

ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN THE QUR'AN

The Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions

Emran Iqbal El-Badawi



The Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions

This book is a study of related passages found in the Arabic Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospels, that is, the Gospels preserved in the Syriac and Christian Palestinian Aramaic dialects. It builds upon the work of traditional Muslim scholars, including al-Biqā'ī (d. ca. 808/1460) and al-Suyūfī (d. 911/1505), who wrote books examining connections between the Qur'ān on the one hand, and Biblical passages and Aramaic terminology on the other, as well as modern western scholars, including Sidney Griffith, who argues that pre-Islamic Arabs accessed the Bible in Aramaic.

The Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions examines the history of religious movements in the Middle East from 180 to 632 CE, explaining Islam as a response to the disunity of the Aramaic speaking churches. It then compares the Arabic text of the Qur'ān and the Aramaic text of the Gospels under four main themes: the prophets; the clergy; the divine; and the apocalypse. Among the findings of this book are that the articulator as well as audience of the Qur'ān were monotheistic in origin, probably bilingual, culturally sophisticated, and accustomed to the theological debates that raged between the Aramaic speaking churches.

Arguing that the Qur'ān's teachings and ethics echo Jewish-Christian conservatism, this book will be of interest to students and scholars of Religion, History, and Literature.

Emran Iqbal El-Badawi is Director and Assistant Professor of Arab Studies at the University of Houston. His articles include "From 'clergy' to 'celibacy': The development of *rahbaniyyah* between Qur'ān, Hadith and Church Canon" and "A humanistic reception of the Qur'ān." His work has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Houston Chronicle* and *Christian Science Monitor*.

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For Rasha

مأذنُ الشّامِ تبكي إذ تعانقني
و للمأذن.. كالأشجار.. أرواحُ
..للياسمين حقوقٌ في منازلنا
وقطعةُ البيتِ تغفو حيثُ ترتاحُ
طاحونةُ الينِّ جزءٌ من طفولتنا
فكيفَ أنسى؟ و عطرُ الهيلِ فواحُ
هذا مكانُ "أبي المعترز" .. منتظرٌ
ووجهُ "فائزة" حلوٌ و لِمَاحُ
هنا جذوري.. هنا قلبي... هنا لغتي
فكيفَ أوضحُ؟ هل في العشقِ إيضاحُ؟
كم من دمشقيةٍ باعت أساورها
حتى أغازلها... والشعرُ مفتاحُ
أتيتُ يا شجرَ الصفصافِ معتذراً
فهل تسامحُ هيفاءً.. ووضاحُ؟
(نزار قباني)

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Preface

This book was written with the greatest respect for the scripture of Islam and the religious tradition in which I was raised and to which I belong. The purpose of this book is, therefore, neither to offend believers nor pander to non-believers, but rather to serve as an objective, critical, academic study to be appreciated by those of great understanding, who reflect upon the verses of the Qur'ān (Q 38:18, 29). Seeing in critical scholarship the modern adaptation of *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) which lie at the very heart of classical Islamic legal discourse, I can only hope that on account of the sweat, blood, and tears shed on this book that I will receive commensurate reward for exercising my own *ijtihād* (Bukhārī 9:133).

While this book concerns the study of religious texts and history, it is at the same time just as much about my own personal journey. Being of mixed ethnic background, and having grown up in several countries around the world, life imposed upon me a great deal of curiosity and broad-mindedness. As an out-cast I attempted to understand my predicament by embarking on a comparative study of the diverse cultural impulses behind the Abrahamic faiths. My interest in the history of these religions began during my early years living in the Middle East; and my interest in eastern religious traditions took hold some years later when sifting through my deceased father's library. It was evident from my diverse circle of friends that each one of them was attached to a particular religion either because it belonged to the community in which they were born, or because their personal life experiences guided them towards its acceptance. It appeared to me that the primacy of one religion over another—a remnant of parochial, pre-modern communities—no longer applied to a modern, globalized world. With a heightened sense of inquiry I came to the conclusion that each of the world's great religious, mystical, and philosophical expressions had unique intrinsic merit.

Immersing myself in all of them, I accepted that each religion was indeed a legitimate spiritual and social mechanism which provided structure, meaning, and beauty to its adherent community, and a reminder that this world is simply too vast and complex to be appreciated without recourse to metaphysical principles. This, however, did not mean that the teachings of a particular faith were timeless or applicable to all societies, nor that its doctrines were unique to the plane of world history. Furthermore, I came to learn that the stories, characters, lessons, and deepest mystical truths held by the world's major religions echoed one another,

each new tradition building upon an earlier one. While I appreciated the exigencies for an individual to embrace the absolute and universal validity of a single religion—including the belief in a particular creation legend, salvation figure or afterlife doctrine—this appeared arbitrary and limiting in my view. I soon grappled with the experience of spiritual crisis and intellectual disillusionment into which far greater minds like Siddhartha Gautama (fifth century BCE), Augustine of Hippo (d. 430 CE) and Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) delved, annihilating the traditional outlook espoused by one's community in order to reconstitute myself and discover a clearer, more truthful ethos.

The lack of intellectual freedom in some of the societies in which I grew up compelled me to study Islamic Civilization from its very sources and I was attracted to the Qur'ān—not its restricted traditional interpretation—but rather a rationalist approach that ensured the vitality of the text for our modern world. I realized, however, that numerous intellectuals in different parts of the Middle East were persecuted fiercely for publishing objective, critical research on the Qur'ān, not least of whom was Nasr Ḥ. Abū Zayd (d. 2010). This challenge only strengthened my determination to study Religious Studies in college, and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in graduate school. My concern for Aramaic and other Semitic languages began, oddly enough, when I came to the United States but preceded both Christoph Luxenberg's book published in 2000 and the tragic events of September 11, 2001. My interest in the Qur'ān's language and historical development—including its dialogue with Christian Aramaic literature—began during my undergraduate studies and coalesced throughout my graduate studies.

This book is a revised version of my doctoral dissertation completed under the supervision of Fred Donner in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. The most significant changes were made to the introductory and concluding chapters. At any rate, this book is *fundamentally* a “literary and historical analysis of the Arabic text of the Qur'ān in light of the Aramaic translations of the Gospels.” This book is, therefore, *not fundamentally* concerned with debates surrounding the text's authenticity or dating. Thus, the outline of the traditional narrative surrounding the codification of a 'Uthmānic codex in the mid-seventh century CE is accepted in principle, as it sets the background for our analysis, and despite the fact that the details of this episode remain debated among scholars. Likewise, the problems surrounding the development of a “qur'ānic chronology” based on its passages is *not the fundamental* concern of this book either and, more importantly, does not preclude the clustering of distinct passages—as this book does—which may address slightly different audiences or contexts. Furthermore, certain episodes experienced by the prophet Muḥammad as depicted in the *Sīrah*, including his interaction with the antiquated Jewish, Christian, and Hanafite activism of the Arabian sphere have been filtered for nuggets of plausible historical insights that can serve as the background for our analysis. The same approach holds true for the relatively sparing use of *Tafsīr* and other Islamic literary genres in this book. In sum, the outlines of the traditional narratives surrounding the history of the Qur'ān and the person of Muḥammad as preserved in the Islamic literary sources have been selectively and

cautiously utilized, strictly as a matter of convention and setting the foundation for our inquiry.

Whereas some of my colleagues in the larger discipline of Islamic Studies may see this in depth study on the Qur'ān and Aramaic Gospels as a bold step forward, those in Biblical Studies and Semitic Linguistics are often surprised that such a foundational study has not already been undertaken. I am hopeful, however, that the growing importance of studying Syriac literature (given a solid foundation in Arabic) in Qur'ānic Studies curricula means that a broader spectrum of academics may study the text with the curiosity of medieval Muslim philologists, but using the instruments of the modern academy. I anticipate, moreover, that this book will enhance the discourse on the Qur'ān—for academics and an enlightened public alike—its dialogue with the Gospels, and its place in the sequence of scriptures belonging to the world's great religions. I hope that it contributes to interdisciplinary areas of study including Qur'ānic Studies, Biblical Studies, Historical Linguistics, History of Religions, Comparative Religion, Comparative Literature, Christian-Muslim relations, and perhaps even supply the “nuts and bolts” of a renewed, deeper discussion on Theology. Since I view scholarship as an inherently public service—and not merely “scholarship for scholarship's sake”—I have tried to limit the use of technical terminology to a minimum, and I am exploring the possibility of an Arabic translation as well.

Decades ago it was actually possible to read all the scholarly literature on the Qur'ān. Nowadays it has become near impossible to keep up with the rapid pace at which scholarly works on Qur'ānic Studies are being produced. The industrious rate at which these publications have answered important questions has, at times, also produced sporadic works of methodological confusion and unwarranted polemic, which have tarnished this otherwise great field of study. Still my hope is that this book can and will benefit a diverse Muslim readership as it continues to engage scholarly works concerning their scripture, as Christians and Jews have done with the Bible for some time. Whatever its methodological strengths and limitations may be, I hope that this book sooner or later finds its way into the mainstream of Qur'ānic Studies and contributes to the incremental process of critical scholarship. In this vein, I leave the reader with the words of my very first teacher—my late father—the physician Q. M. Iqbal (d. 1991), concerning the scholarship of his predecessor Abū al-Qāsim al-Zahrāwī (Abulcasis; d. 404/1013),

It is often difficult to procure evidence upon which a definite answer to the numerous facets of progress of human advancement can be based. However, it is in general acceptance that advancement in knowledge is achieved through a process of continuous occurring of data from all available sources at different times.¹

1 Q. M. Iqbal, “Contribution of Abul Qasim al-Zahrawi in the management of fractures” in Ahmed R. El-Gindy (ed.), *Proceeding of the Second International Conference on Islamic Medicine, Bulletin of Islamic Medicine 2*, Kuwait: Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Science, 1982, 362.

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Abbreviations

<i>A</i>	<i>Arabica</i>
<i>A2</i>	<i>Apocrypha</i>
<i>AA</i>	<i>Al-Abhath</i>
<i>AAE</i>	<i>Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy</i>
<i>AB</i>	<i>Al-Bayan: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies</i>
<i>ABD</i>	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
<i>ATLAL</i>	<i>Aṭlāl: The Journal of Saudi Arabian Archaeology</i>
<i>BCIIS</i>	<i>Bulletin of Christian Institutes of Islamic Studies</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
<i>BW</i>	<i>The Biblical World</i>
<i>CAL</i>	<i>Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon</i>
<i>CCO</i>	<i>Collectanea Christiana Orientalia</i>
<i>CHRC</i>	<i>Church History and Religious Culture</i>
<i>CSCO</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Scriptores Syri.</i>
<i>CSIC</i>	<i>Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>Daedalus/Journal of the Academy of Arts and Sciences</i>
<i>DI</i>	<i>Der Islam</i>
<i>DO</i>	<i>Deutscher Orientalistentag</i>
<i>DR</i>	<i>The Downside Review</i>
<i>DWI</i>	<i>Die Welt des Islams</i>
<i>EI1</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam, First Edition</i>
<i>EI2</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition</i>
<i>ELN</i>	<i>English Language Notes</i>
<i>EQ</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān</i>
<i>HJSS</i>	<i>Hugoye Journal of Syriac Studies</i>
<i>IOS</i>	<i>Israel Oriental Studies</i>
<i>JA</i>	<i>Journal Asiatique</i>
<i>JAAS</i>	<i>Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies</i>
<i>JAL</i>	<i>Journal of Arabic Literature</i>
<i>JIS</i>	<i>Journal of Islamic Studies</i>
<i>JLARC</i>	<i>Journal of Late Antique Religion and Culture</i>
<i>JQS</i>	<i>Journal of Qur'anic Studies/Majallat al-dirāsāt al-qur'ānīyah</i>

<i>JRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSAI</i>	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>L</i>	<i>Lešonenu</i>
<i>LM</i>	<i>Le Museon</i>
<i>MIDEO</i>	<i>Memoirs de L'Institut Dominican des Etudes Orientales</i>
<i>MKLT</i>	<i>Majallat kulliyat al-lughāt wa al-tarjamah</i>
<i>MW</i>	<i>The Muslim World</i>
<i>MWBR</i>	<i>Muslim World Book Review</i>
<i>ND</i>	<i>Nashr-e Dānesh</i>
<i>NTT</i>	<i>Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift</i>
<i>NZSE</i>	<i>Novalis: Zeitschrift für spirituelle Entwicklung</i>
<i>OC</i>	<i>Orines Christianus</i>
<i>PDO</i>	<i>Parole de l'Orient</i>
<i>PO</i>	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
<i>POC</i>	<i>Proche Orient Chre'tien</i>
<i>PS</i>	<i>Patrologio Syriaca</i>
<i>SI</i>	<i>Studia Islamica</i>
<i>SS</i>	<i>Sources Syriaques</i>
<i>TRIBULUS</i>	<i>Journal of the Emirates Natural History Group</i>
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morganländischen Gesellschaft</i>

Note on Transliteration

The following alphabet scheme will be used to render Arabic consonants: *a b t th j ḥ kh d dh r z s sh ṣ ḍ ṭ ṭ̣ ʿ gh f q k l m n h w y*, and the glottal stop'. *Matres lectionis* are *ā ī ū*. Final *tā'* *marbūṭah* is marked with *h*, or *t* if the word is in *status constructus*. Since pretonic reduction is neither widespread in classical Arabic nor explicit in the vowelings of Arabic script, the transliteration of Arabic text does not reflect elision, for example, *wa li allāh*, not *wa lil-lāh*. Superscripted case endings (but not the indefinite accusative *an*) and verbal moods are only placed at the end of words if they seem archaic or if it affects the overall meaning of passage in question, for example *yawma'idhⁱⁿ*, *ri'ā'^a*, but *naṣīran*

The following alphabet scheme will be used to render Aramaic consonants: *a b g d h w z ḥ t y k l m n s ' p/f ṣ q r š t*. The five vowels are *ī ē a ā ū*, and not *ō*. *qūšāyā*, *rūkākā* and silent letters will not be marked. Since pretonic reduction is explicit in the vowelings of Aramaic (especially Syriac) script, the transliteration of Aramaic text does reflect elision, for example, *w-ēmar*, not *wa ēmar*.

1 Sources and Method

Introduction

In Yūsuf Zaydān’s bestseller, *‘Azāzīl*, the main character quarrels with the demons of his conscience, stating, “Did God create man or vice versa? What do you mean? Each era mankind creates a god of his own predilection, and this god always comes to represent his unreachable hopes and dreams.”¹ In the fifth century CE, Hībā was an Egyptian monk whose insecurity about Christian dogma, conscious support for Nestorius (d. 451 CE) before his excommunication, and an affair with a Syrian woman lead him to self-conflict and ultimately tormented him with demonic visions. His conflicted character and the tumultuous days in which he lived leading up to the Church schism in many ways paved the way for the emergence of Islam and the teachings of the Qur’ān. Zaydān, the director of the Manuscript Center at the Bibliotheca Alexandria who spent many years researching a 30-page Syriac manuscript excavated in Aleppo, was finally inspired to write a novel dramatizing the sectarian conflict, dogmatism, and political instability found within the manuscripts which—more importantly—characterized the Near East in the “late antique period” (180–632 CE; see Table 4).² More specifically, by Near East is meant Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Abyssinia, Persia, and Anatolia (see Figure 1.1).

The late antique Near East—which Islamic tradition came to know as the “*jāhiliyyah*” or “pre-Islamic World”³—had become accustomed to strong

1 Yūsuf Zaydān, *‘Azāzīl*, Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2008, 348.

2 For more on the history of the development of Church schism and doctrine see John P. Jenkins, *Jesus Wars: How Four Patriarchs, Three Queens, and Two Emperors Decided What Christians Would Believe for the Next 1,500 Years*, New York: HarperOne, 2010. For more on the rise of Islam in the context of late antique Christian heresy see Daniel Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam: the Heresy of the Ishmaelites*, Leiden: Brill, 1972; James Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis: Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

3 For purposes of this study, the world of the pre-Islamic *jāhiliyyah* is synonymous with the late antique Near East. It represents the time period and sectarian milieu from which Muḥammad sought to make an immediate break and from which he wished to distinguish himself. Aside from the Qur’ān, late antique Syriac literature and later Islamic histories and *Sīrah* literature make it clear that surrounding Near Eastern communities and customs were intertwined with that of

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Figure 1.1 The Late Antique Near East

Source: Labeled by Emran El-Badawi (open source)

pre-Islamic Arabia. For example, Isaac of Antioch (d. ca. 452), *Homiliae S. Isaaci Syri Antiocheni*, Ed. Paul Bedjan, Paris: Otto Harrassowitz, 1903, 180–213, cites the worship of pagan gods in Syria and Mesopotamia which are cited in Hishām b. al-Kalbī, *Kitābal-aṣnām*, Ed. Aḥmad Zakī, Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1924. That Ibn al-Kalbī ascribes the origin of these pagan cults—the hallmark of the *jāhiliyyah*—to Syria is evidence enough to compel us to widen our scope of this context beyond the pagan worship of Arabia popularized by Islamic tradition. For

sectarianism and great violence, because imperial powers had merged the functions of religious piety with political life.⁴ Imperial power was exercised by the two global polities of the day, the Sasanian and the Byzantine empires. As a result of imperial sponsorship Zoroastrian and Christian practices and religious texts became especially widespread throughout the region. This also polarized the Near East into an eastern and western sphere, fueled warfare and gave rise to orthodox (state sponsored) vs. heretical (un-sponsored) forms of religious piety.⁵ Soon the late antique Near East was transformed into a heated sectarian arena with Zoroastrian, Monophysite (especially West Syrian/Jacobite), East Syrian (Nestorian), Melkite, Sabian-Mandaean, Manichean, Mazdian, Jewish, Jewish-Christian, and pagan groups, all competing for the souls of the faithful.

In the central lands of the Near East, beyond the immediate reach of Byzantium and Ctesiphon and where the Syrian steppe meets the vast and barren Arabian desert, direct imperial control was absent and different peoples lived within highly decentralized or tribal political structures. This fostered a diverse cultural and religious environment relatively free from imperial and orthodox persecution. Therefore, this region provided a safe haven for the development of prominent urban syncretistic pagan cults such as those in Harran, Ṭāʾif, and Mecca; the flourishing of large Jewish communities including those in Khaybar, Yathrib, and Ṣanʿāʾ; and it supported reticent Christian cities including Edessa, al-Ḥīrā, and Najrān. In this region, traditions of popular Christian lore and piety flourished in the Aramaic dialects of Syria-Mesopotamia—Syriac—and that of Palestine, Transjordan, and the Sinai—Christian Palestinian Aramaic. Long standing trade, tribal resettlement and missionary activity expanded Arabia's heterogeneous cultural and religious activity to include such Aramaic traditions as scripture and liturgy, including hymns, homilies, dialogues, and other such religious treatises.⁶

Desert hermits encamped in the wilderness, as well as itinerant businessmen like Muḥammad (ca. 570–632 CE) from the aristocratic Quraysh tribe of Mecca,

a broader discussion of earliest Islam as a civilization belonging to late antiquity see Chase Robinson, "Reconstructing early Islam: Truth and consequences," in Herbert Berg (ed.), *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, E. J. Brill: Leiden, 2003, pp.101–8.

- 4 This religious governance was demonstrated when Ardashīr I (d. 242) made Zoroastrianism the official religion of the Sasanian Empire. Constantine I (d. 337) followed suit in 313 CE gradually transforming the Roman Empire into a Christian entity. In Mesopotamia, the Syriac speaking kingdoms of Osroene (132 BCE–244 CE) and Adiabene (15–116 CE) also became Christian. For more on this For more see Harold A. Drake, *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices*, Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006, 69–83, 103–12, 167–77, 235–52, 253–63, 321–2. Cf. further Thomas Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.
- 5 See the definition of both camps in Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971, xxi–xxiii, which is useful for the late antique Christian context.
- 6 John Trimmingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, Beirut: Longman, 1979, 137, 163, 296; Sidney Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, 9, 50; Irfan Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1984, 435–47.

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were in constant dialogue with such popular Aramaic Christian impulses passing through the trade routes of Hījāz and along the west coast of Arabia. The scripture revealed to him was the Qur'ān, which like scriptures before it legitimated itself through, built itself upon, and responded to heterogeneous religious traditions, contending ideas of a diverse sectarian audience, and heterodox forms of piety. The verses of the Qur'ān portray an environment of heated sectarian conflict and proselytization (cf. in relation Bukhārī 6:60:89). This is evident in the text's discursive references to: believers (*mu'minūn*) *vis à vis* Muslims (*muslimūn*; cf. Q 49:14); assemblies who have splintered and disputed (*tafarraqū wa ikhtalafū*; 3:105); Jewish groups (*al-ladhīn hādū*; *al-yahūd*; *banū isrā'īl*); Christians (*naṣ ārā*); People of the Gospels (*ahl al-injīl*; Q 5:47); People of the Scripture (*ahl al-kitāb*); Gentiles (*ummiyūn*); Sabians (*sābi'ūn*; Q 5:69; 22:17); Magians (*majūs*; Zoroastrians?; Q 22:17); puritans (*ḥunafā'*; pagans?; cf. Q 22:31) *vis à vis* associators (*mushrikūn*; polytheists?); hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*), and rebels (*kuffār*).

We learn that the rebels live in “complacency and factionalism” (*'izzah wa shiqāq*; Q 38:2). Furthermore, we learn that among them are “those who say that God is Christ the son of Mary” (Q 5:17, 72) or “the Third of Three” (Q 5:73). Splinter groups existed even among the believers as reference is made to: sects (*fīraq*, sg. *fīraqah/farīq*; especially Q 2:75; 146; 100–101; 3:23, 78, 100; 5:70; 19:73; 23:109; 34:20); groups (*tawā'if*, sg. *ṭā'ifah*; e.g. Q 33:13; 49:9; cf. Q 61:14); units (*fi'āt*, sg. *fi'ah*; Q 3:13, 69–72; 4:81; 7:87) and parties (*aḥzāb*, sg. *ḥizb*; Q 5:56; 58:18–22). To these may be added the brethren in religion (*ikhwān fī al-dīn*; Q 9:11) and subjects (*mawālī*; Q 33:5). Similarly Q 5:48 teaches that different religious groups possessed different laws and customs (*shir'ah wa minhāj*). The enmity (*'adāwah*) of the Jews and the friendliness (*mawaddah*) of Christians found in Q 5:82 is also worthy of note in this regard. Moreover, Q 60:7–8 cautions the believers that “God may cause friendliness (*mawaddah*) between [them] and those whom [they] antagonize,” and that they should deal honestly and equitably with “those who have not fought [them] in religion nor expelled [them] from their homes.” The point is that the Qur'ān makes ample reference to the sectarian landscape from which it emerged.

The prophet Muḥammad sought to bring an end to the sectarianism of his world by calling the People of the Scripture to join him in coming to a “common word” (Q 3:64) and commanding his early community to “hold on to the cord of God and [not to] splinter” (Q 3:103). That Muḥammad and his community actively participated in heated, sectarian disputations with Jewish and Christian interlocutors is also made explicit in Q 2:109–136; 3:60–91. But not everyone was convinced; and some rebelled. Concerning his revelations, some rebels claimed that “other folks” (*qawm ākharūn*) helped Muḥammad conjure up perversion (Q 25:4); others claimed that they were merely “tales of the ancients” (Q 25:5). The slanderous attacks by his many interlocutors caused Muḥammad great emotional grief (Q 15:97) and suicidal thoughts (Q 18:6; 26:3).

Given the sectarian nature of the audience which the Qur'ān sought to win over—especially Jews and Christians—the text takes up the “dogmatic re-articulation” (see definition later) of earlier scriptures belonging to competing religious

groups written in neighboring dialects and languages.⁷ The most potent scriptures in the “Qur’ān’s milieu”⁸—that is, the religious, cultural, political, and geographical within which the text was first articulated and soon codified—and with which it had to contend were: Hebrew Scripture and Rabbinic commentary (*al-tawrāh*; Q 5:44—perhaps due to Muḥammad’s exchange with Jewish interlocutors), and the Gospel traditions (*al-injīl*; Q 5:47—including other New Testament books). The latter, which left an indelible mark on the Qur’ān’s worldview, doctrine, and language via different Aramaic intermediaries, is dubbed here the “Aramaic Gospel Traditions.” Specifically, these are the extant Gospel recensions preserved in the Syriac and Christian Palestinian Aramaic dialects.⁹ However, we first begin our inquiry by defining “dogmatic re-articulation.”

Dogmatic Re-Articulation

This study will demonstrate how the Qur’ān, via the agency of the late antique *lingua franca* of the Near East—Aramaic—selectively challenged or re-appropriated, and therefore took up the “dogmatic re-articulation” of language and imagery coming from the Aramaic Gospel Traditions, in order to fit the idiom and religious temperament of a heterogeneous, sectarian Arabian audience.¹⁰ The word “dogmatic” is an adjective coming from the noun “dogma” which is derived from the Greek word *dokein*, meaning “to think.” Thus, the word “dogmatic” in this case conveys the meaning “thought, opinion or tenet.” It does *not*, in this case, connote formulations resulting from institutional enforcement or consensus, like in the case of the Catholic Church. In sum, our use of the term “dogmatic” describes belief, *not* institution. The content of this belief is driven by a preoccupation with a type of monotheism whose nature is anti-Trinitarian, post-Rabbinic and apocalyptic. In other words, “strict monotheism”—as it is dubbed herein—fundamentally rejects orthodox forms of Christian belief in God as well the monopoly of Jewish clerics on matters of orthopraxy, and it demands urgent and austere obedience to the One true God before the coming end of the world.

7 Ṭayyib al-Ṭiznī, *Muqaddimāt awwalīyyah fī al-islām al-muḥammadī al-bākir nash’atan wa ta’sīsan*, Damascus: Dār Dimashq li al-Ṭibā’ah wa al-Saḥāfah wa al-Nashr, 1994, 329 suggests this dogmatism on the part of the Qur’ān stresses strict monotheism and may be a reflection of the desolate living conditions and somewhat sober socio-psychology which gave rise to this religious atmosphere. Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 1, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977, 1:117, 130 attributes this to what he calls the “mercantile impulse” which stresses justice and populism.

8 The word “milieu” is general enough to afford a gradual, complex, heterogeneous development of the Qur’ān, which contrasts the word “origin” which is too specific and implies that the Qur’ān sprang forth from a particular source.

9 It is just as important to keep in mind that the Aramaic Gospel Traditions are themselves part of the general Biblical, Rabbinic, Apocryphal, and Pseudepigraphal background with which the Qur’ān was in dialogue and with which it had to contend.

