, information about your history (*sīratukum*) and your matters, your religion and the ways of your speech (*luḥūn kalāmikum*) and what will happen in the future.¹⁶⁴ When ‘Umar was informed about a man who copied (or read) the Book of Daniel, he ordered that man to be brought into his presence, beat him with his whip until he promised to burn books of this kind and not to read them.¹⁶⁵

A saying from *Kitāb Dāniyāl* is recorded by Ḥamd b. Muḥammad al-Khaṭṭābī.¹⁶⁶ A lengthy passage about the campaigns of the Sufyānī is quoted from *Kitāb Dāniyāl* by Abū l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad b. Ja‘far b. al-Munādī in his *Kitāb al-malāḥim* and recorded by al-Qurṭubī.¹⁶⁷ A significant passage from *Kitāb Dāniyāl* is recorded by al-Majlisī. It contains predictions about weather during the year, crops, plagues and wars established according to the date of the first day of Muḥarram (Saturday, Sunday, Monday... etc.) and the month in which the eclipse of the sun or the moon will occur. Al-Rāwandī marks this material as stories of the type of *malāḥim*.¹⁶⁸ The Book of Daniel seems to have been read by Ka‘b and the twenty Jewish scholars in their discourse in Jerusalem. Ka‘b gave orders to throw this book, which he described as being “the Torah as revealed by God to Moses, unchanged and unaltered”, into the sea of Tiberias. Ka‘b feared that people might rely on it (*khashītu an yuttakala ‘alā mā fihā*). When the man sent by Ka‘b arrived at the middle of the sea, the waters parted so that he could see the bottom of the sea, and he threw the Book into the sea.¹⁶⁹

There was, of course, the danger of the intentional changes and alterations of the Scriptures carried out by the People of the Book. This is reflected in a tradition about Ka‘b. He brought a book, whose leaves were torn out, to ‘Umar stating that it contained (chapters of) the Torah, and asked permission to

¹⁶² Nu‘aym b. Ḥammād, *op. cit.*, fol. 4b (= Ms. Atif, fol. 3a).

¹⁶³ See on him Ibn Sa‘d, *op. cit.*, VII, 112–117.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Bayhaqī, *Kit. dalā’il al-nubuwwa*, Ms. Br. Mus., Or. 3013, fol. 65a; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, II, 40–41.

¹⁶⁵ Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taqyīd*, p. 51; al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *op. cit.*, I, 332–333, no. 1626; *ibid.*, 335–336, no. 1633; ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *op. cit.*, fol. 114a.

¹⁶⁶ *Kitāb al-‘uzla* (Cairo, 1352), p. 80.

¹⁶⁷ *Al-Tadhkira*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥ. Mursī (Cairo [n.d.]), pp. 610–611.

¹⁶⁸ *Biḥār al-anwār*, LVIII, 346–350 (new ed.).

¹⁶⁹ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a’lām al-nubalā’*, III, 323–325; and see *idem.*, *Ta’rikh al-islām*, III, 99–101, on the bottom of the sea of Tiberias are buried the Ark of the Covenant and the Staff of Moses; they will be raised on the Day of Judgement. See al-Nuwayrī, *op. cit.*, XVI, 43.

read it. 'Umar said: "If you know that the book contains the Torah revealed by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, read it day and night."¹⁷⁰

Ibn Kathīr, quoting the traditions which forbid the consultation of scholars from among the People of the Book remarks: "These traditions serve as evidence that they made changes in the Holy Scriptures which they possess (...*baddalū mā bi-aydihim min al-kutubi l-samāwiyati*), altered them and interpreted them in an improper way." They did not possess comprehensive knowledge of their Scriptures; in their translations into Arabic they made many errors and mistakes. Furthermore, they had bad intentions and erroneous views. One part of the Torah is manifest, publicly revealed, but a great part of it is hidden. The manifest parts of the Torah contain changes, alterations, erroneous expressions and elusive ideas. Ibn Kathīr accuses Ka'b of transmitting traditions many of which are not worth the ink with which they are written, and some of which are false.¹⁷¹ "Some of the *Isrā'īliyyāt* were invented by some of their *zanādiqa*; some of them may be sound, but we do not need them: what is written in the Book of God (i.e. the Qur'ān — K) is sufficient for us and we do not need to look for it in the remaining books (revealed) before it; neither God nor His Messenger caused us to lack their knowledge."¹⁷² The same accusations of lies, alterations, changes and intentional misinterpretations are repeated by Ibn Kathīr in the course of a section in which he records the traditions which forbid consultation of scholars from among the People of the Book.¹⁷³

Ibn al-Jauzī, the prolific author of the sixth century AH, expresses similar views. The stories concerning the early peoples and especially the Children of Israel rarely contain authentic accounts. The Muslim religious law (*shar'*), Ibn al-Jauzī says, is sufficient and the Prophet ordered 'Umar to discard certain passages from the Torah which he brought to him. Some stories of the *Isrā'īliyyāt* are absurd, like the story about David who sent Uriyah to be killed in order to marry his wife.¹⁷⁴

The early sources mentioned in this paper bear evidence of the close contacts between Muslims, Jews and Christians at the end of the first century of the Hijra. The traditions recorded by Ma'mar b. Rāshid in his *Jāmi'* can be estimated as going back to original sources of the end of the first century. The material of Abū 'Ubayd in his *Mawā'iz* seems to stem from the same

¹⁷⁰ Abū 'Ubayd, *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*, IV, 262; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Fā'iḡ*, I, 651; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāya*, II, 468, s.v. *sh r m*; J. Goldziher, "Über Muh. Polemik gegen *Ahl al-Kitāb*", *ZDMG* XXXII, 345 (read correctly: *fa-gra'hā ānā'a l-laylī*).