10 For purposes of this study, the terms “Arabian” or “Arabic speaking” people is used instead of the word “Arab” which implies a modern, nationalist grouping ill-suited for the tribal and sectarian social structures with which peoples in the late antique period identified.

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To contextualize dogmatic re-articulation in this study consider that amid the divisive theological controversies surrounding the nature of God and creation—exemplified in the discussion on monotheism found in *Gēnzā Rbā* R1:1:34–39;¹¹ Aphrahat’s (d. 345 CE) strong exchange with his Jewish interlocutors, Ephrem’s (d. 373 CE) *Refutation of Mani, Marcion and Bardaisan*,¹² to Q 112’s response to the Nicene Creed of 325 CE¹³—Muḥammad’s espousal of strict monotheism set the agenda for the dogmatic re-articulation of Qur’ānic passages from the Aramaic Gospels. In addition, the Qur’ān not only promotes this hermeneutical agenda—centered around a vision of strict monotheism—when debating the nature of God and creation (Chapters 5–6), but also when re-telling the stories of the prophets and their followers, as well as relaying stories and lessons from the past (Chapters 3–4). That the re-telling of stories and lessons—down to the smallest detail—is thoroughly dogmatic is made explicit in the verses of the Qur’ān itself, which state,

Those who rebel (*al-ladhīn kafarū*) state, “if only the Qur’ān were revealed [lit. descended] upon him [Muḥammad] as a single volume (*jumlatan wāḥidah*). Thus do we secure your heart; for We [God] have recited it gradually (*wa rattalnāh tartīlan*). And they do not bring you a parable (*mathal*) except that We have brought you the truth (*al-ḥaqq*) and a better interpretation (*aḥsan^a tafsiṛan*).

(Q 25:33)

In relation to Q 25:33 other verses state, “these are the signs (*āyāt*) of God/Scripture” which God recites/reveals upon you “in truth” (*bi al-ḥaqq*; Q 2:252; 3:108; 13:1). Elsewhere it states,

This is some of the hidden news (*anbā’ al-ghayb*), about which neither you nor your folk knew [and] with which We inspire you.

(Q 11:49)

The Qur’ān also claims to possess “the best stories” (*aḥsan al-qaṣaṣ*; Q 12:3) and “the best speech” (*aḥsan al-ḥadīth*; Q 39:23). It is evident that these stories (*qaṣaṣ*) and lessons—including parables (*amthāl*; sg. *mathal*), signs (*āyāt*), and

11 Anonymous, *Gēnzā Rbā*, Ed. Husām H. al-‘Aydānī, Baghdad: Mawsu‘at al-‘Uyun al-Ma‘rifīyah, 2011. Its books are divided between the Right (19 total) and Left (7 total).

12 Ephrem the Syrian, *St. Ephraim’s Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion, and Bardaisan*, 2 vols, Ed. C. W. Mitchell, London; Oxford: William Norgate, 1912.

13 This point has been discussed by a number of studies including Angelika Neuwirth, *Studien zur Komposition der mekkanischen Suren: die literarische Form des Koran – ein Zeugnis seiner Historizität?*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007, 26; Manfred Kropp, “Tripartite, but anti-Trinitarian formulas in the Qur’ānic corpus, possibly pre-Qur’ānic” in G. S. Reynolds (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Qur’an: The Qur’an in Its Historical Context 2*, London; New York: Routledge, 2011, 251, 260; Naṣr H. Abū Zayd, “Theological Interpretation,” Lecture delivered to the Bibliotheca Alexandria, Alexandria, Egypt, December, 2008, concerning an earlier discussion with Angelika Neuwirth.

hidden news (*anbā' al-ghayb*)—represent from the viewpoint of the Qur'ān “the truth” (*al-ḥaqq*) and the “best” (*aḥsan*) “speech” (*ḥadīth*). Q 29:46 further instructs that only “that which is best” (*al-aḥsan*) may be used to dispute with the People of the Scripture. Therefore, the Qur'ān's stories and lessons are unequivocal dogmatic instruments for use against especially Jews and Christians. These lessons and stories, however, were not articulated as a single (written?) volume (*jumlatan wāḥidah*)¹⁴ but rather recited in segments (*tartīl*) over an extended period of time—perhaps according to the exigencies of Muḥammad's interlocutors and the circumstances of his community. If we accept the general framework of the *Strah* narrative, the 23-year period in which these verses were articulated may have paralleled the military victories of Muḥammad and his early band of followers, the emergence of a Muslim polity and—most importantly—allowed for their dogmatism to become entrenched among the Qur'ān's heterogeneous, sectarian Arabian audience.

Concerning the details of the proposed “re-articulation,” in the sphere of God and creation, the result was to remove Christological constructs from the Gospels and related imagery in which the person of Jesus or individuals in relation to him were granted divine or saintly status, and often replace them with constructs centered upon God alone, which serve as a theological corrective measure. In the sphere of stories and lessons the result was to embark on an “intertextual dialogue”¹⁵ with the teachings of the Gospels—along with earlier passages from Hebrew Scripture and later ones from New Testament letters—which took the form of fulfilling prophecies concerning God's chosen people, tightening policies on communal charity and religious works, adopting teachings against the clergy and Satan, as well as teachings that elaborate upon apocalyptic imagery and similar language found in the Gospels. In this respect the Qur'ān shares the hermeneutical and literary approach of Syriac Christian homiletic works with which it must be considered in parallel.¹⁶

This study analyses the literary process, i.e. dogmatic re-articulation, behind the ‘qur'ānic homily’ on verses emanating from the Aramaic Gospels. It demonstrates dogmatic re-articulation by analyzing correspondences between the discourse of salient qur'ānic passages and those in dialogue with them from the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Of the four canonical Gospels I will argue that due to its popularity in the late antique world¹⁷ and its emphasis on a prophetic and apocalyptic worldview, the Gospel of Matthew became somewhat more dif-

14 John Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, reprinted, Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2004, 36 argues that the notion of a single volume harkens back to “Mosaic revelation.”

15 For more on intertextual dialogue with respect to the Qur'ān see Neuwirth, *Studien zur Komposition der mekkanischen Suren*, 51–54.

16 Gabriel Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext*, New York; London: Routledge, 2012, 232–57. Cf. also Rosalind W. Gwynne, *Logic, Rhetoric and Legal Reasoning in the Qur'an: God's Arguments*, New York, Routledge Press, 2009.

17 Bart Ehrman, *The New Testament: Other Early Writings*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 9.

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fused in the Qur'ān's milieu via the participation of Arabic speaking Christians in the sphere of Arabian oral tradition.

Arabic speaking Christians lived in a state of diglossia, wherein they used Arabic for common everyday purposes and Aramaic (probably Syriac) for liturgical and religious purposes.¹⁸ It is they who were the cultural agents, this study argues, absorbing various elements of the Aramaic Gospel Traditions into the oral tradition of pre-Islamic Arabia, elements that eventually entered into the Qur'ān's milieu. This, however, does not discount the possibility of orthographical relationships between the Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospels, which came about after committing the Qur'ān to text and editing it in the era following the prophet Muḥammad's death—ca. 632–714 CE.¹⁹

Furthermore, this study will systematically analyze the Arabic language of qur'ānic passages, verses, phrases, idioms, words, and rhetorical schemes, as compared to the Aramaic text of the Gospels in an effort to demonstrate that the process of cultural absorption took place over an extended period of time—decades or centuries—and not overnight. This study will also argue against a Jewish or Christian *urtext* to the Qur'ān and problematic notions of 'influences' or 'borrowings' as were prevalent in earlier studies on the Qur'ān. For instance, the Qur'ān's phrasing of the verses *lahu maqālīd al-samāwāt wa al-ard*, "to Him are the keys of the heavens and the earth" (Q 39:63), or *kullu nafs dhā'iqat al-mawt*, "every soul shall taste death" (Q 3:185), originate in the context of the Aramaic Gospel Traditions, but find no exact verbal equivalent in those traditions as we shall see in following chapters. Furthermore, the rhetorical style of Jesus's speech in the Gospels, namely of responding to questions he himself posits by stating, "truly I say to you" (*amīn ēmar lak [ūn]*; Matthew 5:18; Mark 11:23; Luke 4:14; John 3:3; and so on), is modified in the Qur'ān that it may respond to its own questions with the command, "say, indeed" (*qul innamā*; Q 10:20; 13:36; 21:45; and so on). Furthermore, verses which discuss matters of faith and orthopraxy preserving the formula "if it is said to them . . . they say . . ." (*idhā qīl lahum . . . qālū..*; Q 2:170; 5:104; 6:30; 25:60; 31:21; 36:47; cf. Q 45:32) are styled as dialogues, not unlike those in *Gēnzā Rbā R3:1* or *The Book of the Laws of Countries* for example.²⁰ However, unlike the dialogue between the speaker and the "Magnificent Living One," or between Bardaisan (d. 222) and his student Awīdā, the qur'ānic verses typically illustrate a dialogue between an omniscient third person (God?) and an unnamed interlocutor(s), both of whose names have been deliberately stricken from the record. The point is that these qur'ānic verses demonstrate a long process of cultural exchange, theological debate, and morphological adjustment—not mere borrowing. There was therefore no process of "cut and paste." Having absorbed

18 Trimmingham, *Christianity among the Arabs*, 19; Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, 8–9, 12; Ernst A. Knauf, "Arabo-Aramaic And 'Arabiyya: From Ancient Arabic To Early Standard Arabic, 200 CE–600 CE" in Angelika Neuwirth *et al.* (eds) *The Qur'ān in Context*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2009, 199.

19 Cf. Fred Donner, "Qur'ānic *furqān*," *JSS* 52:2, 2007, 279.

20 Bardaisan, *The Book of the Laws of Countries*, Ed. H. J. W. Drijvers, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007.

and localized aspects of the Aramaic Gospel Traditions, the Qur'ān transformed pre-Islamic Arabian oral tradition into a dogmatic, pious religious repository.

The Qur'ān's complex manipulation of the Aramaic Gospel Traditions is, furthermore, neither accidental nor haphazard. It is rather, quite deliberate and sophisticated. It would behoove readers to realize a basic fact concerning dogmatic re-articulation as we have laid it out herein, namely that the Qur'ān exercises complete control over its challenging or re-appropriation of passages from the Aramaic Gospels—not vice versa. This is evident both implicitly and explicitly within the text. Concerning the former, the Qur'ān is intimately familiar with the passages it dogmatically re-articulates, as this study will prove. Concerning the latter, consider that the text asserts itself as “a scripture whose signs are explained as Arabic recitations (*kitāb fuṣṣilat āyātuh qur'ān^{am} 'arabiyy^{am}*) for a people who know” (Q 41:3; cf. also Q 6:97–98, 126; 7:52; 10:37; 11:1; 12:111; 41:44). That is to say, the text consciously and calculatingly elucidates its verses in the Arabic language because, ostensibly, the (Biblical?) scripture that came before it was not clearly articulatable to this knowledgeable audience, nor Arabic in any case.²¹ In this vein, consider further that the text claims to fulfill earlier prophecy by explicitly quoting Biblical scripture, Rabbinic commentary and Christian homiletic. Such is the case when God states, “We have commanded” (*katabnā 'alā*; Q 4:66; 5:32; 57:27).²² In addition to this, consider that the text divulges the limits of its audience's knowledge (who are mainly steeped in the Bible), by evoking a technical phrase (for example, *al-ḥāqqah*, *yawm al-dīn*, *al-ḥuṭamah*) and then immediately asking, “and what do you know of?” (*wa mā adrāk*; e.g. Q 69:1–3; 82:16–17; 104:5). Finally, consider that the text skillfully translates or interprets Hebrew and Aramaic terminology and seamlessly integrates them into the overall literary, rhetorical, and theological coherence of the particular passage or Surah wherein they occur, which is the unmistakable intention behind *zakariyyā* in Q 19:2 and *ṣarrah* in Q 51:29 for example.

Dispensing with hasty and superficial readings of the text—which may incorrectly yield ‘mistakes’ or ‘contradictions’ in the qur'ānic re-telling of Biblical narratives or post-Biblical controversies—is the first step in truly appreciating its linguistic, structural, and thematic integrity. That is to say, on the intra-qur'ānic level—that is, between Surahs—the outright conflation of Mary the mother of

21 See further Emran El-Badawi, “A humanistic reception of the Qur'an,” *Scriptural Margins: On the Boundaries of Sacred Texts*, *ELN* 50.2, 2012, 99–112; Angelika Neuwirth, *Der Koran als Text der Spätantike: Ein europäischer Zugang*, Berlin: Verlag der Weltreligionen, 2010, 565. *Ibid.*, 561–64; 761–68 propose “koranisches Drama” and “rhetorischer Triumph” respectively, as a way of explaining—in my view—how the text consciously and competently re-create what are otherwise quaintly considered Biblical parallels.

22 Carl Ernst, *How to Read the Qur'an: A New Guide with Select Translations*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011, 199 sees the coherence of the Qur'ān text in the “ring structure” of Cuypers as well as the chronology proposed by Nöldeke and elaborated upon by Neuwirth. See also Mustansir Mir, *Coherence in the Qur'an: A Study of Islahi's Concept of Nazm in Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1986, 2, 98–100. Contrast these positions with Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies*, 44.

Christ (Q 5:17) on the one hand with Mary the daughter of Amram (*‘imrān*; Q 66:12) or sister of Aaron (Q 19:28) on the other, and the primacy of God’s will on the one hand (Q 2:284) versus that of mankind on the other (Q 18:29) should not immediately be viewed as contradictions, but rather a “creative tension” imposed on the reader by the text²³—at least not until systematically and methodologically proven otherwise. The point is that such a dexterous command of Biblical and post-Biblical literature as a whole, and such strong volition on the part of the Qur’ān’s authorship, is central to our understanding of its dogmatic re-articulation of the Aramaic Gospels Tradition.

Our systematic and comparative study is useful for a few reasons. It will help clarify the meaning of Qur’ānic verses in their earliest context. It will help illustrate how the late antique Arabian milieu in which the Qur’ān was revealed served as an intimate point of contact between the oral culture of Arabians and the sacred literature and theological expression of Aramaic speaking groups. Finally, this study will make its humble contribution to enhance our understanding of the murkiest period of Islamic civilization—its origins.

Challenges Posed by the Qur’ān Text

Unearthing the beginnings of Islamic civilization is particularly challenging because beyond the pages of the Qur’ān itself there is a lack of documentary evidence capable of clearly exhibiting the milieu in which it was revealed and the precise scriptural texts with which it was in dialogue. Furthermore, because the Qur’ān emerged from the humble sectarian landscape in which it did, and not from a well established metropolis of the Near East where advanced religious and legal writing were prevalent—like Alexandria, Jerusalem or Babylon for example—the Qur’ān’s milieu and the life of Muḥammad are not entirely clear, and remain a matter of serious, persistent debate. For this reason a particularly thorough review of major Qur’ānic Studies works and scholarly arguments is necessary here in order to contextualize our literary and historical analysis of the Arabic text of the Qur’ān in light of the Aramaic Gospels.

The paucity of documentary evidence is made more difficult due to the paucity of the archaeological record as well, which preserves no evidence of widespread destruction nor large scale flight as one would expect from the time period of the early Islamic conquests (*futuḥāt*; ca. 630–656 CE).²⁴ While there are some non-Muslim sources dated to the latter half of the first/seventh century from nearby lands that mention the advent of a new Arabian prophet and the conquests of hordes coming from Arabia,²⁵ there exists no narrative of the prophet Muḥammad and the revelation of the Qur’ān prior to the *Sīrah* literature—written over one

23 See in relation Ernst, *How to Read the Qur’an*, 94, 163, 204.

24 Walter Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 106, 145, 156.

25 See Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam*, Princeton: Darwin Press, 1997.

century after the fact.²⁶ Subsequent Islamic literary sources, far removed from the Qur'ān's milieu and Muḥammad's locale, embellish historical fact with pious lore and political forgery. This reality was well known by early Hadith compilers and was brought to light by orientalist and traditional scholars alike, both of whom insist that one must understand the Qur'ān through the Qur'ān and not through the accretions of later ascribed Hadith reports.²⁷ Abandoning the Hadith's exegetical qualities and focusing on understanding the Qur'ān through itself was also amethodological consideration by reformist Muslim scholars²⁸ and proponents of the Qur'ānist/Qur'ān Only School (*ahl al-qur'ān; qur'āniyyūn*) who accept the veracity of the Qur'ān but reject that of the Hadith corpus.²⁹

The lack of documentary evidence and problematic nature of the literary sources has had great implications for modern approaches to studying the Qur'ān and its relation to earlier scripture. The nature of the Qur'ān's original dialect and its relation to the Arabic language (North Arabian) proved controversial from the start. Theodor Nöldeke recognizes the frequent use of—among other things—Christian and Rabbinical Aramaic formulae in the Qur'ān,³⁰ but ultimately agrees with the traditional theory that classical Arabic or *fuṣṣḥā* existed as a spoken language among Arab tribes even prior to the rise of Islam and that this, therefore, reflects the original expression of the Qur'ān.³¹ Karl Vollers compellingly refutes this claim by arguing that before the rise of Islam, Arab tribes spoke various dialects of Arabic *koiné* and that *fuṣṣḥā* only developed with later Islamic civilization.³² Voller's thesis is aided by Chaim Rabin's assertion that dialects of *Ancient*

- 26 Fred Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origin: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*, Princeton: Darwin Press, 1998, 132. These conquests became the subject of the *maghāzī/futūḥāt* genre of later Islamic literature. Cf. generally Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, Cairo: Sharikat Ṭab' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, 1901; Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidi, *Kitāb al-maghāzī*, 3 vols, Ed. Marsden Jones, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966; *Futūḥ al-shām*. Ed. William Nassau Lees, 3 vols, Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1981.
- 27 Joseph Schacht, *The Legacy of Islam*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974, 139. From within Islamic tradition Schacht also cites Sayyid Ahmad Khan (d. 1898). In this category also is Muḥammad 'Abduh (d. 1905). See also Kate Zebiri, *Mahmud Shaltut and Islamic Modernism*, Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, 134.
- 28 Muḥammad Abū Zayd, *al-Hidāyah wa-al-'irfān fī tafsiṛ al-qur'ān bi al-qur'ān*, Cairo: Matba'at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1930.
- 29 Rashad Khalifa, *Quran, Hadith, and Islam*, Fremont, CA: Universal Unity, 2001; Aḥmad Ṣ Maṣṣūf, *al-Qur'ān wa kafā: maṣṣaran li al-tashrī' al-islāmī*, Beirut: Mu'asasat al-Intishār al-'Arabī, 2005; Nihūrū Ṭantāwī, *Qirā'ah li al-islām min jadīd*, Cairo: Nihūrū Ṭantāwī, 2005; Ibn Qirnās, *Sunnat al-awwalīn: taḥlīl mawāqif al-nās min al-dīn wa ta'līlīhā*, Köln, Germany: Manshūrāt al-Jamal, 2006.
- 30 Theodor Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, Göttingen, Verlag der Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1860, 6–7, 13, 25, 39, 270, 309.
- 31 Theodor Nöldeke, *Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft*, Strassburg: APA-Philo Press, 1904, 2–23.
- 32 Karl Vollers, *Volkssprache und Schriftsprache im alten Arabien*, Strassburg, K. J. Trübner, 1906, 185–95. Cf. in relation Pierre Larcher, "Arabe Préislamique Arabe Coranique Arabe Classique: Un Continuum?" in Karl-Heinz Ohlig and Gerd Puin (eds), *Die dunklen Anfänge: neue Forschungen zur Entstehung und frühen Geschichte des Islam*, Berlin: Schiler Verlag, 2005.

12 Sources and Method

West Arabian, in which the Qur'ān was originally expressed, exhibit phonological qualities found in Aramaic dialects farther north.³³ That such border dialects existed in the Qur'ān's milieu is likely given the reading of Q 13:36 in 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd's (d. 31/652) codex, which claims the Qur'ān contains "different dialects" (*lughāt mukhtalifah*)³⁴ and evident given epigraphic evidence from the third to fourth century CE (see Figure 1.6).³⁵ Epigraphic evidence adduced by some scholars also strongly suggests that the Qur'ān's language was not isolated from neighboring peninsular dialects as it preserves formulae from both Old North Arabian and Old South Arabian.³⁶

The Arabic oral tradition to which the Qur'ān belongs and challenges, that is the "pronouncements of poets [and] priests," (*qawl shā'ir . . . kāhin*; Q 68:41–42), is demonstrated clearly in powerful passages of rhymed prose (*saj'*), which was the primary attribute of Arabian prophetic speech. Some have disqualified most of the pre-Islamic poetry preserved as Islamicized or fabricated by later Islamic tradition, and stress rather that the Qur'ān is the only reliable example of pre-Islamic Arabian oral tradition.³⁷ Others have more recently argued that some of the pre-Islamic poetry preserved in Islamic tradition, like the verses of the poet Umayyah b. Abī al-Salt al-Thaqafī (d. ca. 1/623), can be reliably traced back to the *jāhili* context ascribed to the Qur'ān.³⁸ While the concern for the problem of forgery in collections of pre-Islamic poetry remains prudent, careful empirical examination of Umayyah b. Abī al-Salt's verses is a reminder that the entire corpus, like that of the Hadith, cannot be fully rejected.

In addition to this, numerous scholars have situated the belief system inherent in the Qur'ān's milieu within a polytheistic Arabian context. Some hold to the traditional view that the *jāhiliyyah* was a purely idolatrous world within which marginal Jewish and Christian characters made their mark.³⁹ Others similarly

33 Chaim Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian*, London: Taylor's Foreign Press, 1951, 107, 109, 123, 129, 167.

34 Arthur Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān: The Old Codices/Kitāb al-mas'ūf*, Leiden: Brill, 1937, 51.

35 See J.F. Healey and G. R. Smith, "Jausen-Savignac 17 – The earliest dated Arabic document (A.D. 267)," *ATLAL* 12 (1989): 77–84; Beatrice Gruendler, *The Development of the Arabic Scripts: From the Nabataean Era to the First Islamic Century According to Dated Texts*. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993, 123–30.

36 Robert Hoyland, "Epigraphy and the Linguistic Background to the Qur'ān," in G. S. Reynolds (ed.), *The Qur'ān in its Historical Context*, London; New York: Routledge, 2008, 51–68; "The Earliest Written Evidence of the Arabic Language and Its Importance for the Study of the Quran," in *ibid.* (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Qur'an*, New York: Routledge Press, 2011; Hani Haya-jneh, "The Earliest Written Evidence of the Arabic Language and Its Importance for the Study of the Quran," in *ibid.* (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Quran*, New York: Routledge Press, 2011.

37 Ṭahā Ḥusayn, *Fī al-shi'r al-jāhili*, Cario: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1925, 27–35.

38 Nicolai Sinai, "Religious poetry from the Quranic milieu: Umayya b. Abī l-Salt on the fate of the Thamūd," *BSOAS*, 2011, 397–416. For more on the applicability of pre-Islamic poetry see also Neuwirth, *Der Koran als Text der Spätantike*, 674–85.

39 Julius Wellhausen, *Muhammed in Medina: das ist Vakidi's Kitāb alMaghazi, in verkürzter deutscher Wiedergabe*, Berlin: G. Reimer, 1882, 41, 310, 370–72; *Reste arabischen heidentums, gesammelt und erläutert*, Berlin: G. Reimer, 1897; Ignác Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*.

claim that despite its stern monotheism, elements of pagan superstition are embedded within the worldview of the Qur'ān.⁴⁰ Even Montgomery Watt accepts, for the most part, this traditional narrative in his discussion of pagan ideas latent in the Qur'ān and *Sīrah* pertaining to waning “tribal humanism,” “fatalism” and the role of Abraham as the first *ḥanīf* (see discussion below).⁴¹ To Watt, the Qur'ān's depiction of a Trinity comprised of God, Mary and Jesus (Q 5:116), its claim that the Jews call Ezra “the son of God” (Q 9:30), and other such heterodox beliefs which he perceived as mistakes, provide evidence that Mecca had little knowledge of Hebrew and Christian scripture.⁴² These views have become somewhat outdated especially due to their blind acceptance of narratives and interpretations from Islamic tradition. That being said, some recent scholarship accepts the overall portrayal of pre-Islamic Arabia in the Islamic literary sources.⁴³ This portrayal does not seem fully justified given that the Qur'ān's deepest roots are planted within a Judeo-Christian discourse first and pagan discourse second.

Some orientalist try to make sense of the Qur'ān's seemingly erratic use of Judeo-Christian literature, claiming that Muḥammad was afflicted with insanity and epileptic seizures conjuring his experiences of revelation.⁴⁴ Others claimed that Muḥammad was a rational and faithful adherent to the ancient scriptures until his lust for power caused him to fabricate his own.⁴⁵ Yet others aim to prove that the Qur'ān is not the word of God—apparently a merit worthy of the Bible alone—and that Muḥammad was a mere opportunist.⁴⁶ These polemical ideas are no longer mainstream and do not reflect the relative urban sophistication of the Qur'ān's milieu in which pagan religious ‘superstitions’ interacted intricately with corresponding Judeo-Christian doctrine.

Other scholars, whose valuable insights may be underlain with some polemical assumptions as well, bring attention to the socio-economic forces of seventh-century Arabia which produced Islam and which are demonstrated in the Qur'ān, claiming that there was an economic boom in Mecca which functioned as the principal impetus for Islam's birth and expansion.⁴⁷ Although an economic rise may have played some role in the spread of Islam, the concern with this theory is that it does not account for the religious dimension which is basic to Qur'ānic

Halle a. S.: M. Niemeyer, 1888–90, Eng. trans. S. M. Stern, C. R. Barber and Hamid Dabashi, *Muslim Studies*. New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Transaction, 2006, 31–32, 44, 237.

40 Samuel Zwemer, *The Influence of Animism on Islam: An Account of Popular Superstitions*, New York: Macmillan Company, 1920.

41 W. Montgomery Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953, 23–29.

42 Ibid.

43 Michael Lecker, “Pre-Islamic Arabia” in Chase Robinson (ed.), *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2010, pp.153–170.

44 Aloys Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammad*, 3 vols, Berlin: Nicolaische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1869, 3:211, 522.

45 William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1861, 63.

46 William Goldsack, *The Origins of the Qur'ān: An Inquiry into the Sources of Islam*, London, Madras and Columbo: The Christian Literature Society, 1907, 6.

47 Henry Lammens, *L'Arabie occidentale avant l'hégire*, Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1928, 249.

teachings. On the other hand, others draw a connection between the religion and economics of Arabia, holding that the belief system in the Qur'ān represents a break with Hanifism and paganism. This break occurred as a result of international trade practices, tribal resettlement, and other socio-cultural changes in Arabia.⁴⁸

The traditional view of the *Sīrah* concerning the time period and geographic location of the Qur'ān text we possess today, and the widespread acceptance of problematic data concerning early Islamic history in the Islamic literary sources, was decisively challenged by John Wansbrough and the “skeptical school” that developed in concert with his ideas. Wansbrough’s *Qur’anic Studies* investigates the Qur'ān in the context of earlier *topoi* and through the lens of the Rabbinic principles of exegesis.⁴⁹ His new methodology relegates traditional Islamic models of Meccan vs. Medinan Surahs, narratives used as “occasions of revelation” (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), and the concept of abrogation as the product of later Islamic exegesis.⁵⁰ One result of Wansbrough’s research is that the Qur'ān, as a “closed canon,” was subsequently placed in a later Mesopotamian context with ambient Jewish and Christian literary traditions in various *topoi*, polemic, or homiletic forms. Whereas Wansbrough’s study was a purely literary endeavor, other authors whom he inspired applied the skeptical methodology to a historical analysis of the Qur'ān and Islam’s origins. In *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* Patricia Crone and Michael Cook justifiably cast doubt on the traditional narrative of early Islam and claim that the early Muslims inspired by Jewish or Samaritan teachings and that the Qur'ān was the product of eight-century Mesopotamia.⁵¹ Other studies argue, using scanty documentary and archaeological evidence, that the Byzantines were already in a state of military withdrawal from the Near East when the Islamic conquests began, claiming that the epoch of Muḥammad and the rightly guided caliphs is a myth and that a basic understanding of Judeo-Christian or Abrahamic monotheism took hold in the Umayyad period (661–750 CE) and that the Qur'ān text became codified in the Abbasid period (750–1258) due to nationalist and legal exigencies of the growing Islamic community.⁵² Other skeptics situate the locus of Qur'ānic teachings after

48 Mohammed Bamyeh, *The Social Origins of Islam: Mind, Economy, Discourse*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999, 273–93.

49 Wansbrough, *Qur’anic Studies*, op. cit.

50 Ibid., 38–52. In relation See Gabriel Reynolds, “Le problème de la chronologie du Coran,” *Arabica* 58, 2011, 477–502.

51 Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977, 29–30.

52 Yehuda Nevo and Judith Koren, *Crossroads to Islam: The Origins of the Arab Religion and the Arab State*, Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2003, 87–168, 255–81. More recently Tom Holland, *In the Shadow of the Sword: The Birth of Islam and the Rise of the Global Empire*, London: Doubleday, 2012 advances the skeptical hypothesis for the masses and in a manner reminiscent of Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, New York: Modern Library, 2003, 131–208; George Anastaplo, *But Not Philosophy: Seven Introductions to Non-Western Thought*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002, 175–224. Were their claims not problematic enough, Holland, Gibbon and Anastaplo also did not know Arabic.

Muḥammad and its textual development in the Umayyad Period.⁵³ While the skeptical school unabashedly brings to light the significant problems with the traditional narrative of Muḥammad's life, the mysteriousness with which the Qur'ān arose, and the assumption that 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (d. 86/705) and al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf (d. 95/714) played a significant role in standardizing the Qur'ān text we possess today, their approach suffers from certain theoretical and methodological problems.

The opening chapter of Fred Donner's *Narratives of Islamic Origin: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing* refutes the theoretical and methodological flaws of the skeptical school and instead dates the composition of the Qur'ān, as a closed canon, to an Arabian context of early believers preceding the schismatic aftermath of the first civil war in 656 CE, which gave rise to Jamā'at-Sunnī (that is, majority), Shī'ī (that is, opposition) and Kharijī (that is, cessationary) proponents, and to which all later Islamic literary sources exhibit signs of substantial political and sectarian tampering.⁵⁴ Along with Donner's perspective which has become mainstream, new evidence and further studies have caused some members of the skeptical school to make sizeable concessions concerning the integrity of the Qur'ān text as we possess it today and the sizeable role played by the historical Muḥammad in Islam's development.⁵⁵ Evidence supporting an early date for the crystallization of the Qur'ān—including carbon dating—is found in a study of a non-'Uthmānic palimpsest from San'ā' which dates to first half of the seventh century.⁵⁶ In addition, some scholars have argued based on Qur'ānic pronouncements, like "these are the verses of the clear book (*al-kitāb al-mubīn*); we have descended an Arabic *qur'ān* that you may understand [it]" (Q 12:1–2), that the Qur'ān was

53 Alfred-Louis de Premare, *Aux origines du Coran: questions d'hier, approches d'aujourd'hui*, Paris: Téraèdre; Tunis: Ceres Editions; Casablanca: Editions Le Fennec, 2005, 97–9, 135–6.

54 Fred Donner, *Narratives*, 49, 60–61. The sectarian problem was first enflamed by the first civil war or *fitnah* (656–661). To appreciate the seismic effect that this had on the religious and political makeup of Islamic civilization cf. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waḡ'at ṣiffīn*, Second Edition, Ed. 'Abd al-Salām M. Hārūn, Cairo: al-Mu'assasah al-'Arabiyyah al-Ḥadīthah, 1382/1962.

55 Patricia Crone, "What do we actually know about Muḥammad?," *Open Democracy*, http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/mohammed_3866.jsp.

56 Behnam Sadeghi and Uwe Bergmann, "The Codex of a Companion of the Prophet and the Qur'ān of the Prophet" *A* 57, 2010, 370–71 conjectures 632–700 CE. Sadeghi's dating and textual analysis is fully fleshed out in Behnam Sadeghi and Mohsen Goudarzi, "'San'ā' 1 and the Origins of the Qur'ān," *DI* 87.1–2, 2012, 1–129. Also cf. generally Déroche, F. *La transmission écrite du Coran dans les débuts de l'islam*, Leiden: Brill, 2009; Keith Small, *Textual Criticism and Qur'an Manuscripts*, Landham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011. For more on issues of orality versus textuality, as well as the codification and canonization of the Qur'ān cf. Régis Blachère, *Introduction au Coran*, Paris, Bessou & Chantemerle, 1959, 18–102; Fred Donner, "The historical context" in Jane McAuliffe (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'ān*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, 30–35; Claude Gilliot, "Creation of a fixed text," in *ibid.* (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'ān*, 2006, 41–57; Harald Motzki, "Alternative accounts of the Qur'ān's formation" *in ibid.* (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'ān*, 59–75; Angelika Neuwirth, "Structural, linguistic and literary features" in *ibid.* (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'ān*, 97–113.

codified as a scripture during Muḥammad's lifetime.⁵⁷ It remains virtually impossible to verify Tilman's dating of the Qur'ān's codification to Muḥammad's lifetime. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that the idea of *al-kitāb* and the process of codification occurred early, and most likely in an Arabian context.

The general discussion surrounding *al-kitāb*, which may be translated literally as "the book, letter" or in this context "scripture"⁵⁸ (for example, Q 29:45) interests many Qur'ān specialists. Régis Blachère⁵⁹ and Kenneth Cragg⁶⁰ generally claim that the Qur'ān's notion of itself as *al-kitāb*, emerged as an Arabic response to the dominance of Hebrew and Christian scripture. Arthur Jeffery defines the *Qur'ān as Scripture*, that is as part of the chain of late antique Near Eastern revealed texts, which beyond Biblical sources include the heterodox religious texts of Mesopotamia, Persia, and Egypt.⁶¹ Following Richard Bell, some have interpreted the Qur'ān's reference to itself as *al-kitāb* as marking a shift in the understanding and preservation of oral revelations into a written, canonized scripture.⁶² To William Graham *al-kitāb* came to designate a fixed scripture, where *qur'ān*—although influenced by the semantic use of Syriac *qeryānā* (lectionary)—had beforehand not differentiated scripture specifically from other utterances of Muḥammad.⁶³ In addition to the points made by Blachère and Welch, Naṣr Ḥ. Abū Zayd deduces in his in-depth study on *Maḥmūd al-naṣṣ: dirāsah fī 'ulūm al-qur'ān* that the Qur'ān refers to itself as *al-kitāb* to liken itself to and thus challenge the *ahl al-kitāb* (Q 3:64) or "People of the Scripture"—that is, Jews and Christians—and conversely distance itself from the *ummiyyūn*, the un-scriptured peoples, pagans or gentiles (Q 3:20; 62:2; see later discussion).⁶⁴ For others the text's internal contradictions, its distinction of itself *vis à vis* the heavenly tablet (*al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*; Q 85:22; cf. also 87:19; Jubilees 5:13; 16:3, 29; 30:21–2; 32:10–24; and so on), and the existence of different codices among Muḥammad's companions is

57 A. J. Droge, *The Qur'ān: A New Annotated Translation*, Sheffield; Bristol, UK: Equinox Press, 2013, xxvi discusses this position held by John Burton; Nagel Tilman, *Der Koran: Einführung-Texte-Erläuterungen*, Munich: C. H. Beck, 1983, 11, 86–7.

58 The translation "book" for *kitāb* is too arbitrary here since what is more precisely intended is "scripture." For more on this, see Arthur Jeffery, *Qur'ān as Scripture*, New York: Russel F. Moore, 1952, 67–8.

59 Blachère, *Introduction au Coran*, 16, 136.

60 Kenneth Cragg, *The Mind of the Qur'ān: Chapters in Reflection*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1973, 14–15, 30.

61 Jeffery, *Qur'ān as Scripture*, 6–7.

62 Ernst, *How to Read the Qur'an*, 43, 118; Neuwirth, "Structural, linguistic and literary features," 102. This point is also shared by Alford Welch, Presentation at the second conference on the *Qur'ān in Its Historical Context*, 2009, which points out that this may have began taking place as early as Muḥammad's lifetime as indicated by the Qur'ān's shift from calling itself *qur'ān* (recitation) to *al-kitāb* (book, scripture). For more on *al-kitāb* and its signification of authority (*sulṭān*) see Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies*, 75.

63 Tor Andrae, *Mohammad: The Man and his Faith*. New York: Scribner, 1936, 96; William Graham, "The Earliest meaning of Qur'ān," *DWI* 23–4, 1984, 1–28.

64 Naṣr Ḥ Abū Zayd, *Maḥmūd al-naṣṣ: dirāsah fī 'ulūm al-qur'ān*, Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-'Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1990, 59–63.

sufficient evidence that the Qur'ān was not necessarily intended to be inerrant; the tendency to the orthodox policy of inerrancy, he claims, comes from later Caliphs and scholars.⁶⁵ While there is no doubting the fact that the history of the Qur'ān's later development is intertwined with strong-armed Caliphal politics,⁶⁶ it seems less certain given its own words that the text sees itself as inerrant (Q 2:2; 25:33). The most comprehensive discussion regarding this subject is to be found in Daniel Madigan's *The Qur'ān's Self-image: Writing and Authority in Islam's Scripture*. Madigan argues that by calling itself *al-kitāb*, the Qur'ān is not merely self-referential but also self-aware.⁶⁷ Thus, the inerrancy of the Qur'ān may be better understood as the self-awareness that God is in a current state of re-writing scripture, the implication of which is that the scripture is living *logos*.⁶⁸ As the living 'word' of God and a means of communication between Himself and mankind, still others argue that the aim of the Qur'ān's God is to call mankind to live ethically.⁶⁹

The living nature of the Qur'ān text is equally essential for the Islamic Modernist and Arab Enlightenment School, which from an exegetical viewpoint hold that while the Qur'ān's text is fixed, its interpretation⁷⁰ is a progressive and evolutionary science and, furthermore, that in order to understand the Qur'ān's teachings and values one cannot rely on Islamic tradition but rather one should have recourse to rational, philosophical, and humanist principles.⁷¹ This approach is—in some

- 65 Mondher Sfar, *Le Coran Est-il Authentique?*, Paris: Les Editions Sfar, Diffusion Le Cerf, 2000, English trans. Emilia Lanier, *In Search for the Original Koran: The True History of the Revealed Text*, Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2008, 15–75. In relation see the discussion in Sadeghi and Bergmann, "The Codex of a Companion," 372 which, in light of Ehrman's work, portrays the evolution of Qur'ānic scribes from a somewhat early and haphazard phase to a more careful one.
- 66 Walid Saleh, "The Politics of Quranic Hermeneutics: Royalties on Interpretation," Lecture delivered to the University of California at Los Angeles, June 6, 2009.
- 67 Daniel Madigan, *The Qur'ān's Self Image*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, 101–5, 183.
- 68 *Ibid.*, 124.
- 69 Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in the Koran: Semantics of the Koranic Weltanschauung*, Tokyo: The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964, 216. Cf. generally his *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Quran*, Montreal, McGill University Press, 1966; and Nawāl Zarzūr, *Mu'jam alfāz al-qiyām al-akhlāqīyah wa-taṭawwuruhā al-dalālī bayna lughat al-shi'r al-jāhili wa-lughat al-qur'ān al-karīm*, Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān Nāshirūn, 2001 which is an ethical lexicon of the Qur'ān.
- 70 For a survey of classical *Tafsīr* literature see Mahmoud Ayoub, *The Qur'ān and Its Interpreters*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984.
- 71 Šādiq al-'Azam, *Naqd al-fikr al-dīnī*, Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalīf, 1982, 12–54; Ṭayyib al-Tiznī, *al-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī amāma ishkalīyyat al-binyah wa-al-qirā'ah*, Damascus: Dār al-Yanābī, 1997, 419–21. See further Tiznī, *Muqaddimāt*, 519; Mohammed Arkoun, *Lectures du Coran*, Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1982, 115–16; Muḥammad S. al-'Ashmāwī, *Jawhar al-Islām*, Beirut: al-Waṭan al-'Arabī; Cairo: Maktabat Madbūlī, 1984; Muḥammad Shaḥrūr, *al-Kitāb wa al-qur'ān: qirā'ah mu'āṣirah*, Damascus: al-Ahālī li al-Ṭibā'ah wa-al-Naṣr wa-al-Tawzī', 1990, 4, 484–99; Burhān Ghalyūn, *al-Wa'y al-dhātī*, Beirut: al-Mu'assasah al-'Arabiyyah li al-Dirāsāt wa al-Naṣr, 1992, 87–8; Ḥasan Ḥanafī, *Min al-naṣṣ ilā al-wāqi'*, Beirut: Dār al-Madār al-Islāmī, 2004, 5–17; Ṭariq Higgī, *Sujūn al-'aql al-'arabī*, Cairo: Dar Mir'at, 2009; Gamāl al-Bannā, *Tathwīr al-qur'ān*. Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-Islāmī, 2000, 106.

ways—more faithful to the text’s origin as it aims to eradicate the coagulated interpretations of classical exegesis (*tafsīr*) and access the text itself through independent scholarly insights (*ijtihād*).

Scholars have explored the Qur’ān’s rich literary composition and rhetorical style, which lend it much of its animate qualities, arguing that the integrity in meaning and artistic beauty of the Qur’ān’s text remain intact only if its narratives (*qaṣaṣ*) are read as they are in the text, and neither taken out of their context nor broken up into smaller parts.⁷² Angelika Neuwirth argues that we might speak of each Surah—with its unique literary and rhetorical devices—as smaller scriptures of late antiquity, compiled into a larger scripture.⁷³ Others draw attention to Muḥammad not merely as a prophet, but a “literary artist.”⁷⁴ In relation to the literary style of the text, Michel Cuypers sees “Semitic Rhetoric as a Key to the Question of Nazm of the Qur’ānic Text,” a trait which is shared in large part with the Gospel of Matthew.⁷⁵ Others underscore the impact of Muḥammad’s *hijrah* from Mecca to Medina upon the literary style of the Qur’ān, exploring “spatial and temporal implications of the qur’ānic concepts of *nuzūl*, *inzāl* and *tanzīl*,” all of which changed with the *hijrah*.⁷⁶ Pierre C. de Caprona researches the metric system employed within certain Meccan Suras. After rigorous study of the Qur’ān’s stanzas, modules, accents, syllables, vowels, pauses, rhythm, and other hymnological and structural mechanisms, de Caprona comes to the bold conclusion that the structural complexity of the text excludes a conscious composition by Muḥammad, but may rather be the work of more than one author, or as he puts it the text is “transpersonal.”⁷⁷ De Caprona’s somewhat skeptical treatment of the Qur’ān’s structural complexity and the transpersonal authorship which he pos-

72 Muḥammad A. Khalaf Allāh, *Hawl al-fann al-qaṣaṣī fī al-qur’ān*, Fourth Edition, London; Beirut; Cairo: Mu’assasat al-Intishār al-‘Arabī; Sinā’ li al-Nashr, 1999.

73 Angelika Neuwirth, “Einige Bemerkungen zum besonderen sprachlichen und literarischen. Charakter des Koran” *DO* 1975, 1977, 736–39. For an in-depth study of qur’ānic chronology and the context of late antiquity see Angelika Neuwirth, *Der Koran. Band 1: Frühmekkanische Suren*, Berlin: Verlag der Weltreligionen, 2011; *Der Koran als Text der Spätantike*, op. cit.; *Studien zur Komposition der mekkanischen Suren*, op. cit. Salwa El-Awa, *Textual Relations in the Qur’an: Relevance, Coherence and Structure*, New York, Routledge Press, 2006, 45–159 goes a step further and discusses the section and paragraph divisions of Q 33 and Q 75 respectively. See also the seven-part division of the Qur’ān by the Farahi-Islahi school in Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Tadabbur-i qur’ān pak ek nazar*, Lahore: Dār al-Tadhkīr, 2007.

74 Christopher Nouryeh, *The Art of Narrative in the Holy Qur’an: a Literary Appreciation of a Sacred Text*, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2008, 52–4.

75 See Michel Cuypers, *Le festin: une lecture de la sourate al-Mā’ida*, Paris: Lethielleux, 2007, 385; “Semitic Rhetoric as a Key to the Question of Nazm of the Qur’ānic Text,” Lecture delivered to the The Qur’ān: Text, History & Culture Conference, London, November 12, 2009. For a lucid integration of Cuypers “ring structure” and Noldeke’s “chronology,” see Ernst, *How to Read the Qur’an*, 48–9.

76 Stefan Wild, “We have sent down to thee the book with the truth: Spatial and temporal implications of the qur’ānic concepts of *nuzul*, *inzāl* and *tanzīl*” in Stefan Wild (ed.) *The Qur’ān as Text*, Leiden; New York and Köln: E. J. Brill, 1996, 137–56.

77 Pierre de Caprona, *Le Coran: aux sources de la parole oraculaire: structures rythmiques des sourates meccquoises*, Paris: Publications orientalistes de France, 1981, 557.

tulates are countered by Behnam Sadeghi's stylometric study of the text, which demonstrates the gradual change of morphemes in the Qur'ān and establishes with some certainty that the text had one author, be that Muḥammad, his alleged scribe Zayd b. Thābit (d. 46/666; see below) or otherwise.⁷⁸

Michael Sells argues in "A Literary Approach to the Hymnic Suras of the Qur'ān" that the early Suras of the Qur'ān are not just unique in their literary quality but also that their hymnic quality, rhyme, breathing patterns employed within, and "aural intertextuality" constitute the voice of the Qur'ān and is rich with spiritual imagery and theological meaning.⁷⁹ The depths of spiritual imagery and theological significance are summarized in Fazlur Rahman's understanding that the Qur'ān was brought down upon Muḥammad's heart (Q 2:97; 26:193–194; cf. Luke 2:35)⁸⁰ and was therefore a divine experience whose verbal manifestation was mediated through the prophet's own mental faculties and emotional sensibilities.⁸¹ In relation to this point, Abdolkarim Soroush argues that from an experiential perspective the Qur'ān is as much God's word as it is Muḥammad's word.⁸² Others undermine the veracity of Muḥammad's mystical insights and argues that the Qur'ān is not the word of God, but rather a human synthesis of earlier traditions and wisdom.⁸³ On the other hand, Malik Bennabi asserts that Muḥammad's absolute conviction at the time of revelation means that the source of revelation was completely objective and came from outside his person.⁸⁴ Still others do not address Muḥammad's personal mystical or spiritual experience specifically but rather that of all mankind (*al-insān*), whom God created "in the best stature" and "then reduced . . . to the lowest of the low" (Q 95:4–5).⁸⁵ He explains that God created mankind and revealed to him "perennial and universal" cosmic and moral wisdom which quench his perennial thirst to transcend the finite.⁸⁶ This perennial wisdom is to be found in all mystical disciplines including Sufism, Christian mysticism, Buddhism, and Hindu Vedanta.

As the source of Islam's practical values and mystical experience, the Qur'ān also re-produces and re-configures the doctrines, legends, and customs of neighboring

78 Behnam Sadeghi, "The Chronology of the Qurān: A Stylometric Research Program," *Arabica* 58, 2011, 210–99.

79 Michael Sells, "A Literary Approach to the Hymnic Suras of the Qur'ān" in Issa Boullata (ed.) *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'ān*, Padstow, UK: Curzon Press, 2000, 3–25.

80 One should be cautious, nonetheless, that Ibn Mas'ūd's codex states upon your "mouth" instead of heart for Q 42:24. See Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, 86.

81 Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'ān*, Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980, 97.

82 Abdolkarim Soroush, *Bast-i Tajrubay-i Nabavī*, Moasese Farhangi Serat, 1999, English trans. Nilou Mobasser, *The Expansion of Prophetic Experience*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2008, 1–25.

83 'Alī Dashtī, *Bīst va sīh sāl*, Paris: Forghan, 1990–1994, English trans. F. Bagley, *Twenty Three Years: A Study of the Prophetic Career of Mohammad*, London; Boston: G. Allen & Unwin, 1985, 50–164.

84 Malek Bennabi, *Le phénomène caranique: essai d'une théorie sur le Coran*, 1968, Arabic trans. 'Abd al-Ṣabūr Shāhīn, *al-Zāhirah al-qur'āniyyah*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1968, 360.

85 Seyyed H. Nasr, "Sufism and the Perennity of the Mystical Quest," *Sufi Essays*, Albany: SUNY Press, 1973, 25.

86 *Ibid.*, 36.

cultures and earlier peoples within the late antique Near East. Many scholars have shed light on the mythological and folkloric dimensions of the Qur'ān and their relationship to repetition and formulae employed therein.⁸⁷ Similarly others provide strong evidence that the Qur'ān's teachings on the universe, embryology, and related physical sciences (for example, Q 10:61; 23:13–14; and so on) are part and parcel of the late antique tradition of Greek scientific discourse, embodied—for example—by the Roman philosopher Lucretius (d. ca. 55 BCE) and the Egyptian physician Galen (d. ca. 200 CE).⁸⁸ Devin Stewart, who apart from sharing a nearly comprehensive survey on the phenomenon of rhymed prose in the Qur'ān,⁸⁹ adduces evidence from Greek oracular texts that demonstrates that the Qur'ān's use of rhymed prose was not isolated to the Arabian peninsula but was part of a greater Near Eastern phenomenon of prophetic expression.⁹⁰

Insofar as ancient Arabian peoples represented a particularly early stock of Semitic peoples, the Qur'ān is to some authors the scripture of the Semitic people, coming after the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament.⁹¹ On the other hand, others see in the Qur'ānic vision of the seven heavens (Q 42:12; 65:12; 67:3; 71:15), Muḥammad's night journey or ascension (*isrā'*; Q 17:1; cf. in relation 2 Enoch),⁹² and the light of Muḥammad (Q 33:46) a strong Persian, non-Semitic, substratum.⁹³ In so far as such claims are influenced by sentiments of Arab nationalism and Christian polemic, their arguments take little notice that in the Qur'ān's milieu Arabians were not a united race (for example, Q 49:14); nor were the

87 Firās al-Sawwāh, *Mughāmarat al-'aql al-ūlā: dirāsah fī al-uṣṭūrah*, Damascus: Ittihād al-Kuttāb al-'Arab, 1976; Sayid al-Qimānī, *al-Uṣṭūrah wa al-turāth*, Cairo: al-Markaz al-Miṣrī li buḥūth al-ḥadārah, 1999. His work by the title *al-Ḥizb al-hāshimī wa ta'sīs al-dawlah al-islāmiyyah*, Cairo: Maktabat Madbūlī al-Ṣaghīr, 2008 won the Egyptian honorary state award and caused great controversy; Alan Dundes, *Fables of the Ancients? Folklore in the Qur'ān*, Lanham; Boulder; New York; Oxford, 2003. Although Dundes is not a Qur'ān scholar, his use of literary tools from the Classics and Biblical parallels are insightful nonetheless.

88 Mohammad Abu Hamdiyyah, *The Qur'ān: An Introduction*, Routledge: New York, 2000, 29; B. F. Musallam, *Sex and Society in Islam*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 54–6. Cf. in relation Job 10:8–12.

89 Devin Stewart, "Saj' in the Qur'an: prosody and structure," *JAL* 21, 1990, 101–39.

90 Devin Stewart, "The Qur'ān in Light of Greek Oracular Texts" in *ibid.* (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Quran*, New York: Routledge Press, 2011. Cf. in relation Walter de Gruyter, *Zeit und Gott: Hellenistische Zeitvorstellungen in der altarabischen Dichtung und im Koran*, Berlin; New York: Gruyter, 2008.

91 Aḥmad Dāwūd, *al-'Arab wa al-sāmiyyūn wa al-'ibrāniyyūn wa banū isrā'īl wa al-yahūd*, Damascus: Dār al-Mustaqbal, 1991, 61–4.

92 The *topos* of the heavenly journey or "ascension" is attested in several ancient and late antique Near Eastern religious works, including Genesis 28:11–12 (Jacob's Ladder); 1 Enoch; *Testament of Abraham* 10–20; *Ardā Virāf Nāmak*; Ephrem, "Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrens Hymnen de paradiso und contra Julianum," *CSCO* 174–5, 78–9, 1957, 16–19, 15–18 (hymn 5.3–15); Q 6:35; 17:93; 52:38.

93 William Clair-Tisdall, *The Original Sources of the Qur'ān*, London: SPCK; New York: E.S. Gorham, 1911, 85–100. His thesis is made clear as well in the title of the first edition of his work *The Sources of Islam: A Persian Treatise*, trans. Sir William Muir, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901.

Persians favored in the Qur'ān's milieu (*vis à vis* the Byzantines; Q 30:1–5). Marshall Hodgson argues more carefully that the Qur'ān is an articulation of what he portrays as “Irano-Semitic tradition,”⁹⁴ which was current in the late antique Near East.