¹⁷¹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, II, 132–134.

¹⁷² Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, IV, 282.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, V, 329–330.

¹⁷⁴ Ibn al-Jauzī, *Kit. al-quṣṣāṣ*, Ms. Leiden, Or. 988, fol. 20a.

period. The assumption of W. Montgomery Watt¹⁷⁵ that the material of the Bible discussed above was directed in the first phase towards illiterate people with no knowledge of the Bible, can hardly be accepted. W. M. Watt takes it that the passage in Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr’s *Jāmi’ bayān al-‘ilm*, II, 40–43 about “Avoidance of information from Jews and Christians” suggests “that it belongs to the first phase” because “it envisages Muslims conversing with Jews and Christians, but not reading their books”;¹⁷⁶ but this argument is in fact untenable. The tradition recorded by al-Bukhārī¹⁷⁷ reports explicitly that “the Jews used to read the Torah in Hebrew and to interpret it to the people of Islam in Arabic.” Al-Suddī reports that some Jews used to compile books, claiming that they are books revealed by God, and used to sell them at cheap prices to the Arabs.¹⁷⁸ The stories about books of *Ahl al-Kitāb* being copied by Muslims, quoted above and mentioned in the chapter of Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr bear evidence that the contacts between Muslims and the People of the Book were not confined to mere consultation. Lastly it may be remarked that the title of the chapter is: *Bāb mukhtaṣar fī muṭāla’ati kutubi ahli l-kitābi wa-l-riwāyati ‘anhum*. It is plainly stated that the subject discussed in the chapter is the reading of books of the *Ahl al-Kitāb* and transmission of traditions on their authority, not merely conversing. W. M. Watt’s doubts, as to “whether any of it (i.e. the traditions recorded by Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr) had its present form at a still earlier period” are unfounded; as far as the “*Jāmi’*” of Ma‘mar and the “*Muṣannaf*” of ‘Abd al-Razzāq are concerned, the traditions and their *isnāds* are copied by Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr with accuracy; this can be ascertained by comparing the material of Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr with the Mss. quoted in this paper.

As already mentioned there was no serious opposition to the Jewish and Christian traditions transmitted by Jewish and Christians converts, in so far as they concurred with the views of orthodox Islam. Opposition seems to have appeared in connection with those aspects of the Jewish and Christian tradition which may have some bearing on Muslim belief or practice. In such cases the motives are clear; the stories about the prohibition to copy the Scriptures of *Ahl al-Kitāb* seem to be connected with cases of this kind. This can be gauged from the tradition about a group of Jews who embraced Islam, but asked the Prophet’s permission to observe the Sabbath and to study the Torah at night. They were, of course, denied this permission. A verse of the Qur’an (Sura ii 208) was revealed about it.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ *The Early Development of the Muslim Attitude to the Bible* (Glasgow Univ. Oriental Society Transactions, XVI, 1955–1956, pp. 50–62.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 60–62. ¹⁷⁷ *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Cairo [n.d.]), VI, 25; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, I, 329.

¹⁷⁸ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, I, 83.

¹⁷⁹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, IV, 255–256, no. 4016; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, I, 439–440; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr*, I, 271; al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, V, 226.

Ḥaddithū 'an banī isrā'īla

The orthodox solution was that a Muslim had to believe in the Torah and the Gospel, but not to observe the practices enjoined in these Books. The Prophet said: "Believe in the Torah, the *Zabūr* and the Evangel, but the Qur'ān should suffice you."¹⁸⁰

This formula, which breathes an air of compromise, enabled indeed the transmission of Jewish and Christian tradition. This tradition, licensed by the utterance *ḥaddithū 'an banī isrā'īl* became part and parcel of Muslim literature as is abundantly reflected in the literature of the *tafsīr*, *zuhd* and *adab*.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, I, 329–330: *qāla rasūlu llāhi: āminū bi-l-ṭaurāti wa-l-zabūri wa-l-injīli wa-l-yasa'kumu l-qur'ānu*, and comp. *ibid.*: *innamā umirnā an nu'mina bi-l-ṭaurāti wa-l-injīli wa-lā na'mala bi-mā fihimā*; and see al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr*, II, 225–226: *lā dīna illā l-islāmu, wa-kitābunā nasakha kulla kitābin, wa-nabiyyunā khātamu l-nabiyyīna, wa-umirnā an na'mala bi-kitābinā wa-nu'mina bi-kitābikum*.

¹⁸¹ I wish to thank Dr. M. Nadav and Mr. E. Wust of the National and University Library, Jerusalem; Dr. A. S. Koningsveld of the University Library of Leiden; the keepers and staff of the British Museum; Cambridge University Library; Chester Beatty Collection, Dublin; and the Süleymaniye, Istanbul, for granting me permission to peruse manuscripts and providing me with microfilms.