Still others have seen both Qur'ānic and Biblical scripture as a continuation of religious impulses originating from Semitic lands, Egypt, North Africa, the Niger valley and Ethiopia, which include common myths, folklore, rituals, customs, and beliefs.⁹⁵ Some, however, have argued based on archaeological evidence that Islam and Christianity owe their origins to Egyptian civilization, or similarly that the Qur'ānic and Biblical vision of monotheism emerged as a result of the cult of the god Aton promoted by pharaoh Akhenaton (d. ca 1334 BCE).⁹⁶ It is entirely plausible that Biblical and Qur'ānic lore is to some degree informed by impulses from ancient Egypt and perhaps even Akhenaton's theological reform as well. However, this lore is informed not just by an Egyptian context, but by a multiplicity of impulses from many civilizations.

The multiplicity of impulses is demonstrated best in the work of Arthur Jeffery who provides systematic philological evidence to expand the Qur'ān's cultural sphere to its greatest extent in the *Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*. From the many loan words that gradually worked their way into the Arabic of the Qur'ān, including words from Hebrew, Akkadian, Sumerian, Persian, Greek, Egyptian, Ethiopic, and Indic dialects, it becomes evident from Jeffery's priceless research that the majority of these terms come from dialects of the Aramaic language, the *lingua franca* of the late antique Near East.⁹⁷

The religious symbols and figures that flourished in different Aramaean spheres intersected with the Qur'ān's milieu. Some scholars demonstrate that the Qur'ān's language shared many pagan and heterodox religious beliefs with Aramaic speaking cultures.⁹⁸ Others interpret certain Qur'ānic narratives with respect to the cultural and mythological ideas circulating in the Near East, including those of the illusive Sabians.⁹⁹ And Adam Silverstein argues that “The Qur'ānic Pharaoh” harkens back to its Biblical antecedent, from which it made significant theological

94 Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 1:61–2, 117.

95 Julian Baldick, *Black God: The Afroasiatic Roots of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim Religions*, London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997, 168.

96 Sarwat al-Assiouty, *Origines égyptiennes du Christianisme et de l'Islām: résultat d'un siècle et demi d'archéologie: Jésus, réalités historiques, Muḥammad, évolution dialectique*, Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1989; Robert Feather, *The Copper Scroll Decoded: One Man's Search for the Fabulous Treasures of Ancient Egypt*, London: Thorsons, 1999, 155, 216, 270.

97 Arthur Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, Baroda, India: Oriental Institute, 1938.

98 Siegmund Fraenkel, *Die Aramäischen Fremdwörter im Arabischen*, Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1962, 11, 141, 255, etc. See also Rudolf Dvorák, *Ein Beitrag zur Frage über die Fremdwörter im Korān*, München: F. Straub, 1884.

99 Ilse Lichtendstadter, “Origin and Interpretation of some quranic Koranic Symbols,” in G. Makdisi (ed.) *Arabic and Islamic Studies in honor of Hamilton A. R. Gibb*, E.J. Brill: Leiden, 1965, 426–36; Tamara Green, *The City of the Moon God: Religious Traditions of Harran*. Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1992, 6, 104.

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changes.¹⁰⁰ However his study on Q 28:6, 8, 38; 29: 39; 40:24, 36 argues that “Hāmān’s transition from the Jāhiliyya to Islam” was inspired—among other things—by the ancient legend of Ahīqār (seventh–sixth century BCE).¹⁰¹

Qur’ān specialists have paid perhaps the most attention to the Jewish and Christian background of Qur’ānic doctrine and language.¹⁰² Abraham Geiger¹⁰³ and others following him¹⁰⁴ highlight the relationship of the Qur’ān to Jewish traditions—that is, all texts and customs stemming from ancient Israelite religion and the Hebrew Bible. Subsequent research proved that Rabbinic commentaries—especially the Talmudim and Midrashim—play a significant role in the Qur’ān’s milieu.¹⁰⁵ Charles Torrey believes, ultimately like Geiger before him, that “The

100 Adam Silverstein, “The Qur’ānic Pharaoh” in *ibid.* (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Quran*, New York: Routledge Press, 2011, 467–77.

101 Adam Silverstein, “Hāmān’s transition from the Jāhiliyya to Islam,” *JSAI* 34, 2008, 285–308.

102 Wilhelm Rudolph, *Die Abhängigkeit des Qorans von Judentum und Christentum*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1922; Joseph Horowitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, Walter De Gruyter: Berlin & Leipzig, 1926; Anton Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur mit Ausschluss der christlich-alästinensischen Texte*, Bonn: A. Marcus and E. Webers Verlag Dr. jur. Albert Jahn, 1922; Clement Huart, “Une nouvelle source du Qoran,” *JA*, IO Series 10, 1904, 125–67; Muhammad, Asad, *The Message of the Quran*, Gibraltar: Dar Al-Andalus, 1980; Denise Masson, *Le Coran et la révélation judéo-chrétienne; études comparées*, Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1958; Rudi Paret, *Muhammad und der Koran: Geschichte und Verkündigung des arabischen Propheten*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1957; Joshua Finkel, “Jewish, Christian, and Samaritan influences on Arabia” in R.W. Barstow (ed.), *The Macdonald Presentation Volume*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1933; H. Z. Hirschberg, *Jüdische und christliche Lehren im vor- und frühislamischen Arabien*, Krakow: Polska Akademia Umiejętnosci, 1939; Heinrich Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1961; Henry Smith, *The Bible and Islam: Or the Influence of the Old and New Testaments on the Religion of Moḥammad*, London: James Nisbet, 1898; Johann-Dietrich Thyen, *Bibel und Koran*, Köln: Böhlau, 1989; David Brady, “The book of Revelation and the Qur’an: Is there a possible literary relationship,” *JSS*, 23: 216–25; Ugo Bonanate, *Bibbia e Corano*, Torino, Italy: Bollati Boringhieri, 1995; Heribert Busse, *Die theologischen Beziehungen des Islams zu Judentum und Christentum: Grundlagen des Dialogs im Koran und die gegenwärtige Situation*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988; F. E. Peters, *The Monotheists: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Conflict and Competition*, vol 1, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003, 2–63; Roberto Tottoli, *I profeti biblici nella tradizione islamica*, Paideia: Brescia, 1999, English trans. Michael Robertson, *Biblical prophets in the Qur’ān and Muslim Literature*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2002; Jacqueline Chabbi, *Le coran décrypté: figures bibliques en Arabie*, Paris: Bibliothèque de culture religieuse, 2008; Reynolds, *The Qur’ān and its Biblical Subtext*, *op. cit.*

103 Abraham Geiger, *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen? Eine von der König. Preussischen Rheinuniversität gekrönte Preisschrift*, Leipzig: Verlag von M. W. Kaufman, 1902, English trans. F. M. Young, *Judaism and Islam*, Madras: MDCSPCK Press, 1896.

104 Hartwig Hirschfeld, *Jüdische Elemente im Koran*, Berlin: Selbstverlag, 1878; George Lamsa, *The Short Koran: Designed for Easy Reading*, Chicago: Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, 1949.

105 Gustav Weil, *Biblische Legenden der Muselmänner*, Frankfurt: Literarische Anstalt, 1845; Walther Eickmann, *Die Angelologie und Dämonologie des Korans*, New York; Leipzig: Selbstverlag Des Verfasser, 1908; Abraham Katsh, *Judaism in Islam: Biblical and Talmudic Backgrounds of the Koran and its Commentaries*, New York: Sepher-Hermon, 1980; Bat-Sheva’ Garsi’el, *Mikra, Midrash ye-Kur’an: ‘iyun inṭerṭekṣtu’ali be-ḥomare sipur meshutafim*, Tel Aviv: ha-Ḳibuts ha-me’uḥad, 2006.

Jewish Foundation of Islam” was the result of Muḥammad’s interaction with Jewish groups in his day.¹⁰⁶ This idea is developed further by Claude Gilliot who argues that Muḥammad had “informants,” like Zayd b. Thābit (d. 46/666) and others, from whom he learned Jewish and even Christian doctrine and scripture.¹⁰⁷ Although this thesis may hold some truth, ascribing to Muḥammad’s revelations a “foundation” or “informants” comes across as short sighted and highly problematic. This is because it leaves no room for the religious and cultural exchanges that occurred between sectarian groups in Arabia (including but not limited to Jewish, Christian, and pagan groups) centuries before Muḥammad, and which likely account for a great deal of relationships between both the Qur’ān and earlier religious texts and traditions. In this vein, other scholars have demonstrated a more nuanced appreciation of the long and complex history of the Jews in the Ḥijāz.¹⁰⁸

In a similar fashion, many scholars have examined the crucial history of Christianity in the Arabian sphere that birthed the Qur’ān.¹⁰⁹ Scholars are justified in their claim that Monophysites from Syria and Yemen-Ethiopia, as well as Nestorians from the Persian Gulf, proselytized the peripheries of Arabia and came to exert some influence upon its very heartland.¹¹⁰ However, other scholars are equally

106 Charles Torrey, *The Jewish Foundation of Islam*, New York: Jewish Institute of Religion, 1933.

107 Claude Gilliot, “Les ‘informateurs’ juifs et chrétiens de Muḥammad: reprise d’un problème traité par Aloys Sprenger et Theodor Nöldeke,” *JSAI* 22, 1998, 84–126.

108 David Margoliouth, *The Relations between Arabs and Israelites Prior to the Rise of Islam*, London: Oxford University Press, 1924; S. D. Goitein, “The Origin and Nature of the Muslim Friday Worship,” *MW* 49, 1959, 183–95; Uri Rubin, “Morning and Evening Prayers in early Islam,” *JSAI* 10, 1987, 40–64; “Between Arabia and the holy land: A Mecca–Jerusalem axis of sanctity,” *JSAI* 34, 2008, 345–62; Gordon Newby, *A History of the Jews of Arabia: From Ancient Times to their Eclipse under Islam*, Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988; Etienne Couvert, *La vérité sur les manuscrits de la Mer Morte: qui étaient les Esséniens?*, Chiré en Montreuil: Editions de Chiré, 1995, 95–7; Michael Lecker, *Jews and Arabs in Pre- and Early Islamic Arabia*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998; Uri Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur’ān: The Children of Israel and the Islamic Self-Image*, Princeton: Darwin Press, 1999; cf. in relation Gerald Hawting, *The Development of Islamic Ritual*, Aldershot: England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate/Variorum, 2006; Jawād ‘Alī, *Tārīkh al-ṣalāh fī al-islām*, Baghdad: Maṭba‘at Diyā’, 2006.

109 John M. Arnold, *The Koran and the Bible or Islam and Christianity*, London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1866; John Trimmingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, Beirut: Longman, 1979; Irfan Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, Washington, DC: *Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection*, 1984; *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*, Washington, DC: *Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection*, 1989; *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, Washington, DC: *Dumbarton Oaks*, 2002; *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Seventh Century*, Washington, DC: *Dumbarton Oaks*, 2010; Hans Zirker, *Der Koran, Zugänge und Lesarten*, Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 1999; Munīr Ghabbūr and Aḥmad ‘Uthmān, *al-Masīḥiyyah fī al-islām*, Cairo: al-Hay’ah al-Miṣriyyah al-‘Āmmah li al-Kitāb, 2009.

110 William Shedd, *Islam and the Oriental Churches*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1904; Richard Bell, *The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment*. London: Macmillan, 1926, 18–39; Hasan, Askari, “Limits to comparison: New Testament and Qur’ān,” *Newsletter, CSIC* 5, 1981; Stuart Munro-Hay, *Axum: An African Civilization of Late Antiquity*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991, 3; cf. in relation John Bowman, “The debt of Islam to monophysite Syrian Christianity,” *NTT* 19 (1964–5): 177–201.

justified in claiming that many Near Eastern audiences, including the Arabians of the Hijāz were—based on common understandings of monotheism popularized by Judaism, rising national consciousness, and persecution at the hands of Byzantium—more pre-disposed to Monophysite Christianity with its simple unitary view of Christ’s nature.¹¹¹

Many scholars hint at the possibility that heretical Jewish-Christian sects like the Ebionites-Elchasaïtes¹¹² and Nazorean-Essenes,¹¹³ dualist sects including Marcionites¹¹⁴ and Manichaeans,¹¹⁵ Gnostics¹¹⁶ and other ill-defined groups¹¹⁷ played a significant role in the development of the Qur’ān. More recently, some scholars have given some credence to this possibility arguing that the *mushrikūn* were not crude pagans or polytheists as tradition has it, but rather monotheists whose cult was too accommodating for the strict monotheism of Muḥammad.¹¹⁸ That the sectarian identity of monotheists was close to that of polytheists in the Qur’ānic milieu is evident from Q 12:112. Taking this a step further, Günter Lüling believes that the pre-Islamic monotheists of the Qur’ān’s milieu were “central Arabian Christians.”¹¹⁹ He further argues that the *ur-Qur’ān*, marked by an anti-Trinitarian angel-Christology, was originally composed of ancient Arabian Christian strophic hymns that went through progressive stages of Islamization by later exegetes.¹²⁰

111 Paul Johnson, *A History of Christianity*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976, 92–6; David Cook, “The Beginnings of Islam in Syria during the Umayyad Period,” Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2002, 60–6. For more on the role of Christianity in Umayyad Syria cf. *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam*, Ed. Emmanouela Grypeou et al., Leiden: Brill, 2006; Jack Boulos Victor Tannous, “Syria between Byzantium and Islam: Making incommensurables speak,” Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2010.

112 Bell, *The Origin of Islam*, 20, 59–60; Trimmingham, *Christianity among the Arabs*, 48–49; Jeffery, *Qur’ān as Scripture*, 13; Azzi, *Le prêtre et le prophète*, 190.

113 Édouard-Marie Gallez, *Le messie et son prophète: aux origines de l’islam*, Paris: Éditions de Paris, 2005; Joachim Gnilka, *Die Nazarener und der Koran Eine Spurensuche*, Freiburg: Herder, 2007.

114 Arnold, *The Koran and the Bible*, 372.

115 de Blois, “Nasrani and Hanif: Studies on the Religious Vocabulary of Christianity and Islam,” *BSOAS* 65:1, 2002, 5–7.

116 Harris Rendel, *The New Text of the Kuran*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1926, 10.

117 Hamilton Gibb, “Pre-Islamic Monotheism in Arabia” in F. E. Peters (ed.) *The Arabs and Arabia on the Eve of Islam*, New York: Ashgate, 1999, 295–306; Karl-Heinz Ohlig, “Das syrische und arabische Christentum und der Koran Autorenverzeichnis,” in *ibid.* (eds) *Die dunklen Anfänge*, 366–404; “Hinweise auf eine neue Religion in der christlichen Literatur “unter islamischer Herrschaft”?” in Ohlig, Karl-Heinz (ed.) *Der frühe Islam: eine historisch-kritische Rekonstruktion anhand zeitgenössischer Quellen*, Berlin: Verlag H. Schiler, 2007, 223–326.

118 Gerald Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemic to History*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 16; Patricia Crone, “The Religion of the Qur’ānic Pagans,” *Arabica* 57, 2010, 151–200 concludes this after arguing that Jewish monotheism had a strong presence. Chase Robinson, “The rise of Islam: 600–705” in *ibid.* (ed.) *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, 177–83 argues vehemently for the dominance of Syriac Christian monotheism.

119 Günter Lüling, *Über den Ur-Qur’ān*, Erlangen: Lüling, 1971, Englishtrans. *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2003, 423.

120 *Ibid.*, xiv.

Others¹²¹ have gone further in fashioning intricate theories to the effect that the movement of Muḥammad and the vision of the Qurʾān were the original product of such heretical Jewish-Christian sects. This has produced very different scenarios. For example: for Yūsuf al-Durrah and Joseph Azzi the Qurʾān was inspired by the Jewish-Christian book known as the *Aramaic Gospel of Matthew*;¹²² and for Azzi it was the individual dubbed by the Islamic literary sources as Warāqah (that is, scribe?)¹²³ b. Nawfal (d. 610), the cousin of Muḥammad's first wife Khadījah bt. Khuwaylid (d. 619), who was his alleged teacher.¹²⁴ However, these theories remain controversial within mainstream Qurʾānic Studies. Some scholars completely reject a heretical Jewish-Christian substratum to the Qurʾān's text or Muḥammad's movement.¹²⁵ It is true that such theories, like all those that seek to find a hidden and meanwhile convenient "source" for Islamic origins, are either short sighted or have within them the polemical tendency to rob Islam of its creative force and reduce it to heretical—that is, illegitimate—beginnings.¹²⁶ However, in recent years more nuanced studies have searched within the verses of the Qurʾān themselves to guide their search for neighboring textual or religious impulses that might shed some light on the Qurʾān's "legal culture," and its place between "Rabbinic Judaism and Ecclesiastical Christianity."¹²⁷

That being said, it is not out of the question—though more research is needed—that Muḥammad knew Warāqah intimately, perhaps even as an apprentice. It is not unexpected—though quite intriguing—that Bukhārī mentions that when Warāqah died, Muḥammad became deeply saddened; immediately his revelations (*waḥy*) ceased for a period of time and he contemplated suicide (Bukhārī 1:1:3). Perhaps

121 Louis Cheikho, *al-Naṣrāniyyah wa-ādābuhā bayna ʿarab al-jāhiliyyah*, Beirut: Maṭbaʿat al-Ābāʾ al-Mursalīn al-Yasūʿiyyīn, 1923; M. P. Roncaglia, "Éléments ébionites et elkésaites dans le coran: notes et hypothèses," *POC* 21, 1971, 101–26; Joseph Dorra-Haddad, *al-Qurʾān daʿwah naṣrāniyyah*, Beirut: Durūs Qurʾāniyyah, 1967; "Coran, prédication nazaréenne," *POC* 23 (1973); Joseph Azzi, *Le prêtre et le prophète: aux sources du coran*, Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001.

122 Dorra-Haddad, *al-Qurʾān daʿwah naṣrāniyyah*, 88, 124–37; Azzi, *Le prêtre et le prophète*, 190.

123 Cf. C. F. Robinson, EI², "Waraqah b. Nawfal."

124 Azzi, *Le prêtre et le prophète*, 265–84.

125 Sidney Griffith, "Syriacisms in the Arabic Qurʾān: Who were those who said 'Allah is third of three'" in Meir Bar-Asher, Simon Hopkins, Sarah Stroumsa and Bruno Chiesa (eds) *A Word Fitly Spoken: Studies in Medieval Exegeses of the Hebrew Bible and the Qurʾān*, Jerusalem: The Ben-Zvi Institute, 2007, 87; Sāmī ʿAṣṣās, *al-Qurʾān laysa daʿwah naṣrāniyyah: radd ʿalā kitābay al-haddād wa al-ḥarīrī*, Damascus: Dār al-Wathāʾiq, 2003.

126 Most important for the development of this theory were Sprenger, *Das Leben*, 1:131; Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen heidentums*, 205; Rudolph, *Die Abhängigkeit des Qorans*, 27; H. J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judentums*, Tübingen: Mohr, 1949, 334–43; S.D. Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, New York: Schocken, 1955. My thanks go to Gabriel Reynolds for sharing this point with me.

127 Holger Zellentin, *The Qurʾān's Legal Culture: The Didascalia Apostolorum as a Point of Departure*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013 argues that within Islamic origins, the "Qurʾān's legal culture" may be in close dialogue with that of the Didascalia Apostolorum. See also John Jandora, *The Latent Trace of Islamic Origins Subtitle: Midian's Legacy in Mecca's Moral Awakening*, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2012.

this was due to the shock of suddenly losing the scholarly (and parental?) guidance Waraqaḥ provided Muḥammad, and which might have given his revelation some of its Jewish-Christian coloring. Others go as far as to say that Muḥammad's life—and therefore the Qur'ān's message—were to a great degree shaped by Waraqaḥ, and his cousin who became Muḥammad's first wife Khadijah bt. Khuwaylid (d. 619)—sometimes including the monk Bahīra—all of whom were presumed Christian.¹²⁸ Nor is it impossible that rural monotheistic and Jewish-Christian groups who had doctrinal and theological disputes with the orthodoxy of urban imperial centers sought refuge in the remote heterodoxy of Arabia. Their ideas became part of the Qur'ān's milieu.¹²⁹ Therefore, that such groups were present in the Qur'ān's milieu is plausible. However, that they were the central inspiration behind Qur'ānic revelation, or the Islamic movement more generally, is not supported by the evidence, nor likely in any case. The most important of these groups with whom the Qur'ān is in conversation is the *naṣārā*, who probably constituted the mainstream group of Christians or Jewish-Christians.¹³⁰

Even more significant is the Qur'ān's adaptation of mainstream Christian doctrine and theology illustrated in many studies.¹³¹ Consequently, the Qur'ān does share a good deal of doctrinal and theological beliefs with New Testament books like the Gospels. Where the Qur'ān and Gospels disagree on doctrine and theology, the ethics shared between the two scriptures become a fruitful arena of comparison. Nabil Khouri argues that Qur'ānic ethics are deeply informed by “ethical themes” common to itself and the Gospel of Matthew.¹³² Khouri's conclusion—colored by his Christian faith but insightful nonetheless—about the different understandings of ethics and law in both scriptures is,

128 Khalīl'Abd al-Karīm, *Fatrat al-takwīn fī ḥayāt al-ṣādiq al-amīn*, Cairo: Mīrīt li al-Nashr wa al-Ma'lūmāt, 2001, 9–10; Abū Mūsā al-Ḥarīrī, *Qiss wa nabī: baḥth fī nash'at al-islām*, Beirut: s.n., 1979, 33–4; Tizīnī, *Muqaddimāt*, 260, 300–2.

129 Several heterodox Christian doctrines are manifested in the Qur'ān, such as Jesus' infancy traditions (Q 19:29–31), Docetic teachings (Q 3:55; 4:157), Christ's single human nature (Q 3:59; 5:116), Christ styled as a Hebrew prophet (Q 2:87), and a pronounced anti-Trinitarian stance (Q 4:171; 5:73). Therefore it is little surprise as Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, 26, notes that some seventh-century Syrian Christian Churches first perceived the Arab-Muslim conquerors as Christian heretics, such as the Arians. See further Yūḥannā al-Dimashqī [John of Damascus], *Schriften zum Islam: Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abū Qurra: kommentierte griechisch-deutsche*, Ed. Reinhold Glei and Adel T. Houry, Würzburg: Echter, 1995.

130 Cf. De Blois, “Nasrani and Hanif,” 26. For more on this cf. in relation H.J. Schonfield, *The History of Jewish Christianity*, London: Duckworth, 1936; J. Danielou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964; “Christianity as a Jewish Sect” in Arnold Toynbee (ed.), *The Crucible of Christianity*, Thames & Hudson Ltd, 1969. The term *naṣrānī*, “Christian,” is attested in Grohmann, *From the World of Arabic Papyri*, 203.

131 Karl Ahrens, “Christliches im Qoran,” *ZDMG* 84, 1930, 148–90; Joseph Henninger, *Spuren christlicher Glaubenswahrheiten im Koran*, Schöneck; Beckenried: Administration der Neuen Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft, 1951; Samir K. Samir, “The theological Christian influence on the Qur'ān: A reflection” in *ibid.* (ed.), *The Qur'ān in its Historical Context*, 141–62.

132 Nabil Khouri, “Selected ethical themes in the Qur'ān and the Gospel of Matthew,” Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1999, 4–5.

The Qur'ānic ethical demands are consistently supported by a higher standard which escapes the letter of the Qur'ānic law. However, the Qur'ān never attempts, like the Gospel of Matthew, to abrogate the letter of the law in order to exclusively highlight the spirit of the law.¹³³

There is a great deal of truth to this assessment if taken theologically. Where the Qur'ān seeks to provide mankind with practical, ethical standards and laws through which mankind can live righteously, in the Gospels the centrality of the law lies in understanding God's holiness and love.¹³⁴

Christian ideas from many different spheres became part the Qur'ān's. However, it was through the Christian Aramaic sphere generally, and Syriac literature specifically, that Christian ideas likely circulated. Qur'ān specialists have been aware of the prominent role Syriac has played since the beginning.¹³⁵ The intimacy of the Qur'ān with liturgical language of Syrian churches (Syriac) came into being, albeit under the radar, with Tor Andrae's *Der Ursprung der Islams und das Christentum*.¹³⁶ After portraying an image of late antique Arabia similar to that of Bell's, in which the Nestorian churches from the Persian sphere and Monophysite churches of the Abyssinian sphere exercised much influence along Arabian trade routes, Andrae's insightful analysis compares the description of paradise in Q 56, likening the "wide eyed maidens" (*hūr 'īn*) with the imagery of the bridal chamber (Q 34:37)¹³⁷ in the Hymn of Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373).¹³⁸ This received some criticism from Edmund Beck.¹³⁹ However, it was shortly thereafter that Alphonse Mingana set the foundation for research on the Qur'ān in light of Syriac in a study entitled "Syriac Influence on the Style of the Kur'ān." He provides a brief typology and some examples of Syriac words used in the Qur'ān, asserting that 70 percent of the Qur'ān's "foreign vocabulary" is Syriac in origin.¹⁴⁰ However, Mingana's study was too succinct to leave a lasting impact. Thus, the study of the Qur'ān with respect to Syriac did not flourish for decades to come.

All of this changed with the publication of Christoph Luxenberg's *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran: Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koransprache* in which he argues the Qur'ān was originally a Syriac Christian lectionary that

133 Ibid., 244.

134 Ibid., 245.

135 Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, 6–7; Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, 19.

136 Andrae's article was originally published in a little known journal in Uppsala Sweden called *Kyrkshistorisk årskrift* between the years 1923 and 1925; furthermore the book's title made no direct claim to be a comparative work of Qur'ān and Syriac literature. See Tor Andrae, *Der Ursprung der Islams und das Christentum*, Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1926; French trans. Jules Roche, *Les origines de l'islam et le christianisme*, Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1955, 21, 118, 131, 205.

137 'Uthmān's codex states *ghurufāt*, "chambers," whereas Ibn Mas'ūd's codex states the singular *ghurfah*, "chamber." See Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, 77.

138 Tor Andrae, *Der Ursprung der Islams und das Christentum*, 151–61.

139 Edmund Beck, "Les Houris du Coran et Ephrem le syrien," *MIDEO* 6, 1959–1961, 405–8.

140 Alphonse Mingana, "Syriac Influence on the Style of the Kur'ān," *BJRL* 2, 1927, 80.

was misinterpreted by classical Muslim exegetes.¹⁴¹ Luxenberg emends the meaning and orthography of dozens of Qur'ānic verses to fit what he deems to be a suitable Syro-Aramaic reading. The most publicized case for which Luxenberg has been attacked concerns his revival and development of Andrae's theory, adding that the *ḥūr 'īn* are "white grapes." While it is quite clear that the Qur'ānic description of *ḥūr 'īn* does not refer to white grapes but rather women, it is equally clear that the description of Q 56 has the imagery of the bridal chamber of Syriac literature in mind, including Aphrahat's *Demonstration on Death and the Last Days*.¹⁴² It is not uncommon to find descriptions of paradise associated with hanging fruit in both the Qur'ān and the extant corpus of Syriac literature.¹⁴³ Oddly enough, Luxenberg does not make this case. Nor does he identify any specific genre or corpus of Syriac literature to compare with the Qur'ān. Furthermore, he does not systematically explain the arbitrariness of selecting Syriac words of his predilection to fit his new Qur'ānic reading. In fact, while Luxenberg's book provides rich—though often unsubstantiated—insights, and a handful of solutions to previously problematic passages, his work produces more problems in their place and is so methodologically problematic as it maintains an exclusive focus on philology, with little regard for the Qur'ān "as a literary text...that has to be decoded and evaluated historically."¹⁴⁴ This is not the place to assess the strengths and limitations of Luxenberg's work. Several scholarly reviews and responses have done this job sufficiently.¹⁴⁵ What remains to be said about Luxenberg is

- 141 Christoph Luxenberg, *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran: Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koransprache*, Berlin: Verlag Hans Schiler, 2000, 20. Other than reminding us that the Arabic *qur'ān* corresponds to Syriac *qeryānā* he does not substantiate his argument with concrete evidence.
- 142 Aphrahat, "Demonstrations," *PS* 1, 1894, 1003–7 (On Death and the Last Days).
- 143 For example, Q 2:266; 6:99; 16:11; 36: 34; 56:20; 95:1; and so on; Ephrem, "Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de paradiso und contra Julianum," 19, 18 (hymn 5.15); Kouriyhe's unpublished paper cites similar examples from Jacob of Serugh's (d. 521) *Memre*.
- 144 Angelica Neuwirth, "Qur'ān and history – A disputed relationship: Some reflections on Qur'ānic history and history in the Qur'ān," *JQS* 5.1, 2003, 8–9.
- 145 *Ibid.*; Phoenix, R. and C. Horn. "Review of Christoph Luxenberg (ps.) *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran: Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Qur'ānsprache*," *HJSS* 6:1, 2003; Simon Hopkins, "Review of Luxenberg's *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran: Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koransprache*," *JSAI* 28, 2003; Wilhelm Maria Maas, "Der Koran – ein christliches Lektionar?," *NZSE* 11–12, 2003, 18–22; F. Corriente, "On A Proposal For A 'Syro-Aramaic' Reading of The Qur'an," *CCO* 1, 2003; Murtaḍā Karīmī-Nyā, "Masaley-e ta'sīr-e zabānhay-e arāmī va siryānī dar zabān-e Qur'ān," *ND* 4:107, 1382/2004, 45–56; Jan van Reeth, "Le vignoble du paradis et le chemin qui y mène: la thèse de C. Luxenberg et les sources du Coran," *Arabica* 53, 2006, 511–24; Aḥmad al-Jamal, "al-Qur'ān wa lughat al-suryān," *MKLT* 10, 2007, 62–109; Devin Stewart, "Notes of medieval and modern emendations of the Qur'ān" in *ibid.* (ed.), *The Qur'ān in its Historical Context*, 225–45; Walid Saleh, "The etymological fallacy and Quranic Studies: Muhammad, paradise, and late antiquity" in Angelika Neuwirth *et al.* (eds) *The Qur'ān in Context*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2009, 649–98; Daniel King, "A Christian Qur'ān? A Study in the Syriac Background to the Language of the Qur'ān as Presented in the Work of Christoph Luxenberg," *JLARC* 3, 2009, 44–71. Of course, writing Arabic in Syriac script (*garšūnī*)—which Luxenberg contends the Qur'ān was written in originally—was used to write some of its verses by Christians after the fact. For more on this see Salah Mahgoub Edris, "Teile des Qur'ān in Garšūnī Umschrift. Eine Studie zur Berliner Handschrift Nr. Sachau 98," *PDO* 22, 1997, 641–65.

that his flawed—and some would say polemical¹⁴⁶—study finally delivered a rude awakening to the field of Qur’ānic Studies concerning the importance of Syriac. Despite his marginalization, at least some scholars equally skeptical about the Qur’ān’s origins have gravitated towards Luxenberg’s approach.¹⁴⁷

At the head of mainstream scholars who study the Qur’ān in light of Syriac literature is Sidney Griffith. Keeping in mind that the religious, cultural and linguistic landscape of seventh-century Arabia was for centuries inextricably tied to communities in the greater Near East compels one to avoid simplistic generalizations. Griffith cautions against reductionist theories of direct or linear “influences,” and expounds upon the complex, diffuse, diverse, and free flowing ideas present in the Qur’ān’s “thematic context.”¹⁴⁸ Among many studies Griffith convincingly argues that Qur’ānic language concerning the Trinity, the nature of Jesus, and the story of the Youths of Ephesus (Q 18:9–26) are all informed by an intimate understanding of Syriac literature.¹⁴⁹ A similar study by Kevin van Bladel traces the Qur’ānic story of Dhū al-Qarnayn in Q 18:83–98 to a Syriac *Alexander Legend* which circulated in the Near East in the final years of Muḥammad’s life.¹⁵⁰ Yousef Kouriyhe systematically discusses the role of the Qur’ānic *ḥūr ‘īn*—which Luxenberg fails to do—and the relationship to its counterpart in Syriac literature. Kouriyhe ultimately corroborates the Qur’ānic notion of the term while staying true to its conceptual, Syriac precedent. He argues that the *ḥūr/ḥūrāyē* are symbols—hanging fruit—of virgin female companions for which desert hermits longed, but to whom they could only allude.¹⁵¹ In addition, Joseph Witztum demonstrates that Syriac literature also preserved Christian stories of Hebrew patriarchs like Abraham and Joseph upon which the Qur’ān built.¹⁵²

The kinds of debates that have shaped Qur’ānic Studies have helped shape this study. To undertake a truly profound study of the Qur’ān in light of the Aramaic

146 Fred Donner, “The Historian, the Believer, and the Quran” in *ibid.* (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Quran*, New York: Routledge Press, 2011.

147 Manfred Kropp, “Athiopische Arabesken im Koran. Afroasiatische Perlen auf Band gereiht, einzeln oder zu Paaren, diffus verteilt oder an Glanzpunkten konzentriert” in Karl-Heinz Ohlig and Markus Gross (eds) *Schlaglichter: Die beiden ersten islamischen Jahrhunderte*, Berlin: Schiler Verlag, 2008, 384–410; Jan van Reeth, “Eucharistie im Koran” in *ibid.* (eds) *Schlaglichter*, 457–60; Gabriel Sawma, *The Qur’ān: Misinterpreted, Mistranslated, and Misread. The Aramaic Language of the Qur’ān*. Plainsboro, NJ: GMS, 2006.

148 Sidney Griffith, “Christian Lore and the Arabic Qur’ān: The ‘Companions of the Cave’ in *Sūrat al-Kahf* and in Syriac Christian Tradition” in *ibid.* (ed.), *The Qur’ān in its Historical Context*, 111.

149 Sidney Griffith, “Syriacisms in the Arabic Qur’ān,” 83–110; “The Gospel, the Qur’ān, and the Presentation of Jesus in al-Ya’qubi’s *Tarikh*” in John Reeves (ed.) *Bible and Qur’ān: Essays in Scriptural Intertextuality*, Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004, 133–60; “Christian Lore and the Arabic Qur’ān,” 109–38.

150 Kevin van Bladel, “The Alexander legend in the Quran 18:83–102” in *ibid.* (ed.), *The Qur’ān in its Historical Context*, 175–203.

151 Yousef Kouriyhe, unpublished paper.

152 Joseph Witztum, “The Foundations of the House Q 2:127,” *BSOAS* 72:1, 2009, 25–40. Cf. also Joseph Witztum, “A Re-Examination of Surat Yusuf (Q 12)” in *ibid.* (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Quran*, New York: Routledge Press, 2011 with Bennabi, *Le phénomène caranique*, 109–53.

Gospels is to try and answer, how and why did religious questions asked in the Christian Aramaic sphere find a resounding answer in the prophetic speech of the Arabian sphere? In broader terms, this means negotiating the tension between the Qur'ān's autonomy and its belonging to the world of the Bible. Undertaking this study also means considering the paucity of our sources and—therefore—the value of what precious little we have, both from within and without Islamic tradition, which we turn to next.

Our Sources

This study will make use of a wide range of primary sources, spanning several languages and a long time period. In the coming pages they are discussed under four categories: (1) The Aramaic Gospel Traditions; (2) The Qur'ān; (3) Islamic Sources; and (4) Non-Islamic Sources. For a table of these sources see Table 1.1.

The Aramaic Gospel Traditions ca. 180–616 CE

The Aramaic Gospel Traditions refer to the canonical Gospels preserved in Syriac and Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA). Neither corpus of Aramaic Gospels is considered original. They are both translated from Greek. How the Gospels were translated into Syriac and CPA is a matter about which Aramaicists and Biblical scholars have yet to reach a consensus. Scholars do, nonetheless, agree on one key point. It is generally accepted that the earliest official Aramaic Gospel was in Syriac. The *Diatessaron* of Tatian (ca. 180) was used for liturgy and worship by the early Syriac church.¹⁵³ Therefore, the circulation of a canonical Syriac Gospel would have taken place during the final years of Tatian's life or after his death in ca. 180. Tatian's *Diatessaron* survives only in fragments quoted by polemical works and a later Christian Arabic translation by Abū al-Faraj al-Ṭayyib (d. 434/1043).¹⁵⁴ At any rate, the existence of a Syriac Gospel text earlier than this is a matter of debate, which principally revolves around the issue of whether or not the Syriac Gospels in general reflect an ancient Palestinian Aramaic substratum going back to the first century.¹⁵⁵

153 Sebastian Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006, 31. Nevertheless, the *Diatessaron* is a Gospel-harmony; it combines the four canonical Gospels into a single narrative. And while its rendition preserves material from all four Gospels, it omits major problem passages and harmonizes conflicting statements.

154 Ephrem the Syrian, *Commentary on the Diatessaron*, Ed. L. Leloir. Dublin: Chester Beatty, 1963; Tatian, *Diatesseron de Tatien*, Arabictans. Abū al-Faraj 'Abd Allāh al-Ṭayyib, Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1935.

155 Despite the assertions of some Greek church fathers such as Hegesippus (d. 180), Irenaeus (d. ca. 202), Origen (d. 254), Eusebius of Caesaria (d. 399), Epiphaneus of Salamis (d. 403), and Jerome (d. 420) regarding the alleged existence of the *Hebrew* (that is, Aramaic) *Gospel of Matthew* (See W. Schoemaker, "The Gospel according to the Hebrews," *BW* 20.3, 1902, 196–203), no extant original Palestinian Aramaic Gospel text exists that emerged from the milieu of Jesus. Although the earliest extant Gospels are in Greek, the basic linguistic affinity of the Palestinian dialect (west

Table 1.1 Survey of Main Primary Sources

	<i>Ancient Period</i> 2700 BCE–180 CE	<i>Late Antique Period</i> 180–632 CE	<i>Qur'anic Period</i> 610–714 CE	<i>Early Islamic Period</i> 714–845 CE	<i>Later Islamic Period</i> 845 CE–
Arabian and Islamic	Sabaic Thamudic Safaitic		Qur'ān (‘Uthmānic codex and variants) Papyri	Mujāhid, <i>Tafsīr</i> Muqātil, <i>Tafsīr</i> Ibn Ishāq, <i>Sīrah</i> Abū Mikhnaf, <i>Nuṣūṣ</i> Ibn Hishām, <i>Sīrah</i> Kalbī, <i>Aṣṣiām</i> Farrā', <i>Ma'ānī</i> al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ, <i>Ma'ānī</i> Ibn Sa'd, <i>Ṭabaqāt</i>	Ṭayyib, <i>Diatessaron</i> Azraqī, <i>Akhhbār</i> Kindī, <i>Risālah</i> Ibn Abī Dawūd, <i>Maṣāliḥ</i> Ibn Qutaybah, <i>Tafsīr</i> Wāhidī, <i>Asbāb</i> Ibn Manẓūr, <i>Lisān</i> Biqā'ī, <i>Naẓm</i> Suyūfī, <i>Itqān</i>
Syriac and CPA	Syriac Insc OT Peshitta <i>Odes</i> [Tatian, Diatess.]	NT (Sinaiticus, Curetonius, Peshitta, Babai the Great Harklean) CPA NT frag. Bardaisan Aphrahat Ephrem Isaac of Ant Narsai Jacob of Ser Philoxenus of Mb John of Eph Bab. Talmud Targums (Onkelos, Jonathan, Psalms) Talmud Narratives Midrash Narratives			
Jewish Aram					

Table 1.1 Continued

	<i>Ancient Period</i> 2700 BCE–180 CE	<i>Late Antique Period</i> 180–632 CE	<i>Qur'anic Period</i> 610–714 CE	<i>Early Islamic Period</i> 714–845 CE	<i>Later Islamic Period</i> 845 CE–
Pagan Aramaic	Nabataean Hatran Palmyran TANAKH				
Hebrew, Bib- lical Aramaic					
Greek	Septuagint	Sozomenos			
Avest,	<i>Avesta</i>	<i>Ardā Virāf</i>			
Pahlavi		<i>Bahmān Yasht</i>			
Apocrypha/ Pseude-	<i>I Enoch</i> <i>Jubilees</i>	<i>Gosp</i> <i>Thomas</i>			
pigrapha (Greek, Cop- tic, Syriac, Ethiop, Mandaic)	<i>Apoc of</i> <i>Abraham</i> <i>Didache</i> <i>Inf Gosp James</i>	<i>Inf Gosp Thomas</i> <i>Didascalia</i> <i>Gēnzā Rbā</i>			

Most scholars agree that the *Old Syriac Gospels*, the subsequent official Gospel texts of the Syriac church, were heavily influenced by the *Diatessaron*.¹⁵⁶ The two extant *Old Syriac Gospel* manuscripts, Sinaiticus and Curetonius, are translations of the Greek, albeit highly Syriac in style (see Figure 1.2). In due course, this text was supplanted in the fifth century by the New Testament *Peshitta* (Syriac *pšittā*, “simple, vulgar”), which Rabbula (d. 435) is believed to have edited.¹⁵⁷ It is a version of the *Old Syriac Gospels*, mimicking the Greek style and syntax a bit more closely.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, the whole corpus of the *Peshitta* is comprised of the entire Biblical canon of both Old and New Testament books. It was the basis of Syriac “spirituality”¹⁵⁹ and remains to this day the Bible of the Syriac churches. In 616, a final revision of the Syriac Bible called the Harklean version was in part based on the work of Philoxenus of Mabbug (d. 523) and commissioned under the auspices of Thomas of Harkel (d. 627), which endeavored to follow the Greek text more austere than ever before.¹⁶⁰ Irrespective of the scholarly debates over the origins

Aramaic) spoken by Jesus of Nazareth with Syriac (east Aramaic) is a substantial foundation upon which some have framed their inquiry. Such efforts are considerably complicated by the fact that Syriacists and Biblical experts remain divided regarding the details of this relationship. The fundamental disagreement between scholars involves the philological treatment of archaic language present in either the *Old Syriac* or the *Peshitta* versions of the Gospels. Consequently, the archaic lexical and grammatical features of the Syriac Gospels were perceived by William Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents Relative to the Earliest Establishment of Christianity in Edessa and the Neighbouring Countries, from the Year after Our Lord's Ascension to the Beginning of the Fourth Century*, London; Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1864, 2–5; Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967, 269–71; Jan Joosten, *The Syriac Language of Peshitta and Old Syriac Versions of Matthew*, Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1996, 22–7, as preserving earlier Palestinian Aramaic. This view is not mainstream among Aramaicists. While he generally claims that archaic phrases in the Syriac Gospels do not reflect an old Palestinian Aramaic tradition, Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 34, 108 argues that the Syriac text of the Gospels, in and of itself, “often recreates the Palestinian Aramaic original.” Moreover, to appreciate the full meaning behind the Gospels, Brock suggests one should read the Syriac translation alongside the Greek (and the Hebrew for the Old Testament). In relation to this point, see Francis Burkitt, *Early Christianity Outside the Roman Empire: Two Lectures Delivered at Trinity College, Dublin*, Glasgow: Cambridge University Press, 1899, 17–21; Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1975, 193–4. See also Asad, *The Message of the Quran*, 304.

156 Black, *An Aramaic approach to the Gospels and Acts*, 265–66; Joosten, *The Syriac language of Peshitta and old Syriac versions of Matthew*, 16–17.

157 For more on this, see Matthew Balck, *Rabbula of Edessa and the Peshitta*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1951.

158 Joosten, *The Syriac Language of Peshitta*, 21. See further Anonymous, *Syriac New Testament [Peshitta] and Psalms*, Istanbul: United Bible Societies, 1994. For more information cf. generally Sebastian Brock, “The Syriac Versions [of the New Testament]” in Bruce Metzger (ed.), *Early Versions of the New Testament*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972.

159 Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 99–102.

160 For a comparative study of the four Syriac Gospel translations see George Anton Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels: Aligning the Sinaiticus, Curetonianus, Peshūtā and Harklean Versions*, 4 vols, Leiden: Brill, 1996. Also cf. generally Sebastian Brock, “Greek Words in the Syriac Gospels,” *LM* 80, 1967.

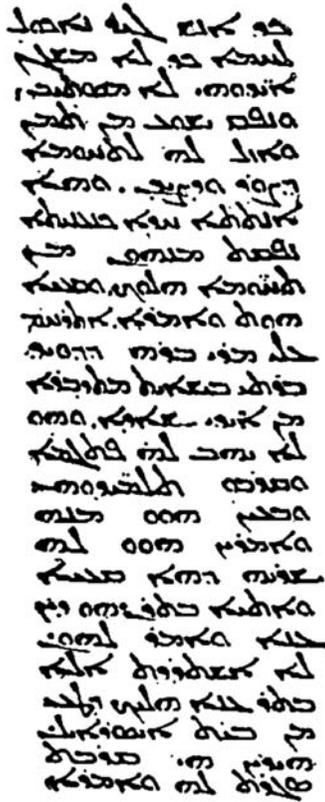


Figure 1.2 Syriac Ms of Matthew 15:20–25

Source: *The S.S. Teacher's Edition: The Holy Bible*, Ed. Henry Frowde, New York: University of Oxford Press, 1896, plate XIV (Public domain)

of the Syriac Gospels and over the existence, or non-existence, of philological evidence for an underlying ancient Palestinian Aramaic substratum dating to the time of Jesus' prophetic activity, the content and literary style of the extant Syriac Gospel texts merit scholarly examination in their own right.

The earliest extant CPA Gospels come from scriptural fragments and through liturgical texts, dating from the fifth to eighth centuries (see Figure 1.3).¹⁶¹ They are

161 *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament Version from the Early Period*, vols 2A–2B, Ed. Christa Müller-Kessler and Michael Sokoloff, Groningen: STYX Publications, 1998, 1. For more information cf. generally Moshe Bar-Asher, *Studies in Palestinian Syriac: Its Sources, Traditions, and Select Problems of Its Grammar*, Jerusalem: _____, 1977; "The Syropalestinian Version of the Bible," *Lešonenu* 61, 1998, 131–43; 251–2; Lucas Van Rompay, in J. Neusner and A.J. Avery-Peck (eds), "Christian Translations of Scripture in Christian Palestinian Aramaic" in *Encyclopedia of Religious and Philosophical Writings in Late Antiquity*, Leiden: Brill, 2007.

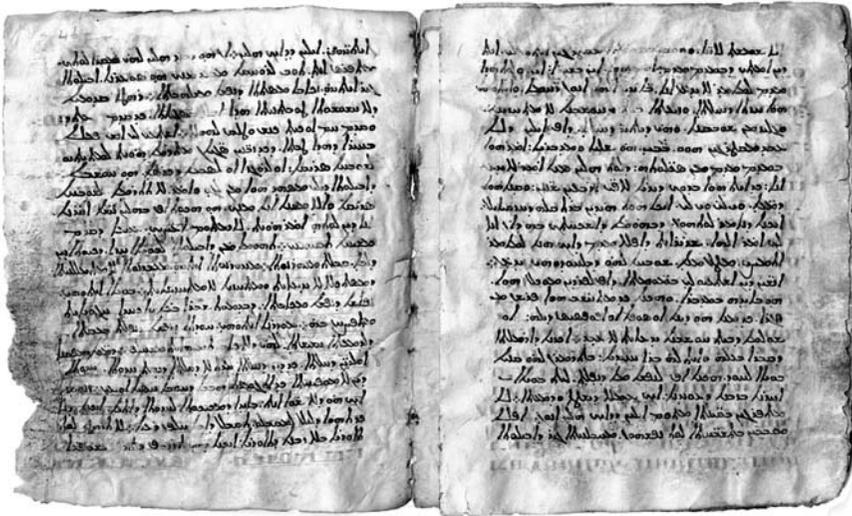


Figure 1.3 Christian Palestinian Aramaic Ms of Romans 8:1–15

Source: *The Codex Climaci Rescriptus, Palimpsest Manuscript on Vellum, In Christian Palestinian Aramaic, Greek and Syriac*, image CCR1_F3b-F4f_rgb001 (Courtesy of the Green Collection)

incomplete and did not enjoy the same level of popularity as their Syriac counterpart. CPA is nonetheless written in the Syriac script which had long become the official script of Near Eastern Christian literature. However, what truly distinguishes the CPA Gospels from the Syriac ones is the strong influence that Greek Biblical traditions had upon it. This is evident, for example, in the syntax of the Gospel passages and even in the spelling of proper nouns, both of which duplicate the Greek Gospels. Therefore, unlike Syriac where “Jesus” is spelled *īšūʿ*, in CPA it is spelled *īšūs*.

However, it is no surprise that Aramaicists can recognize various linguistic, phonological word plays or rhyme schemes in the Aramaic Gospels—especially Syriac—which suggest some level of integrity and antiquity and not mere translation. These features are altogether absent in the corresponding Greek verses. It is also taken for granted that the late antique Christian discourse of the Near East and the contact of the Arabian peoples with Christianity, principally involved the Aramaic traditions—and not so much Greek.¹⁶²

162 The Qurʾān’s milieu intersected with the Syriac Christian sphere of influence, which was diffuse and popular among Arabians. The Greek sphere of influence in the Near East and Arabia was limited to select classes of urban centers like coastal Syro-Palestinian cities including Antioch, and Jerusalem, as well as monasteries in Sinai. For more see David Cook, “The Beginnings of Islam in Syria during the Umayyad Period,” Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2002; Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 2. On the importance of Syriac to the Gospels also see Burkhitt, *Early Christianity Outside the Roman Empire*, 17–21; Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 4,

The Qur'ān ca. 610–714 CE

At the age of 40—that is, the age when individuals were culturally perceived to possess the maturity, wisdom and sanctity to commune with God¹⁶³—Muḥammad received revelations from God mediated through the angel Gabriel as he would meditate in a cave on the outskirts of Mecca called Ḥirā'. Although these revelations were a novelty at the time to the Arabic language (that is, North Arabian)¹⁶⁴ they were expressed according to conventional forms of rhymed prose (Q 16:103) as performed by local poets and soothsayers (Q 68:41–42). These “recitations” or *qur'ān* (Q 75:17–18)—so named after the Syriac *qēryānā* (see earlier)—did not constitute a prayer lectionary as much as the verbal manifestation of Muḥammad's mystical and pious experiences which he shared orally with his followers and greater audience.

Once codified and canonized, the Qur'ān (with a capital “Q”), functioned as the scriptural and cultural repository of the Arabian peoples. The canonical collection of Surahs preserved the religious lore of the Arabian peoples in writing, and was, therefore, the next step in literary development beyond Arabian oral tradition. As the product of a cosmopolitan commercial Arabian setting, among other things the Qur'ān reflects much of the wisdom and lore of Syriac Christian tradition which was integrated into the Arabian milieu by Arabic speaking Christians. Nonetheless, the Qur'ān's own self image makes explicit the claim that it is the first Arabic book. While seeing itself as the scriptural continuation of Hebrew and Christian Scripture,¹⁶⁵ it insists that it is a unique, linguistic, Arabic novelty (Q 16:103; 42:7).¹⁶⁶ Mingana notes, therefore, that “the author” of the first Arabic book did not risk coining new terminology, but rather,

The best policy was to use for [its] new idea of Islam the words which were understood by his hearers and found in a language akin to his that had become an ecclesiastical and religious language centuries before his birth and the adherents of which were surrounding him in all directions in highly organized communities, bishoprics, and monasteries.¹⁶⁷

193–94; Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 34. Furthermore, the native cultures of Syria and Egypt especially, were in some ways in conflict with imported Hellenism. For more on the alienation and outrage of Syrian Jacobites towards the Greek church, See Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 1:201; Kamal Salibi, *Syria under Islam: Empire on Trial, 634–1097*, Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1977, 18, 28. The animosity towards Greek elements was also prevalent among the Copts of Egypt. For more on the theological scuffles between the Coptic populace and Greek colonizers See Severus b. al-Muqaffa' (d. 377/987), *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria*, ed. B. Evetts, Paris: Permis D'Imprimer, 1903. This was the case especially once the Greek Church came to control much of Christian doctrine and canon.

163 Dundes, *Fables of the Ancients?*, 65.

164 Mingana, “Syriac Influence on the Style of the Kur'ān,” 78; Gilliot, “Creation of a fixed text,” 43.

165 Jeffery, *The Qur'ān as Scripture*, 67–8; Q 3:3.

166 Furthermore, Q 42:12 states, “and before it [that is, the Qur'ān] was the book of Moses as a guide and mercy, however this is a book confirming [it] in an Arabic language, to warn those oppressive ones and to give good tidings to the doers of good.” See also Thyen, *Bibel und Koran*, 221; Claude Gilliot and Pierre Larcher, *EQ*, “Language and Style of the Qur'ān.”

167 Mingana, “Syriac Influence on the Style of the Kur'ān,” 78.

The language to which Mingana is referring, of course, is Syriac. It is crucial to keep in mind that while much of its cultural and linguistic inspiration came from the Syriac—or more generally Aramaic—sphere, the Qur’ān is indeed an Arabic scripture which was conveyed through the person of Muḥammad at a time when he was formulating the religion that would come to dominate almost the entire late antique Near East.

It is evident from the Qur’ān itself that Muḥammad was learning while he was formulating the tenets of his new faith (Q 20:114), that the new revelation being received by him was slow in coming (Q 17:106), that the versions of the stories in the Qur’ān challenged the stories preserved by rival sects (Q 25:33), and that it was derided by non-believers as the work of witchcraft or fables dictated to Muḥammad (Q 6:7; 25:5). During the latter stages of his prophethood the Qur’ān’s notion of itself evolved further into that of a written scripture or *al-kitāb*, which ostensibly came to replace earlier revealed scripture (Q 10:94). The austere understanding that scripture had to be preserved and fixed in writing (Q 32:2; 39:1; 40:2; 45:3; 46:2) carried on through the early stages of Islamic history as the Qur’ān was expeditiously compiled, written, and canonized within decades of Muḥammad’s death. Thus, the approximate date for the oral and possibly written origins of the Qur’ān are 610–632, or thereabouts. Unfortunately, there is no evidence for written fragments dating to this time period.

In fact, no Qur’ānic fragments survive, which according to Islamic literary tradition, were recorded by Muḥammad’s scribe Zayd b. Thābit (d. 46/666) on animal shoulder blades (for example, Bukhārī 4:4704). At any rate, the time period between 610 (Muḥammad’s call to prophecy) until 714 (the death of Iraq’s governor al-Ḥajjāj, see later discussion) is considered the “Qur’ānic period.” It marks the transition between the “late antique period” (180–632) and “early Islamic period” (714–845)¹⁶⁸ in which the Qur’ān was articulated and preserved in canonical form (see Table 4).

Documentary evidence of the Qur’ān survives in the Dome of the Rock inscription dated to ca. 72/692 or soon thereafter.¹⁶⁹ There are also a handful of inscriptions, graffiti, and coins dated to this time period which contain some Qur’ānic formulae and even Muḥammad’s name.¹⁷⁰

The earliest extant Qur’ān codices (*maṣāḥif*)—a matter of some contention—are the Ḥijāzī manuscripts of Ṣan‘ā’, London, Paris, and St. Petersburg.¹⁷¹ These

168 This time period roughly coincides with Fred Donner, “From believers to Muslims,” *AA* 50–1, 2002–3; *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2010, 194’s conception of the “emergence of Islam” which begins in the late seventh or early eighth century.

169 C. Kessler, “‘Abd al-Malik’s Inscription in the Dome of the Rock: A Reconsideration,” *JRAS*, 1970, 2–14.

170 Among others these include *b-ism-illāh* (Q 27:30) and *allāh-humm* (Q 3:26; 5:114; 8:32; 10:10; 39:46). See further ‘Alī Ibrāhīm Ghabbān, “Naqsh Zuhayr: Aqdam naqsh islāmī Mu’arrakh bi-sanat 24 H/644–45 M” *Arabia* 1, 2003, 293–342.

171 In relation to this point see Sadeghi and Bergmann, “The Codex of a Companion,” 364.

codices preserve many copies of the “standard” ‘Uthmānic codex.¹⁷² Some of these were written in the Ḥijāzī script probably in Yemen or Egypt (see Figure 1.3).¹⁷³ Both of these facts suggest that the Ṣan‘ā’ manuscripts were the work of an official commission by the state, that is, the Caliph. The Islamic literary sources inform us of early commissions in which the Qur’ān was printed by the state. One is the endeavor of the caliph ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān (d. 656) to standardize and print the first official, canonized Qur’ān which took place in about 650.¹⁷⁴ We also know that during the reign of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (65/685–86/705)—who supervised the construction of the Dome of the Rock, Arabicization of the Umayyad bureaucracy and standardization of the Arabic script—al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī (d. 95/714) was commissioned to edit the ‘Uthmānic Qur’ān while governor of Iraq, which occurred approximately 691–714. Therefore, the approximate date of the earliest Ṣan‘ā’ codices—around which there is some consensus—is no later than 656–714 (see Figures 1.4 and 1.5).¹⁷⁵



Figure 1.4 Ḥijāzī MS of Q 8:73–9:6

Source: *Memory Of The World: Ṣan‘ā’ Manuscripts*, CD-ROM Presentation, UNESCO, image 148239B. (Courtesy of UNESCO)

172 Ibid., 344, 364.

173 Ibid., 371.

174 Ibid., 383.

175 *Maṣāḥif ṣan‘ā’*. Kuwait: Dār al-Āthār al-Islāmiyyah, 1985, 42–4. Sadeghi and Bergmann, “The Codex of a Companion,” 364–5 dates the “standard Qur’an” to the late seventh or early eighth century. Sadeghi and Goudarzi, “Ṣan‘ā’ 1 and the Origins of the Qur’ān,” 8, argues based on carbon dating for a date prior to 656—actually before 646 with a 75 percent chance to be exact.

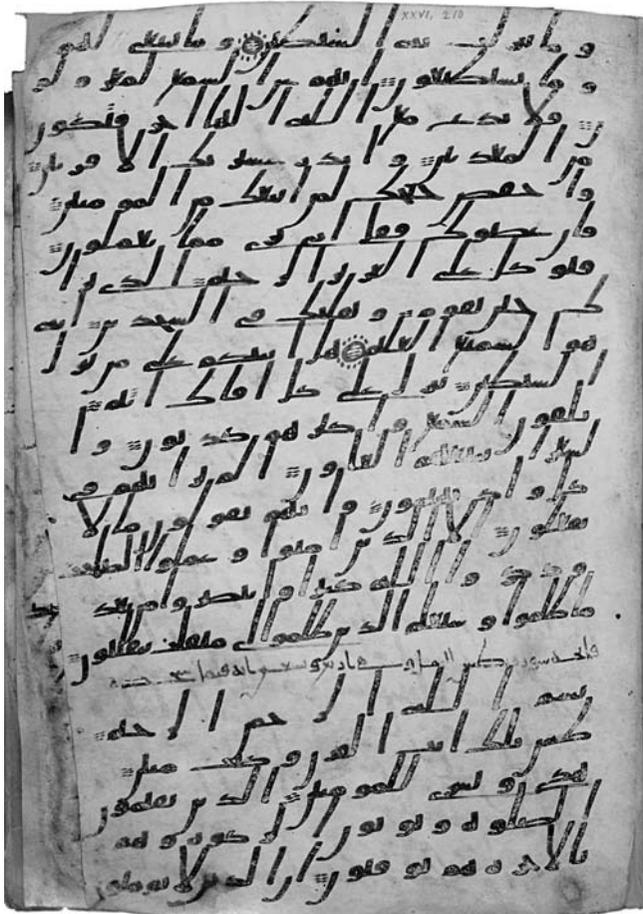


Figure 1.5 Hijāzī MS of Q 26:210–27:4

Source: Or. MS 2165, ff 76v–77 (Courtesy of the (c)British Library Board)

For early Muslims, the script employed in writing the (new) word of God had to be official in nature and noble in appearance. Hence, while the Arabic script developed in the late antique period out of the Aramaic script of Nabataean pagans,¹⁷⁶ a writing style of greater religious legitimacy was needed with

Since this study assumes the person of Muḥammad to be the primary articulator of the Qurʾān, the precise dating of its earliest extant written record does not affect our literary analysis in any significant way. Therefore, designating 610–714 as the “Qurʾānic period” provides a time period that is historically broad and methodologically conservative.

176 Gruendler, *The Development of the Arabic Scripts*, 123–30

which to pen the Qurʾān. As a result, the Ḥijāzī script—or Meccan script as Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 376/987) calls it—which evolved from the administrative and epigraphic styles of Arabic—was employed.¹⁷⁷ However, building on the work of her predecessors—mainly Abbot and Grohman—Beatrice Gruendler notes that the slanted writing and long fingered letters (*alif*, *lām*, *ṭah*, *ḡah* but not the ligature *lām-alif*) are internal developments of the Ḥijāzī script.¹⁷⁸ These developments are in part parallel to the Syriac script of the day, which was the script in which popular late antique scripture and liturgy was written. This may further explain some accounts in the Islamic literary sources which claim that the Arabic script was derived from the Syriac script of al-Hīrā.¹⁷⁹ Al-Ḥajjāj was involved in vocalizing the text and providing diacritics, both of whose relationship to Syriac is most likely but the details of which remain debated.¹⁸⁰ From the time of Muḥammad to that of al-Ḥajjāj, the Qurʾān developed in the background of Syriac religious literary precedents and writing practices.

It is worth pointing out at this stage that comparing the recensions of the Aramaic Gospels and the Qurʾān by themselves may well suffice to demonstrate how dogmatic re-articulation mediates their dialogue. However, this study aims to demonstrate this literary process at a higher standard that engages the literature of the non-Muslim, late antique Near East as well as that produced within Islamic tradition.

Islamic Sources

The Islamic documentary sources that come from Islam's earliest time period are few in number but give us a lexical corpus with which to work, and an orthographical yardstick with which to assess the text of the Qurʾān. These include attestations preserved in papyri collections.¹⁸¹

The history of the Qurʾān's revelation to the prophet Muḥammad and its codification by later generations is discussed by too many Islamic literary sources for us to consider here. Most of these sources are concerned with piety and not what we would call today history. Furthermore, later generations of Muslim authors

177 Ibid., 133–4.

178 Ibid., 134–5; see also Maṣāḥif ṣanʿāʾ, 14–15; see further M.C.A. Macdonald, “Reflections on the Linguistic Map of Pre-Islamic Arabia,” *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 11, 2000, 28–79.

179 Gruendler, *The Development of the Arabic Scripts*, 2. In addition, Tīzīnī's student Yousef Kouriyeh has shared with me his insights concerning fifth to sixth century Syriac manuscripts which he says set the standard for the writing of early Qurʾān manuscripts.

180 Shelomo Morag, *The Vocalization Systems Of Arabic, Hebrew, And Aramaic: Their Phonetic And Phonemic Principles*, Gravenhage, Netherlands: Mouton & Co., 1962, 46; Phillip Hitti, *History of the Arabs: From the Earliest Times to the Present*, London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970, 219; Luxenberg, *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran*, 16–24.

181 Adolf Grohmann, *From the World of Arabic Papyri*, Cairo: Al-Maaref Press, 1952; *I Arabische Chronologie, II Arabische Papyruskunde, Handbuch Der Orientalistik*, Leiden; Köln: E. J. Brill, 1966; Nabia Abbott, *The Rise Of The North Arabic Script And Its Kurʾānic Development, with A Full Description Of The Kurʾān Manuscripts In The Oriental Institute*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939; Gruendler, *The Development of the Arabic Scripts*, op. cit.

frequently took to ‘compiling’ the opinions and narrations of their predecessors rather than ‘producing’ new material.¹⁸² I will make use of “earlier” and “later” Islamic literary sources from which original insights and facts about the Qur’ān’s milieu can be extracted—that is, those which ‘produce’ rather than those which ‘compile’. The early period of Islamic literature begins after the Qur’ān’s codification (ca. 714) and ends with the writing of Ibn Sa’d’s (d. 230/845) *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* (also known as *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*) which by documenting the entirety of the early Muslim community marks a new period of maturation.¹⁸³ The later period of Islamic literature follows from 845 until the present (see “early Islamic period” and “later Islamic period” in Table 4).

For the pre-Islamic period—which as mentioned earlier is synonymous with the late antique period—leading up to the Qur’ān’s first articulation, two works are of principal interest. One is Abū Zayd al-Qurashī’s (d. 170/786) *Jamharat ash’ār al-‘arab fī al-jāhiliyyah wa al-islām* which gives us a corpus of pre-Islamic poetry—albeit imperfect as it is recorded much later—with which to compare to the Qur’ān.¹⁸⁴ Also essential is Hishām b. al-Kalbī’s (d. c. 206/821) *Kitāb al-aṣṅām* which is unique in its portrayal of the origin of pre-Islamic pagan cults in the Qur’ān’s milieu and their relation to Judeo-Christian prophetic tradition (see Chapter 2).¹⁸⁵

The earliest sources of Islamic history are in the biographical and historical works. Muḥammad b. Ishāq’s (d. ca. 151/768) *Sīrah*¹⁸⁶ and Abū Mikhnaf’s (d. 157/774) *Nuṣūṣ*¹⁸⁷ are the vital starting points as they are the first Islamic looking glass through which we see both Muḥammad and the Qur’ān. The biographies historicize Muḥammad within the sectarian Judeo-Christian framework of the late antique Near East. Citing the opening verse of Q 96, “recite in the name of your Lord!”—itself a calque of a Hebrew or Aramaic formula¹⁸⁸—Ibn Ishāq models Muḥ

182 Abū Zayd, *Mafhūm al-naṣṣ*, 92–9.

183 Muḥammad b. Sa’d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, 11 vols, Ed. ‘Alī M. ‘Umar, Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 2001. This cut off date is found generally in al-Sayyid Taqī al-Dīn, *Uṣūl al-baḥṭh al-adabī wa-manāhijahu: al-baḥṭh fī maṣādir al-tārīkh al-dīnī*, Cairo: Dār Naḥdat Miṣr, 1984, 11–17; Wadad al-Qadī, “Biographical dictionaries: Inner structure and cultural significance” in G. N. Atiyeh (ed.), *The Book in The Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, 97. For an in-depth study on the development of the Islamic literary sources in this period see further Gregory Schoeler, *Ecrire et transmettre dans les débuts de l’islam*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2002, Englishtrans. Uwe Vagelpohl, Ed. James Montgomery, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, London; New York: Routledge, 2006.

184 Abū Zayd al-Qurashī, *Jamharat ash’ār al-‘arab fī al-jāhiliyyah wa al-islām*, First Edition, Ed. Muḥammad A. al-Hāshimī, Riyadh: al-Mamlakah al-‘Arabiyyah al-Sa’ūdiyyah, Jāmi‘at al-Imām Muḥammad ibn Sa’ūd al-Islāmiyyah, Lajnat al-Buḥūth wa al-Ta’līf wa-al-Tarjamah wa-al-Nashr, 1981.

185 Ibn al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-aṣṅām*, op. cit.

186 Muḥammad b. Ishāq, *al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*, 2 vols, Ed. Aḥmad F. Al-Mazīdī, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2004.

187 Lūṭ b. Yahyā Abū Mikhnaf, *Nuṣūṣ min tārīkh abī mikhnaf*, First Edition, 2 vols, Ed. Kāmil S. al-Jabbūrī, Beirut: Dār al-Maḥajjah al-Bayḏā’; Dār al-Rasūl al-Akram, 1999.

188 Gilliot, “Creation of a fixed text,” 41.

ammad's episode of revelation at the cave of *ḥirā'* after Isaiah 29:11–12.¹⁸⁹ Likewise, Waraqaḥ's words of praise upon learning about Muḥammad's revelation—*quddūs quddūs* or “holy, holy”—reproduce Isaiah 6:3.¹⁹⁰ Furthermore, the prophet awaited by the Jews and Christians, *al-nabī al-ummī* (Q 7:157)—originating from a Hebrew or Aramaic epithet meaning the “gentile” or “unscriptured prophet”¹⁹¹—while faithfully rendered by Ibn Ishāq, it is reinterpreted by later Islamic tradition to mean “the illiterate prophet” in order to emphasize that the Qur'ān was not the product of Muḥammad's intellect, but rather divine revelation.¹⁹² Similarly, in Q 61:6 the “advocate” (Greek *parakletos*; John 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7) whom Jesus promises to his disciples at the last supper is called *aḥmad*, “more praised,” which shares the same root *ḥ-m-d* with the name *muḥammad*, “praised one,” and was invariably identified with his person by the Islamic literary sources.¹⁹³ In the *Sīrah* of 'Abd al-Malik b. Hishām (d. ca. 218/833), the author synthesizes these different appellations by ultimately equating *muḥammad* with *mnḥmā*, the word for “advocate” in Jewish dialects of Aramaic and Syriac.¹⁹⁴

The biographical literature also cites Jewish-Christian authorities—all of whom were familiar with Aramaic scripture and language—like the figure of the monk Baḥīrā (cf. Aramaic *bḥīrā*, “elect”)¹⁹⁵ who allegedly met the child Muḥammad with a caravan in Bosra, the priest Waraqaḥ b. Nawfal who had an impact on Muḥammad's early life and the scribe Zayd b. Thābit who played a paramount

189 Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah*, 1:168–69; See further Cragg, *The Mind of the Qur'ān*, 26–7.

190 Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah*, 1:169.

191 Cragg, *The Mind of the Qur'ān*, 60–2. Cf. also this correct meaning of *ummī* in Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies*, 54 and the traditional interpretation of the term in *ibid.* 63.

192 Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah*, 1:168, does not portray Muḥammad as illiterate at the first episode of revelation, but rather that he did not know what to recite. This is clear from the rhetoric intrinsic to his question to Gabriel, “and what should I recite?” (*wa ma aqra?*). Cf. also Muḥammad b. Ismā'il al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-bukhārī*, First Edition, 4 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1997, 3:31:137; Robinson, “The rise of Islam,” 186. El-Badawi, “A humanistic reception of the Qur'an,” 102–3 demonstrates that both the articulator as well as audience of the Qur'ān possessed the “cultural refinement” with which to comprehend and appreciate the literary and rhetorical sophistication of the text.

193 Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 3:356. That the names Muḥammad or Aḥmad may be titles acquired through prophetic office instead of birth names is consistent with the nomenclature of prophets throughout the Qur'ān. For more see Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext*, 185–99.

194 'Abd al-Malik b. Hishām, *al-Sīrah al-nabawiyyah*, 4 vols, Ed. 'Umar A. Tadmuri, Beirut: Dar al-Kitāb al-'Arabi, 1990, 1:262 narrates an apocryphal transmission of John 15:24–27. His thesis is reproduced by Asad, *The Message of the Quran*, 1170. See further CAL, “*mnḥm*,” Michael Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon: A Translation from the Latin, Correction, Expansion, and Update of C. Brockelmann's Lexicon Syriacum*, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009, 908. Cf. in relation Ramazan Zuberi, “The prophecy of the comforter (John 16:7–13),” Answering Christianity, http://www.answering-christianity.com/aramaic_society.htm; al-Jamal, “al-Qur'ān wa lughat al-suryān,” 99–101 which agree with Ibn Hisham's problematic derivation. In addition, the names Muḥammad and Aḥmad are attested in the early Arabic papyri of Grohmann, *From the World of Arabic Papyri*, 202–3 and throughout. For more on the biblical and messianic background of the name Aḥmad see Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies*, 64.

195 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 135–6. For more on Baḥīrā see K. Szilágyi, “Muḥammad and the monk: the making of the Christian Baḥīrā legend,” *JSAI* 34, 2008.

role in the Qur'ān's compilation.¹⁹⁶ To this genre of historical works we may add Azraqī's (d. ca. 251/865) *Akhbār makkah* which chronicles the events of the region in which the Qur'ān emerged and possesses valuable records of the houses of worship and architectural landmarks present at the time.¹⁹⁷

A number of reports from the canonical Sunnī Hadīth corpus may similarly preserve historical insights about Qur'ānic passages or otherwise be rooted in Biblical literature. Included in this category are the *Ṣaḥīḥ* works of Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and Muslim (d. 261/875), as well as the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/888).¹⁹⁸ Similarly, the history of the collection and initial codification of the Qur'ān by 'Uthmān and the role that al-Ḥajjāj played in editing it later on are narrated in the *Risālah* of 'Abd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī (d. 259/873), which is exceptional because it is a Christian Arabic source.¹⁹⁹ The changes al-Ḥajjāj made to the 'Uthmānic text of his day, and the variations of circulating non-'Uthmānic codices, are well documented in the *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif* of Ibn Abī Dawūd al-Sijistānī (d. 316/928).²⁰⁰

Within the broad discipline referred to as the Qur'ānic Sciences (*ulūm al-qur'ān*) is *Ma'ānī al-qur'ān* by al-Farrā' (d. 207/822) and other works of lexicography (*luḡah*) and grammar (*i'rāb*).²⁰¹ These different approaches to studying the Qur'ān's language are illuminating because they provide evidence for the stand-

196 Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah*, 1:122–24, 171; Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqāt*, 2:309; 5:306.

197 Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Azraqī, *Akhbār makkah wa mā jā fihā min al-āthār*, Ed. 'Abd al-Malik b. Duḡaysh. Mecca: Maktabat al-Asadī, 2003.

198 Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-bukhārī*, op. cit.; Sulaymān b. al-Ash'ath al-Sijistānī, *Sunan abī dāwūd*, 7 vols, Ed. Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt and Muḥammad Kāmil Qarah Baliif, Beirut: Dār al-Risālah al-'Ālamiyyah, 2009.

199 'Abd al-Masīḥ b. Ishāq al-Kindī, and 'Abd Allāh b. Ismā'īl al-Hāshimī, *Risālat 'Abd Allāh b. Ismā'īl al-Hāshimī ilā 'Abd al-Masīḥ b. Ishāq al-Kindī yad'ūhu bihā ilā al-islām wa-risālat 'Abd al-Masīḥ ila al-Hāshimī yaruddu bihā 'alayhi wa-yad'ūhu ilā al-naṣrāniyyah*, London: W.H. Allen, 1885, Englishtrans. William Muir, *The apology of al Kindy, written at the court of al Māmūn (circa A.H. 215; A.D. 830), in defence of Christianity against Islam. With an essay on its age and authorship read before the Royal Asiatic Society*, London: Smith Elder, 1882.

200 Abū Bakr 'Abd Allah b. Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif*, Cairo: al-Farīq al-Ḥadīthah, 2002; Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, op. cit.

201 Yahyā b. Ziyād al-Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-qur'ān*, Third Edition, 3 vols, Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1403/1983; Abū al-Ḥasan Sa'īd b. Mas'adah al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ, *Ma'ānī al-qur'ān*, 2 vols, Ed. Hudā M. Qurrah, Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1991; Abū 'Amr 'Uthmān b. Sa'īd al-Dānī, *Kitāb al-taysīr fī al-qirā'at al-sab'*, Ed. Ūtū Birizil, Istanbul: Maṭba'a al-Dawlat, 1930; Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sa'llām, *Lughāt al-qabā'il al-wāridah fī al-qur'ān al-karīm*, Ed. 'Abd al-Hamīd al-Sayyid, Kuwait City: Maṭbu'at Jamī'at al-Kuwayt, 1985. (For more on Ibn Sallām's questionable authorship of this work see Andrew Rippin, "Ibn 'Abbās's al-Lughāt fī'l Qur'ān," *BSOAS* 4, 1981); Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. al-Sārī al-Zajjāj, *Ma'ānī al-qur'ān wa i'rābuh*, 5 vols, Ed. 'Abd al-Jalīl Shalabī, Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1994; Muḥammad b. Mukarram b. Manẓūr (d. 711/1311), *Lisān al-'arab*, 6 vols, Ed. 'Abd Allāh A. al-Kabīr et al., Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1981. The *Kitāb al-qirā'at* by al-Sayyārī (third/ninth century)—and other Shī'ī works dealing with the "integrity of the Qur'ān"—are too sectarian in nature to sufficiently contribute literary or historical insight for purposes of this study. On this point see Hossein Modarresi, "Early debates on the integrity of the Qur'ān: A brief survey," *SI* 77, 1993, 5–39; Etan Kohlberg and Mohammad A. Amir-Moezzi, *Revelation and Falsification: The Kitāb al-Qirā'at*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009.

ardization of Arabic grammar from its diverse dialectic origins into its classical form, which is the point that Vollers argued all along.²⁰²

Islamic exegetical tradition (*tafsīr*) is to a great extent a continual compilation of reports, one building upon another. However, different threads of *tafsīr* literature exist. Muqātil b. Sulaymān's (d. 150/767) *Tafsīr* is attacked vehemently by later orthodox Muslim authorities for its frequent use of Christian and Jewish Rabbinic lore, collectively called *isrā'īliyyāt*, which was a necessary resource for the earliest work of Islamic exegetical tradition.²⁰³ Orthodox Muslim authorities were also wary of Mujāhid b. Jabr's (d. 104/722) *Tafsīr* for the same reason.²⁰⁴ An example of their reliance on *isrā'īliyyāt* is the episode of Muḥammad's marriage to Zaynab bt. Jaḥsh (d.4/626) recounted by Muqātil concerning Q 33:37, which is modeled after King David's scandalous marriage to Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11:1–27 (cf. further Q 37:17–26; 2 Samuel 12:1–6; Matthew 18; Luke 15).²⁰⁵ The *Tafsīrs* of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās, (d. 68/688), and possibly even that of Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778) are of questionable authorship.²⁰⁶ These authors' names are probably pseudonyms for later authors who sought to project their orthodox views back onto the founding fathers of Islamic exegesis.

The related genre of "occasions of revelation" (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) supports the notion that early Muslims realized that revelation was mediated through historical context; meaning that the wording of the Qur'ān was directly influenced by occurrences in Muḥammad's life, the people surrounding him and the objectives he aimed to achieve. This is evident, for example, in the unique wording of Q 33:35 and its entirely plausible 'occasion of revelation' recorded later on. It states, "Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women and the believing men and believing women . . . God has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward." This verse is allegedly an egalitarian response to an episode narrated in a report from Abū al-Ḥasan al-Wāḥidī's (d. 468/1076) *Asbāb nuzūl al-qur'ān*. It mentions that a female companion of Muḥammad by the name of Asmā' bt. 'Umayy (d. ca. 40/660) complained to him that all women have been shamed because his revelations failed to mention the virtues of women, which incidentally happens to be a common trait of late antique and Islamic literature alike.²⁰⁷ However, this did not sit well with Muḥammad's egalitarian sensibilities—by seventh century standards

202 Vollers, *Volksprache und Schriftsprache im alten Arabien*, 185–95

203 Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr muqātil b. sulaymān*, 3 vols, Ed. Aḥmad Farīd, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2003.

204 Mujāhid b. Jabr, *Tafsīr al-imām mujāhid ibn jabr*, Ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salām Abū al-Nīl, Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-Islāmī al-Ḥadīth, 1989; A Rippin, EF², "Mudjāhid b. DJabr al-Makkī, Abu l-Ḥadīdjādī." Cf. In relation Zeev Maghen, "Intertwined triangles: remarks on the relationship between two prophetic scandals," *JSAI* 33, 2007; "Davidic motifs in the biography of Muhammad," *JSAI* 35, 2008.

205 Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 3:46–49; see further Zeev Maghen, "Davidic Motifs in the Biography of Muhammad," *JSAI* 35, 2008.

206 Veccia Vaglieri, EF², "Abd Allāh b. al-'Abbās;" H. P. Raddatz, EF², "Sufyān al-Thawrī."

207 Cf. the misogyny in works like Aphrahat, "Demonstrations," 1:255–60, 265–70 (On Monks); *Ardā Wirāf Nāmā* 20; 26; 62; 63; 69; 70; 73; Bukhārī 1:2:28; 1:6:301.

of course—and the report continues that after this episode Q 33:35 was revealed bringing good news to *al-muslimūn wa al-muslimāt*, that is, both Muslim men and women.²⁰⁸ As jurisprudence became the quintessential Islamic science, the historical context of qur'ānic verses was prioritized according to the legal exigencies of the growing Muslim community. As a result, verse abrogation (*al-nāsikh wa al-mansūkh*) permits that verses belonging to an earlier time period of revelation be abrogated by verses from a later one.²⁰⁹

The early exegetical and *asbāb al-nuzūl* literature also had a tendency to indirectly biblicalize historical events attributed to qur'ānic verses. For example, *dār al-arqam* was the name of the secret home in Mecca where Muḥammad preached to his earliest companions, including 'Ammār b. Yāsir (d. 37/657). 'Ammār and his family were said to have endured severe torture which claimed the lives of his parents and led to his denial of Muḥammad, after which he wept and recanted. 'Ammār's act of "dissimulation" or "caution" under duress (*taqiyyah*), along with his unwavering support of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), made him a model and hero especially among the Shī'ah. The details of this story, however, emerge from the 'interpretation' and 'occasion of revelation' derived from Q 16:106–8 and, furthermore, echo Peter's denial of Jesus in the Gospels (Matthew 26:75; Mark 14:27) as well as the persecution of Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:25.²¹⁰

Some later exegetical works use the Bible to interpret the Qur'ān more explicitly. This is especially the case with *Naẓm al-durar fī tanāsub al-āyāt wa-al-suwar* of al-Biqā'ī (d. 808/1460) who believes that the canonical Hebrew and Christian scriptures are in fact the *tawrāh* and *injīl* mentioned in the Qur'ān.²¹¹ His incorporation of the Judeo-Christian corpus into his work was too revolutionary for the orthodox scholars of his day who destroyed his reputation.²¹² However, Suyūfī's (d. 911/1505) similarly revolutionary claim in *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-qur'ān* that loan words (*mu'arrabāt*) were part of the qur'ānic articulation, and therefore Arabic language, was generally accepted by the Muslims of his day,²¹³ perhaps in part because there was already a precedent for this idea in earlier Islamic literary

208 Abū al-Ḥasan al-Wāhidī, *Asbāb nuzūl al-qur'ān*, Ed. Kamāl Zaghlūl, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1991, 370.

209 e.g. Qatādah b. Di'āmah al-Sadūsī, *al-Nāsikh wa al-mansūkh*, Third Edition, Ed. Ḥātim S. al-Dāmin, _____: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1409/1988; Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām, *al-Nāsikh wa al-mansūkh*, First Edition, Ed. John Burton, Cambridge: Trustees of the E. J. W. Gibb Memorial, 1987.

210 al-Wāhidī, *Asbāb nuzūl al-qur'ān*, 288–89.

211 Ibrāhīm b. 'Umar al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar fī tanāsub al-āyāt wa-al-suwar*, Ed. 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Mahdī, 8 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1995.

212 Ibrāhīm b. 'Umar al-Biqā'ī, In Defense of the Bible: A Critical Edition and an Introduction to al-Biqā'ī's Bible Treatise. Ed. Walid Saleh. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008, 33.

213 Cf. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī, *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-qur'ān*, 7 vols, Ed. Markaz al-Dirāsāt al-Qur'āniyah, Medina: Majma' al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibā'at al-Muḥḥaf al-Sharīf, 1426/2005; *al-Muhadhdhab fīmā waqa'a fī al-qur'ān min al-mu'arrab*, Ed. Muḥammad al-Tunjī, Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1995.

sources.²¹⁴ Apart from discussing the Qur’ān’s foreign vocabulary, of which Jeffrey makes ample use, Suyūṭī’s work is a systematic, comprehensive examination of the Qur’ān’s literary structure and hermeneutical devices. It is at the same time a mammoth compilation of earlier exegetical material.²¹⁵

Non-Islamic Sources

Unlike the Islamic sources, which are valuable albeit pious assessments of the Qur’ān’s milieu coming centuries after the fact, the non-Islamic sources are independent traditions which were part of the Qur’ān’s milieu itself. The literary sources may come from the late antique or earliest Islamic periods, spanning roughly 180–714 CE, with some documentary sources being significantly older—that is, before 180 CE.

Documentary sources also include epigraphic texts, dictionaries and lexicons that attest the major ancient dialects people spoke and the religious formulae of their writings. This background data, the majority of which is ancient and comes from the Arabian Peninsula, gives us the earliest surviving precedent for pre-qur’ānic Arabian oral and literary forms of articulation (Figure 1.5). These

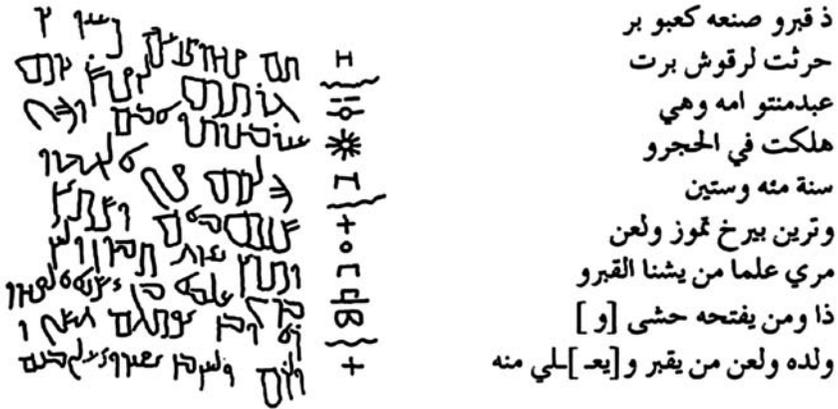


Figure 1.6 Raqūsh Inscription Dated 267 CE

Source: Healey and Smith, “Jaussen-Savignac 17,” pl. 46. The inscription reads “This is a grave K b. H has taken care of for his mother, Raqush bint ’A. She died in al-Hijr in the year 162 in the month of Tammuz. May the Lord of the World curse anyone who desecrates this grave and opens it up, except his offspring! May he [also] curse anyone who buries [someone in the grave] and [then] removes [him] from it! May who buries...be cursed!” (Courtesy of John Healey)

214 Cf. Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muslim b. Qutaybah, *Tafsīr gharīb al-qur’ān*, ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘ilmiyah, 1978; Abū Manṣūr al-Jawālīqī, *al-Mu’arrab min kalām al-‘arab ‘alā ḥurūf al-mu’jam*, Ed. Aḥmad Shākīr, Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb, 1389/1969.

215 Note that while Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Shawkānī (d. 1249/1834), *Faṭḥ al-qadīr, al-jāmi’ bayn fannayy al-riwāyah wa al-dirāyah min ‘ilm al-tafsīr*, Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1421/2000 is written very late, it preserves some useful original insights.

sources include collections of inscriptions and from lexicons of: Old South Arabian (mainly Sabaic);²¹⁶ Old North Arabian (mainly Thamudic and Safaitic);²¹⁷ late antique Arabic;²¹⁸ Ethiopic (Ge'ez);²¹⁹ pagan Aramaic (Nabataean, Palmyrene and Hatran);²²⁰ and Syriac.²²¹

Non-Islamic literary sources include texts from a diverse range of languages and traditions. They may be classified by religious tradition. The Jewish sources upon which the Qur'ān frequently depends include the Hebrew Bible,²²² its translations in Aramaic (Targumim) and Syriac (Old Testament Peshitta),²²³ further Rabbinic literature,²²⁴ and Essene literature from Qumran.²²⁵ Christian literature which also played an integral part in the Qur'ān's milieu includes the Greek Septuagint, fragments of the CPA Old Testament,²²⁶ some Greek religious and historical writings,²²⁷ and the vast sea of Syriac literature which is an essential link between the

216 A. F. L. Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1982.

217 Albertus Branden, *Les inscriptions thamoudéennes*, Louvain-Heverlé: Bureaux du Muséon, 1950; Sulaymān Dhuyayb, *Dirāsah li-nuqūsh Thamūdīyyah min Jubbah bi-hā'il*, Riyadh: Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭaniyyah, 2000; *Nuqūsh Thamūdīyyah min al-Mamlakah al-'Arabīyyah al-Sa'ūdiyyah*, Riyadh: Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭaniyyah, 1999; *Nuqūsh Ṣafawīyyah min shamālī al-Mamlakah al-'Arabīyyah al-Sa'ūdiyyah*, Riyadh: Mu'assasat 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Sudayrī al-Khayriyyah, 2003; F.V. Winnett, *Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns*, Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1978.

218 Gruendler, *The Development of the Arabic Scripts*, 152–71.

219 Wolf Leslau, *Concise Dictionary of Ge'ez*, Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1989.

220 Sulaymān Dhuyayb, *Dirāsah taḥlīliyyah lil-nuqūsh al-Ārāmīyyah al-qadīmah fī Taymā'*, Riyadh: Maṭbū'āt Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭaniyyah, 1994; *al-Mu'jam al-Nabaṭī: dirāsah taḥlīliyyah muqāranah lil-mufradāt wa-al-alfāz al-Nabaṭīyyah*, Riyadh: Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭaniyyah, 2000.

221 Han Drijvers and John Healey, *The Old Syriac inscriptions of Edessa and Osroene*, Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999.

222 *The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoretic Text*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America (JPS), 1917.

223 See Onkelos, *Targum Onkelos*; Jonathan ben Uzziel, *Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel*; Anonymous, *Targum Psalms* in CAL; Anonymous, *The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshitta Version*, Ed. International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, Leiden: Brill, 1996.

224 Anonymous, *The Talmud, with English translation and commentary*, Ed. A. Ehrman. Jerusalem: El-'Am-Hoza' a Leor Israel, 1965. Furthermore, Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 4 vols, Forgotten Books, 2008 (Reprint of Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909), is a collection of the narrative material from the voluminous library of Talmudic and Midrashic literature translated and arranged chronologically, beginning from the creation of the world until Esther.

225 Chaim Rabin, "Islam and the Qumran Sect" in *Qumran Studies*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1957, 112–30.

226 *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic Old Testament and Apocrypha Version from the Early Period*, vol 1, Ed. Christa Müller-Kessler and Michael Sokoloff, Groningen: STYX Publications, 1997. Biqā'ī, *Naẓm*, 1:102, claims that the Arabic text of the Hebrew Bible was translated from the Syriac (Peshitta?) of the Christians, which in turn was translated from the Greek text. Biqā'ī himself, however, claims to have used an Arabic version of the Hebrew Bible translated from Hebrew.

227 For example, Anonymous, "Barnabas;" "The Epistle of Barnabas;" "The Shepherd of Hermas," in J. A. Robinson (ed.), *Barnabas, Hermas and the Didache*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920; Sozomenos of Gaza, *Historia ecclesiastica*, Ed. Edward Walford, London: S. Bagster, 1846; Anonymous, *Didascalia Apostolorum*, trans. R. H. Connolly, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929.

Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions. These works are principally composed of: stanzaic homilies to be sung (*madrāṣē*) like the *Odes of Solomon* (second–third century), those by Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373), Narsai (d. 502) and Jacob of Serugh (d. 521); and verse homilies to be recited (*mēmre*) by Aphrahat the Persian Sage (d. 345), Isaac of Antioch (d. ca. 452), Philoxenus of Mabbug (d. 523) and Babai the Great (d. 628); as well as the *Book of the Laws of Countries* by Bardaisan (d. 222), and the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus (d. 586).²²⁸

Zoroastrian literature also played some role in contributing to the Qur'ān's milieu.²²⁹ Such literature includes the Avesta and pre-Islamic Pahlavi works like the *Ardā Virāf Nāmak* and the *Bahmān Yasht*.²³⁰ The impact of Zoroastrian literature on late antique Judeo-Christian apocryphal literature, which also played a great part in the Qur'ān's milieu, was profound.

Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha account for some of the heterodox doctrinal articulations espoused by the Qur'ān. These sources originated mainly in Coptic, Syriac, Greek, and Ethiopic. They include the Gospel of Thomas, the Infancy Gospels, books of *Enoch*, *Jubilees* and the *Apocalypse* and *Testament of Abraham*.²³¹ The *Gēnzā Rbā* (lit. "Great Treasure") preserved in the Mandaic dialect of Aramaic may also be placed in this category.

Methodology and Organization

It is worth recalling at this stage that taking a confluence of earlier non-Muslim and later Muslim sources into consideration serves to raise the standard of our study of the Qur'ān and Aramaic Gospels, as well as the role of dogmatic re-

228 It is difficult to overstate the depth and complexity of the dialogue between the Qur'ān and late antique Syriac Christian literature. This is especially the case concerning verses from mystical hymns which frequently echo the imagery, ethics, and style of Qur'ānic *āyah* s.

229 See Clair-Tisdall, *The Original Sources of the Qur'ān*, 85–100.

230 Ardā Virāf, *The Book of Arda Viraf in The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East*, Vol. 7, Ed. Charles Horne, New York; London: Parke, Austin, and Lipscomb, 1917; "Bahmān Yasht," trans. E. W. West, in (ed. Max Müller) *Pahlavi Texts*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1880, 189–235. The *Ardā Virāf Nāmak* is also in strong dialogue with Hadith reports on Hell.

231 Anonymous, *The Gospel of Thomas: the Hidden Sayings of Jesus*, Trans. Harold Bloom, San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1992; Anonymous, *Arabic Infancy Gospel* [Infancy Gospel of James; Protovangelium of James], Ed. M. Perova, *Il Vangelo arabo dell' Infanzia*, Jerusalem, 1973; Anonymous, *The Book of Enoch [I Enoch]*, Ed. R. H. Charles, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893; Anonymous, *The Book of Jubilees: a critical text*, Ed. James C. VanderKam, Lovanii: E. Peeters, 1989; Anonymous, *The Apocalypse of Abraham*, Ed. G. H. Box, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; New York: Macmillan, 1918; Anonymous, *The Testament of Abraham*, Ed. G. H. Box. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; New York; Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1927. For a series of apocryphal texts in Syriac that were part of the Qur'ān's milieu see *Apocrypha Syriaca: The Protevangelium Jacobi And Transitus Mariae With Texts From The Septuagint, The Corān, The Peshitta, And From A Syriac Hymn In A Syro-Arabic Palimpsest Of The Fifth And Other Centuries*, Ed. A. S. Lewis. London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1902. See further Cornelia Horn, "Intersections: The Reception History of the Protevangelium of James in Sources from the Christian East and in the Qur'ān," *AJ* 17, 2006, 113–50.

articulation therein. The method behind using these sources in a meaningful way is of no less importance.

The analysis phase will proceed as follows. Texts—that is, passages, phrases or words—in the Qur’ān and Aramaic Gospels are compared if general linguistic relationships are outwardly apparent—without emending the (typically) undotted written skeleton (*rasm*) of the traditional readings. Such relationships include philological, grammatical, lexical, phonological, and orthographical correspondences. General parallels with respect to content but not language, for which limitless possibilities exist, do not receive consideration. The Qur’ānic text is first read in the context of the cluster of verses with which it forms a logical whole—that is, the verses immediately before or after it. Then the text is checked alongside earlier Biblical, Rabbinic, Apocryphal, Pseudepigraphal, homiletic, historical, and epigraphic literature to identify if it has a precedent, echoes a source, outside of the Aramaic Gospel Traditions. Once the Qur’ānic text has been solely linked to the Aramaic Gospel traditions, the Islamic literary sources are consulted regarding opinions that can further shed light on the study’s findings thus far. The official, canonical scriptures—the ‘Uthmanic codex and the *Peshitta*—are initially compared side by side. Variant Qur’ān codices or Aramaic Gospel versions will be consulted and incorporated insofar as their content can contribute to the study.

Once the use of primary sources has been exhausted, the secondary literature is consulted for its insights on the passage(s) in question. After consulting all the literature and noting their insights, I will formulate a hypothesis concerning the Qur’ānic passage and its corresponding passage in the Aramaic Gospel Traditions. This study will show that the driving principle mediating the Qur’ān’s use of the Aramaic Gospel Traditions is dogmatic re-articulation. Thus will end the sequence of analysis.

However, the type of linguistic relationship (lexical, phonological, or otherwise) also plays a role in determining the results of our analysis. Phrases or words in the Qur’ān and Aramaic Gospels often share more than one linguistic relationship, making a typology of the relationships not immediately possible. This will have to wait until the very end of our analysis. Chapter 2 sets up “Prophetic Tradition” as the master narrative of the late antique Near East and places the Aramaic Gospel Traditions and the Qur’ān on a level field from which they can be compared. Furthermore, this study will break up its analyses into themes—chapters. Chapter 3 deals with the “Prophets and their Righteous Entourage;” Chapter 4 discusses “The Evils of the Clergy;” Chapter 5 delves into the place of the “Divine Realm;” and Chapter 6 explores the vivid language and imagery of “Divine Judgment and the Apocalypse” employed in both scriptures. Chapter 7 will then summarize the findings of the analysis phase (Chapters 3–6), construct a detailed typology of the linguistic relationships, and formulate a tentative reconstruction of how the Qur’ān’s milieu came to absorb and articulate the language of the Aramaic Gospel Traditions. This chapter will also discuss prospects for ongoing research as well as the phenomenon of Prophetic Tradition after the Qur’ān. The data accumulated in this study will be recorded in a number of appendices that should prove useful to the reader.

2 Prophetic Tradition in the Late Antique Near East

The following pages aim to illustrate the historical framework of the late antique Near East in order to pave the way for our comparative study between the Qur’ān and the Aramaic Gospel traditions. The salient socio-religious phenomenon in this milieu dubbed “prophetic tradition” was generally latent in the Zoroastrian and Christian spheres of the Near East. It was kept alive especially through the efforts of the waning Syriac speaking churches—along with their Aramaean and Arabian *body politic*—to reconsolidate themselves. In the late sixth and early seventh centuries, Syriac Christian patriarchs undertook great ventures to reformulate and unite Syriac Christian prophetic tradition (*mašlmānūtā*). Simultaneous with these efforts were the emergence of Arabian prophetic traditions—called in Arabic *islām* and philologically equivalent to Syriac *mašlmānūtā*—culminating in the Islam of the prophet Muḥammad.

Sectarianism as Prophetic Tradition

First we begin with our discussion on what prophetic tradition is and its role in the late antique Near East. Norman Brown states in his study concerning the Haggadic and Hellenic conflation of Moses with Alexander in Surah 18, that the Qur’ān “in a characteristically abrupt and monumental gesture, breaks with Judaic ethnocentrism and reprojects the prophetic tradition on a new transcultural, universal, world-historical plane.”¹ His statement reveals the Qur’ān’s view of “prophetic tradition”—and its power to reproject ethnocentrism into universalism—in a manner which this study seeks to utilize and further define. What essentially gives Brown’s idea of “prophetic tradition” vitality in the Qur’ān’s milieu is the strong sectarianism of the late antique Near East which, especially through Syriac Christian literature, melded together Rabbinic and Hellenic traditions, with a hodgepodge of heterogeneous traditions from other civilizations. This brings us to the discussion of sectarianism and prophetic tradition.

The sectarianism of the late antique Near East mentioned at the start of this examination is best understood in the framework of competing religious move-

1 Norman Brown, *Apocalypse and or Metamorphosis*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, 79.

ments with one function in common, “prophetic tradition.” In this study, prophetic tradition may designate a religion, faith, denomination, sect, school, or group of adherents which tends to be monotheistic in a general sense. More explicitly, it is the social lifestyle of abiding by the teachings, ethics and law of a divinely inspired or sanctioned leader. Such leaders were not just limited to prophets—who filled the late antique Near East—but included, furthermore, religious and political leaders whose interest it was to preserve and promote the tradition of the community.² Their teachings are (1) dogmatic in nature, which gives them the universalist feature mentioned by Brown, and (2) passed down from one generation to the next.

This lifestyle excluded, in large part, many Arabian (Q 7:194; 53:19–23) and Egyptian (for example, Q 7:127; 40:36–37) cults because of their emphasis on the role of multiple or human gods rather than a single prophetic agent in connection to the one God. Prophetic traditions competed with one another, and in doing so participated in the unending process of ‘cross pollination,’ that is, exchanging ideas with one’s rivals. This began in the Near East during the ancient period (ca. 2700 BCE–180 CE; see Figure 1.1) where heterodox religious practices in Persia and the Fertile Crescent coalesced into the first prophetic traditions.³ This process was intensified in the late antique period (180–632 CE; See Appendix B) with the emergence of ever more religious sects and stern dogmatic principles as a result of Christian controversies and the subsequent increase in prophetic claimants.⁴ 180 CE marks the death of Tatian whose *Diatessaron* was the first popular Syriac translation of the Gospels; it also approximates the beginning of popular Syriac Christian literature that became widely circulated throughout the Near East. In the late second and early third century, the Arabian peoples began to embrace Christianity and to play a vital role in the sectarian landscape of the Near East. The increased sectarianism and church fragmentation of the sixth century emboldened its rivals and culminated in Muḥammad’s new prophetic tradition called Islam in the seventh century. In order to understand the complex role sectarianism plays in this study we must briefly trace the beginnings of rivalries in Near Eastern prophetic tradition.

Judeo-Christian and Zoroastrian Background

The beginnings of Near Eastern prophetic tradition, of which Islam was the greatest manifestation, go back to the ancient period. Ancient kings who were said to have

- 2 For example, see the judges of Hebrew Scripture who lead their people to military victory and Pharaoh of Q 40:46 who leads his people into hell.
- 3 The date of 2700 BCE approximates the date of Gilgamesh in Victor Matthews and Don Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*, New York: Paulist Press, 1991, 19.
- 4 For more on this see Richard Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God: The Struggle to Define Christianity During the Last Days of Rome*, New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 2001; Furthermore, compare this with the periodization of 150–750 CE in Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity*, London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971, and 395–600 CE in Averil Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 395–600*, London, Routledge, 1993.

been semi-divine or communicated with God, like Gilgamesh, Hammurabi, and Croesus, sages like Ahīqār, Luqmān, and Aesop, and countless prophets including Zarathustra, Pythia, Enoch, Hūd, and Šāliḥ, through transcendent decrees received from divine beings and their access to universal truths, set an ancient precedent for emergent ideas of religious teachings, ethics, and laws. From ancient Mesopotamian notions of prophecy the prophetic tradition of ancient Israel originated.⁵ Its teachings were traced back to Adam as the founder of the human race, salvaged by Noah from a global flood and constituted through the Abrahamic covenant. Its ethics and laws were legislated to Moses on Mt. Sinai by the one God, mandated to King David and upheld by numerous Hebrew prophets.

Following hard learned lessons at the hands of Assyrian cruelty in 722 BCE, Babylonian Captivity in 586 BCE and the subsequent destruction of Israel as a permanent political entity, the children of Israel renounced the pagan rites and lesser deities of what the Bible authors deemed was a sinful violation of their divine moral code. The result was the monotheistic religion known as Judaism founded upon the Mosaic Law. Despite the hardships withstood by the children of Israel, Judaism remained ideologically popular and enjoyed a great deal of recognition as different sects of this tradition branched off. One reason for the rise of so many branches was that prophecy in Judaism had come to an end, thus delivering the authority of prophethood to the institution of the clergy.⁶

Vestiges of the ancient priestly class known as the Sadducees (cf. Zadokites; 2 Samuel 8:17; 1 Kings 4:2; Matthew 1:14, 22:19) remained by the beginning of the common era when a new class of rabbis known as the Pharisees took over as champions of Rabbinic Judaism (for instance, Matthew 23:2). Samaritan Judaism, which began in the pre-exilic era and further emphasized the Mosaic Law, continued to develop parallel to Rabbinic Judaism. Within Judaism, however, competing prophetic traditions, the lack of political sovereignty, and feelings of suffering and persecution at the hands of foreign powers gave rise to new movements in Palestine. These include the militancy of Jewish Zealots whose aim was to liberate Israel from the Roman yoke, and the strong eschatological beliefs of Essene communities.

An essential component of this eschatology was the messianic impulse. Probably influenced by the Zoroastrian *saoshyant* (Avesta Yasna 46:3; 61:5), it evolved into the hope for a powerful military leader who would redeem Israel's Davidic kingship and Aaronic priesthood.⁷ This impulse was kindled by Cyrus the Great's (d. 530 BCE) return of the Israelites to the land of Palestine in 538 BCE, the partial restoration of their temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 6:3–5) and the short-lived Hasmonean kingdom some centuries later (140–37 BCE; 1 Maccabees). Competing prophetic traditions came to include the adherents of dozens of messianic claimants

5 Matthews and Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels*, xiii.

6 This is evident in the grouping of prophets and patriarchs in the same category in Narsai, *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, Ed. R. H. Connolly, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909, 101. Cf. also discussion in *Ibid.* 159–60.

7 John Waterhouse, *Zoroastrianism*, London: Epworth Press, 1934, 125.

and prophets including Judas of Galilee (d. ca. 4 CE; Acts 5:37), Jesus of Nazareth (d. ca. 32 CE), Simon Magus (first century CE; Acts 8:9–24), Montanus (second century CE) and Simon Bar Kokhba (d. ca. 135 CE), all of whom were defeated.

In Palestine, the revolutionary doctrine of the prophet Jesus (for example, Luke 4:24; 9:19; John 4:19; 6:17; 7:14) concerning unwavering love flourished in the context of wisdom from Hillel the Elder (d. ca. 10 CE); his position on divorce flourished in the circles of Shammai (d. ca. 30 CE)⁸ and his ideas about repentance and the impending arrival of the kingdom of God apocalyptic emerged in the circles of John the Baptist (d. ca. 30 CE; Matthew 3:2). Jesus's followers also became prophets and spread the Good News after the day of Pentecost throughout Jerusalem (Acts 2:1–4) and later to Antioch (Acts 11:27–30; see further Didache 11). Increased political turmoil and subsequent Near Eastern sectarianism expanded the phenomenon of prophetic tradition to include miracle workers like Apollonius of Tyana (first century CE), and founders of new religious movements based on Jesus's revolutionary teachings concerning the Mosaic Law. Saul of Tarsus (Paul; d. ca. 67 CE) was a Hellenized Jew—not unlike the philosopher Philo of Alexandria (d. ca. 50 CE) and the historian Josephus (d. ca. 100 CE)—who claimed direct inspiration from Jesus (Galatians 1:11–16). After disputing with Jesus's disciples—especially Peter (d. 67 CE) upon whom the Catholic Church was built—concerning the applicability of Jewish Law, Paul broke with the burgeoning Jerusalem church and preached to the Gentiles across the Mediterranean (Galatians 1:22–24; 2:11–14). For Gentiles around the world, including those in Arabia (Galatians 1:15–17), their salvation soon came through the death and resurrection of Jesus *the* Messiah.

Christianity broke away from Judaism, whose adherents no longer possessed their own polity and whose Rabbinic manifestation slowly developed into a scholarly form of orthodoxy before the Common Era. An example of this orthodoxy can be seen in the views of Rabbi Akiva ben Joseph (d. ca. 135 CE) who was one of the greatest authorities of early Rabbinic Judaism.⁹ In contrast to this, syncretistic prophetic traditions—Jewish-Christian sects—championed by prophets or prophetic leaders whose teachings and sects were often branded as heretical by later orthodoxy survived in marginal enclaves. For instance, the prophet Elchasai (first century CE) who seceded from the Ebionites—a Jewish-Christian sect that held fast to the Jewish law—came to influence the people of Mesopotamia—especially the Sabians of Harran and the Mandaeans of southern Mesopotamia and Khuzistan—who became known for practicing full-body baptism.¹⁰ Hence, the Sabian-Mandaeans follow the teachings ascribed to John the Baptist, as well as other prophets before him. Basilides (d. 140 CE), Marcion of Sinope (d. 160 CE), Tatian (d. ca. 180 CE), Bardaisan (d. 222 CE)—whose *Book of the Laws of Countries* may

8 On both see Jeffrey Gibson, *Temptations of Jesus in Early Christianity*, London; New York: T & T Clark, 2004, 265. On Hillel see further Johnson, *A History of Christianity*, 16.

9 Louis Ginzberg, *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, “Akiba ben Joseph.”

10 See in relation Gerard Luttikhuisen, *The Revelation of Elchasai: Investigations into the Evidence for a Mesopotamian Jewish Apocalypse of the 2nd century and Its Reception by Judeo-Christian Propagandists*, Tübingen: Mohr, 1985, 165–69.

be considered a third-century compendium of prophetic traditions¹¹—and various other dualists, Gnostics, reformers, and syncretists enriched Near Eastern sectarian debate from the margins. The work of later Christian authors makes it clear that such early reformers considered themselves prophets,¹² that is, individuals who communicated with what was understood as divine, transcendental beings.

In the late antique period, Zoroastrianism evolved from the national prophetic tradition of the Iranian peoples stretching back centuries into the official Sasanian religion—that is, the religion adopted and sanctioned by the political and military leader (the king, *shāh*, emperor, phylarc, or tribal leader). Mainstream Christianity triumphed over its competitors and, similarly, became the official Roman and Byzantine religion. The undying rivalry between both empires caused them to use religion in order to legitimate comparable but mutually hostile cultural ideas of sacred universal rule and sovereignty.¹³ For both faiths, official religion became orthodox religion. It was the approval, sponsorship and propagation of a particular prophetic tradition by the *shāh* or emperor, and his enforcement of a single dogmatic interpretation, that gave it legitimacy. This legitimacy came at the detriment of other prophetic traditions that did not enjoy the approval of the state. In the case of Christianity and Zoroastrianism, the path to widespread adherence and orthodoxy was the same: imperial power and formal decrees.

Zoroastrian ideas became set and spread through strong kings and influential priests. Centuries after Persia had politically dominated the ancient Near East, Tiridates I (first century CE) further entrenched Zoroastrianism in the region. This is because he is credited with the beginnings of compiling Avestan scripture by the Parthian king Vologases (d. ca. 191 CE), which is lost.¹⁴ In contrast to the Parthian Empire (247 BCE–224 CE), the Sasanian Empire (226–651 CE) was somewhat more centralized. The centralization of its religious sphere was a natural outcome of this policy. Therefore, after Ardashīr I (d. 241) finally proclaimed Zoroastrianism the Sasanian Empire's official state religion, new imperial commissions were enacted to re-compile the *Avesta*.¹⁵ After him, Shāhpūr II (d. 379) and Khusrāw Anūshirvān (d. 579) managed under the supervision of numerous priests—like Tōsār and Atūrbād—to complete this task.¹⁶ In addition to this, priests like Ardā Virāf (sixth century) further disseminated and developed the ideas of Zoroastrianism by increasing the corpus of Pahlavi religious texts, like the *Ardā Virāf Nāmak*.¹⁷ Among the common ideas Zoroastrianism spread was the special place

11 Bardaisan, *The Book of the Laws of Countries*, Ed. H. J. W. Drijvers, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007, 41–63.

12 For example, Ephrem, *St. Ephraim's Prose Refutations*, 53–8.

13 Matthew Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth: Art and Ritual of Kingship Between Rome and Sasanian Iran*, Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009, 1–2.

14 Rastanji Sanjana, *Zarathushtra and Zarathushtrianism in the Avesta*, Leipzig: O. Harrosowitz, 1906, 77–8.

15 *Ibid.*, 79–80.

16 *Ibid.*, 80–3.

17 Ardā Virāf, *The Book of Arda Viraf in The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East*, Vol. 7, Ed. Charles Horne, New York; London: Parke, Austin, and Lipscomb, 1917.

of the prophet, the importance of ritual, and the dualism latent within Zoroastrianism—including the battle between light vs. dark, and good vs. evil—which permanently influenced all prophetic traditions to come.¹⁸

The priests were commissioned by the state—that is, the *shāh* himself—and were therefore the guardians of Zoroastrian orthodoxy. The popularity of the prophets Mani (d. 276) and Mazdak (d. ca. 528) did not ultimately gain the long-term support of the strong Zoroastrian priestly class, nor the state.¹⁹ Mani was persecuted fiercely, although Manichaeism remained an appealing religious path for many adherents well into the early Abbasid era (750–945).²⁰ Furthermore, Mazdak’s teachings became heresy with the death of his patron Kavād I (d. 531). And so Zoroastrianism survived the challenges of rival prophetic traditions to win the day. Perhaps the most significant idea to disseminate among the pious masses, and which all subsequent prophetic traditions had to doctrinally reckon with, may be summed up in the words of the Sasanian high priest Kārtīr Hangripe (third century) in his efforts to blot out the fatalism inherent in the teachings of Zurvānism, “there is a paradise and there is a hell!”²¹

Similarly were the Neoplatonic and Gnostic impulses of the Hellenic sphere, especially the idea behind the world of archetypes vs. that of the imperfect physical world, a contributor to the otherworldliness of paradise and the spirit.²² One further consequence of this thought on religious circles was the glorification of the human spirit and the debasement of the human body.²³ A prominent center of Hellenic philosophy was Alexandria, where its philosophical base melded with Egyptian religious ideas. Although not possessing a dualistic worldview or the office of prophet *per se*, Egyptian religion was rich enough in religious imagery and mythological lore that its ideas penetrated into the doctrinal fabric of prophetic traditions.²⁴ These different religious currents contributed to the development of Christian canon, theology, and the doctrine of the Trinity, which began with the writers of the Gospels, Pauline letters and deeply influenced the guardians of early Christian orthodoxy.²⁵

Eusebius’ description of Phillip the Arab (d. 249) confessing his sins in church on Easter service would—if we accept this story—make him the first Christian

18 Waterhouse, *Zoroastrianism*, 57–63.

19 *Ibid.*, 109.

20 Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 1:291.

21 Martin Sprengling, *Third Century Iran, Sapor and Kartir*, Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1953, 28. Cf. also the idea of *dahr* in Q 45:23–24; W. Montgomery Watt, “Dahr,” EI².

22 Johnson, *A History of Christianity*, 45. See further James D. G. Dunn, *ABD*, “Christology;” Thomas H. Tobin, *ABD*, “Logos;” Jarl Fossum, *ABD*, “Son of God.”

23 Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, 52–9, 74–9, 136, 188.

24 Baldick, *Black God*, 44–66.

25 These include Irenaeus of Lyons (d. ca. 202), Tertullian (d. ca. 220), Athanasius (d. 373), Augustine of Hippo (d. 430), and Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444), all of whom came from different ethnic and cultural milieus of the Roman Empire. For more on the crucial role played by the latter three see Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God*, 96–262.

emperor of Rome in 244–49.²⁶ However, the empire remained largely pagan. Soon afterwards cracks in the empire were staved off when Diocletian (d. 311) established the tetrarchy in 293. Only later did Rome itself follow the imperial precedent of its greatest rival—Sasanian Persia—when Constantine I (d. 337) converted to Christianity around 312, and when Theodosius I (d. 395) decreed Christianity the Roman Empire’s official religion in 380.²⁷

Where imperial Sasanian commissions renewed ancient Persian prophetic tradition, the ecumenical councils of the Roman Empire defined Christian prophetic tradition by means of consensus. The Councils of Nicaea in 325, Ephesus in 431, and Chalcedon in 451 condemned Arius (d. 336), Eutyches (d. 456), and Nestorius (d. 451) respectively, ultimately asserting that Jesus’s two natures—the divine and human—were in fact unified by one *hypostasis*.²⁸ In its wake were left three competing Christian confessional groups—the Chalcedonian Dyophysites (including Melkites), non-Chalcedonian Dyophysites (East Syrians; Nestorians), and Jacobites (Monophysites). That each of these denominations enjoyed some level of state support—that is adoption by ruling dynasties and subsequent sponsorship under political entities—and especially with the rise of lesser kingdoms, meant the gradual but inevitable dominance of Christianity over Zoroastrianism in the late antique Near East. In other words, smaller kingdoms located between both the Byzantine and Sasanian empires, like Osrhoene and Adiabene, soon converted to Christianity. The Arabian peoples were in large part the reason for this shift.

The Arabian Peoples and Christianity

Sources attest to the fact that Christianity was adopted by the Arabian peoples throughout the late antique period, which eventually contributed to the development of Qur’anic teachings and Islamic doctrine. In the *Doctrine of Addai*, a proto-Jacobite legend of the third to fourth century, Abgar V Ukāmā (d. ca. 50 CE), who was phylarc of the Mesopotamian kingdom of Osrhoene (132 BCE–244 CE) and from a line of Arabian royalty dating back to the second century BCE, converted to Christianity at the hands of Addai (d. second century CE), one of Jesus’s seventy-two followers.²⁹ The demise of the once great Nabataean empire in 106 CE, possibly recalled in Q 89:7, created a vacuum filled by Arabian vassals who would strengthen the growing Near Eastern polarity between Persians and Romans pressing in from the east and west.³⁰ The power vacuum created by

26 Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History*, English trans. Christian Cruse, New York: Stanford and Swords, 1850, 6:34, 252.

27 Charles Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire*, New York: Routledge, 2004, 1, 240–52; Johnson, *A History of Christianity*, 104–7.

28 Johnson, *A History of Christianity*, 92.

29 For more see Labubnā bar Sennāq, *Mallepānūtā d-Addai Shelihā*, Ed. George Phillips, London: Trübner & Co., 1876, trans. George Howard, *The Teaching of Addai*, Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations 16; Early Christian Literature Series 4, Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981.

30 This polarity fractured the indigenous (mainly) Aramaean population of the Near East into imagining their national past as Assyrian vs. Syrian. For more on this see Richard Payne, “The Rise

the fall of largely pagan Arabian city-states like Hatra and Palmyra in 241 and 272 respectively were filled by increasingly Christian tribal groups coming from South Arabia, probably in the wake of the repeated collapse of the Ma'rib dam in Yemen recalled in Q 34:15–16 (ca. 145 BCE–575 CE). Most notable among them were the Banū Ghassan (ca. 220–638) and the Banū Lakhm (ca. 266–633). The Banū Kindah (ca. 425–529), a vassal to the Jewish Himyarite kingdom of Yemen, exerted great influence in Mesopotamia until the Lakhmids overtook them.

The Lakhmids, as the Sasanian buffer state, were a confederation of Arabian and Aramaean peoples who accepted Christianity after the conversion of their king Imru' al-Qays b. 'Amr (d. 328).³¹ Al-Ḥīrā, the Lakhmid capital in Iraq after 266, soon became a major center of East Syrian Christianity.³² By the sixth century the Persian Empire was, via the Lakhmids and the Sasanian *marzbāns*, able to exert enough control over Arabia to extract taxes from Medina through its Jewish inhabitants.³³ In fact even the influence of Zoroastrianism was felt in Arabia during this time. Later Islamic literary sources like Ibn Kathīr's (d. 774/1373) *Sīrah* speak of a semi-legendary Arabian prophet called Khālid b. Sinān b. 'Ayth al-'Absī (sixth century?) who flung himself into the *nār al-ḥarratayn* in order to extinguish the (Zoroastrian?) fire cult that thrived there.³⁴ West of the Persian sphere of influence, the Syrian counterparts of the Lakhmids were the Ghassanids who were protectors of Byzantium and who became Melkite Christians sometime in the fifth century. During this same century in the South Arabian city of Najrān, Christianity flourished—perhaps at the expense of earlier Judaism—under the auspices of Axum and Byzantium.³⁵ The death of Al-Ḥarith (St. Aretas; d. 523) and the “martyrs of Najrān” transformed the city into an essential pilgrimage stop for Christians coming from the Byzantine and Sasanian empires. Furthermore, sectarian strife and the suffering of their Christian brethren in South Arabia captured the attention of the pious masses, as well as Q 85:4–8.

Further Syriac literature reveals that Arabian groups were sweeping into Syria and Mesopotamia in the fifth century and converting to Christianity by the sixth

of Islam and Christian Society in Iraq”, Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2009; Philip Wood, *We Have no King but Christ: Christian Political Thought on the Eve of the Arab Conquests in Greater Syria*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. Cf. further Sergio N. Nosedá, “From Syriac to Pahlavi: The Contribution of the Sassanian Iraq to the Beginning of the Arabic Writing” in idem. (eds), *Die dunklen Anfänge*, 266–92.

31 Henry Lammens and Irfan Shahid, EI², “Lakhm.”

32 A. F. L. Beeston, EI², “al-Ḥīrā.”

33 F. E. Peters, *Muḥammad and the Origins of Islam*, Albany: SUNY Press, 1994, 68.

34 Ismā'īl b. 'Umar b. Kathīr (d. 774/1373), *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah*, English trans. Trevor Le Gassick, *The Life of the Prophet Muhammad: Al-Sira Al-Nabawīyya*, Vol. 1, Reading: Garnet Publishing, 1998, 73–5. Cf. Pellat, EI², “Khālid b. Sinān b. 'Ayth al-'Absī.” Despite the problematic nature of such a late report, the fact that Khālid's appearance and anti-Zoroastrian stance coincides with a historical time period in which Persian influence in parts of Arabia was strong, and that it provides evidence—albeit somewhat legendary in form—for the pre-Islamic institution of prophecy with which Arabians were very familiar (see below), may give this kind of story some level of credibility.

35 Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah*, 1:33.

century.³⁶ Strong kinship ties between Arabic speaking Christians in the Fertile Crescent and their Yemeni kindred in South Arabia, as was the case with tribes including Banū Taghlab, Tanūkh, Tamīm, Ṭayy', Kalb, Kindah, as well as the dominance of the Syriac dialect in the Arabian religious sphere, propagated the Christianity of Aramaic speaking prophetic traditions throughout the Peninsula and made it the prophetic traditions with which the Arabians were most familiar and to which they belonged.³⁷ This is not least because the Arabians of the Ḥijāz took sides in the imperial warfare between the Byzantines and Sasanians (Q 30:1–5)³⁸ and also because they became embroiled in sectarian warfare between the Jews of South Arabia, initiated by Yūsuf As'ar Yathār Dhū al-Nuwās (d. ca. 525) and the Monophysite Christians of Abyssinia under orders from Constantinople, led by their king Abrahah al-Ashram (d. ca. 553; Q 105).³⁹ According to Ibn Ishāq, in the year of the elephant—which was the year of Muḥammad's birth (570) or shortly before then—the Abyssinians attempted to seize the Ka'bah in Mecca and, furthermore, built the church shrine *al-qulays* or *al-qalīs* (Gk. *ekklesia*?) in San'ā' to rival its eminence.⁴⁰

There is further reason to believe that there was a sustained presence of Christianity in pre-Islamic Ḥijāz specifically. The Islamic literary sources mention numerous Christian landmarks in the vicinity of Mecca and Medina, not least of which were Mary's church (*masjid maryam*), the Christian station (*mawqaf al-naṣārā*), the Christian cemetery (*maqbarat al-naṣārā*), and most importantly the icon of the Virgin Mary within the Ka'bah's pantheon itself.⁴¹ The sources also state that tribes in the Ḥijāz like the 'Udhra, and even members of the Quraysh—especially the Banū Asad b. 'Abd al-'Uzzā and their Meccan ancestor 'Abd al-Masīḥ b. Buqīlah (or Nuqīlah) b. Jurhum who is alleged to have served Kusrāw Anūshirwān (d. 579) in Syria—were all Christians.⁴² Furthermore, Arabic speaking Christians like 'Adī b. Zayd (d. first/seventh century) and al-A'shā (d. ca. 3/625) were poets of the highest order and their poetry remained an important part of Arabian oral tradition in the region. However, there are no remains of a pre-Islamic Arabic (North Arabian) literary tradition, Christian or otherwise.⁴³ At the same time, the Arabic speaking

36 Isaac of Antioch, *Homiliae*, 576–92 (homily 48–49) bewails the fall of *bet hūr* to the savage 'arbāye and sons of Hagar; Aḥūdemmeḥ, *Histoire d'Ahoudemmeḥ et de Marouta, métropolitains Jacobites de Tagrit et de l'Orient*, Ed. F. Nau, *PO* 3, 1909, 24–5, speaks of the prosletyization of Arabians in the region of *bet 'arbāye*.

37 Trimmingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, 203.

38 Wāḥidī, *Asbāb nuṣūl al-qur'ān*, 354–5. However, Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-qur'ān*, 2:319 alleges that Ibn 'Umar was confused and suspected that perhaps it was the Romans who were victorious (*ghalabat*) based on their military success in Syria.

39 M.R. Al-Assouad, *EP*², "Dhū Nuwās, Yūsuf As'ar."

40 Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah*, 1:41.

41 Azraqī, *Akhbār*, 248, 962; Shams al-Dīn al-Muqaddisī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī ma'rīfat al-aqālīm*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1877, 77.

42 Abū al-'Abbās al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1881, 1:6; Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-aḡhānī*, 21 vols, Ed. R. Brunnow, Bulaq; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1888, 8:139.

43 Cf. difference of opinion between Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, 50 and Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*, 515.

Christians of the Hijāz and nearby provinces were inextricably tied to Christian communities in the north. They relied, therefore, on the literary traditions of the Aramaic Christians with whom they lived side by side for centuries.⁴⁴

Educated in the liturgical and scriptural Aramaic literature of their churches, early Arabic speaking Christians integrated such wisdom into the longstanding Arabian oral tradition. Arabian peoples of late antiquity were an integral audience of the dialogues, treatises, and histories of Christian Aramaic literature—especially Syriac. Syriac Christian literature belonged as much to the Arabian peoples as it did the Aramaeans.⁴⁵ This is because centuries of intermingling between both peoples evolved into the intimate relationship between Syriac speaking Christian groups and the tribal and urban centers of Arabia in the late antique period.⁴⁶

Both peoples of late antiquity submitted to the ethics, laws, and teachings of Syriac Christian literature, passed down from one generation to the next. This act of submission was called in Syriac *ašlem* (lit. to give up, surrender, hand down, hand

- 44 Even the ancient scriptures, originally written in languages like Akkadian, Ancient Egyptian, Biblical Hebrew, and Avestan were translated into the vernacular of the late antique Near East and spurred new literary works. Although many of these were preserved in Coptic, Pahlavi, Greek, and Ethiopic, most of the ancient prophetic scriptures were known to the Arabian peoples through dialects of Aramaic. See further Bell, *The Origin of Islam*, 17.
- 45 Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam*, 67. Unlike peoples from other Near Eastern nations like Persia, Egypt, or Anatolia, the Arabians of late antiquity had no access to an earlier or native corpus of written literature. They were therefore compelled to read the works of their neighbors, which were predominantly Syriac in language and Christian in identity. In relation to this, Suyūfī, *Itqān*, 6:2169 notes that since the dawn of antiquity the languages of scripture (*kitāb*) were Syriac (*suryānī*) and—presumably in light of the Qurʾān—Arabic (*ʿarabī*).
- 46 Tizīnī, *Muqaddimāt*, 585; Griffith, “Christian Lore and the Arabic Qurʾān,” 116, alludes to this point. Furthermore, the Arabian and Aramaean spheres of the Near East demonstrated a close and fluid relationship in the first millennium BCE through the late antique period. Some scholars have therefore acknowledged a Syro-Arabian geographical space. Not only does Trimmingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, 41 talk about the “Syro-Arab Region,” he also mentions the “Aramaeo-Arab Peoples” *in ibid.*, 7–20. See also Luxenberg, *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran*, 15. Arabians and Aramaeans of antiquity were bound together by, among other things, political alliances. See Jan Retsö, *The Arabs in Antiquity: Their History from the Assyrians to the Umayyads*, London; New York: Routledge, 2003, 132, 177. This was not exclusive to Aramaean and Arabian tribes but included other Semites, like Assyrians, Phoenicians, and Israelites. Javier Teixidor, *The Pantheon of Palmyra*, Leiden: Brill, 1979, 40, 82. *Ibid.*, 8, 34 shows that they were also linked by kinship ties through marriage. Retsö, *The Arabs in Antiquity*, 174 similarly demonstrates that the same is so for cults and even priests. Retsö, *ibid.*, 286 further demonstrates that they were also linked through general ties created by nomadism. *Ibid.*, 129, 218; John Healey, *The Religion of the Nabataeans*, Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001, 32 argue that the region was also perpetually connected through commercial interests. See also Q 106:2. In addition, Meir Bravmann, *The Spiritual Background of Early Islam*, Leiden: Brill, 1972, 39; Teixidor, *The Pantheon of Palmyra*, 13–14 illustrate that religious cults, belief systems, and institutions were constantly renewing and reinforcing social relations. See also Q 53:21; 71:23. These had many forms, not the least of whose examples were the spread of various pagan cults by Arab tribes (Teixidor, *The Pantheon of Palmyra*, 17–19, 22, 24, 64; Han Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980, 146–76), the conversion of some Arab tribes to Judaism (Abraham Katsh, *Judaism in Islam*, xxi–xxii), and the Christian proselytizing of nomadic Arabians by Palestinian and Syrian missionaries (Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, 243–55. See also Galatians 1:17). See further Q 89:7.

over, deliver), which is the G-stem (Aramaic aph'ēl or Arabic fourth form af'al) of the root š-l-m. The active participle of this verb is *mašlem*, that is, “surrendering.” The *nomen agentis* of this verb is *mašlmānā*, meaning “surrenderer,” which has a negative connotation in Mark 14:11 and Matthew 26:25.⁴⁷ The emphatic form of this verb’s infinitive (equivalent to the Arabic *mašdar* or verbal noun) is *mašlmānūtā*, meaning “traditio,” “tradition,” that which is handed down.⁴⁸ An instance of this term is found in the Syriac Gospels where the Pharisees and Scribes question Jesus saying, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the clergy (*ayk mašlmānūtā d-qašišē*⁴⁹) but rather eat with defiled hands?” (Matthew 15:2; Mark 7:5; cf. also Acts 28:17). Later on, the revivalist nature of prominent Syriac authors—that is, those who saw themselves as divinely inspired to protect and renew the faith—enriched *mašlmānūtā* with deeper meanings. The richness of meaning imbued onto *mašlmānūtā* was imparted by the many attempts with which both East Syrians and Monophysites sought to unite their crumbling churches.

Restoration of the Syriac Churches: mašlmānūtā

The Syriac speaking churches attempted to revive their visions of *mašlmānūtā* and, in so doing, set an example for Arabian prophetic impulses and ultimately the Islam of Muḥammad.⁵⁰ It was one of the earliest witnesses to the rise of Islam, John Bar Penkaye (d. 687/68), who writes of the “prophetic tradition of Muḥammad” (*mašlmānūtā da-mḥamad*). He also discusses that as early as the sixth century, the Syriac speaking churches of the Near East were so weak and divided along hardened confessional lines that they eventually came to view the Islamic conquests of the following century as God’s punishment for their sectarian squabbling (cf. in relation *Gēnzā Rbā* R1:2:212–34).⁵¹ More specifically, the rejection of the Chalcedonian formula by the Jacobites in 513 (or 515) symbolized the final rupture in the Syriac speaking churches with Constantinople.⁵² During the late sixth and early seventh centuries the fragmented Syriac churches sought to recon-

47 This is the episode when Judas “surrenders” or “hands over” Jesus to the Romans.

48 Carl Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, Halis Saxonum: Sumptibus M. Niemeyer, 1928, 378; J. Payne-Smith, *A Compendius Syriac Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979, 581–2; Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 1567.

49 Unlike the Peshitta and Harklean versions, Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:217 records that Sinaiticus and Curetonius state “the commandments of the elders” (*pūqdānā d-sāybīn*).

50 Cf. in relation to our conception of prophetic tradition Peter Brown, “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity,” *JRS* 61, 1971; *The World of Late Antiquity*, 101–2, 182, 206. According to Brown, the “holy man” institution pervaded the late antique world. Cf. further Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

51 John bar Penkaye, *Ktābā d-rīsh mēllē*, Ed. Alphonse Mingana, SS 1, Mosul, 1908, 12, 18–140. It is imperative to keep in mind that while Christianity may have been more popular among the late antique Near Eastern populace, the absence of a universal (Catholic) church to unite the Christian body politic kept the disputing churches weak and divided, and it ensured, furthermore, no rapid or decisive religious victory against Zoroastrianism.

52 Bell, *The Origin of Islam*, 20.

solidate their doctrine and regain political power. The point is that this was a time in which prophetic traditions were being re-created in the Near East.

For instance, the doctrinal framework of East Syrian tradition, which began under the authority of Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 424), later developed under the leadership of Babai the Great (d. 628).⁵³ This is because both theologians were dogmatic manufacturers of the *mašlmānūtā* for “the entire church of the Persian country.”⁵⁴ This included the formulation of orthodox doctrine and religious identity.⁵⁵ At the Synods of 585, 596, and 605 the well developed concept of *mašlmānūtā* became frequently used in the East Syrian church to defend the exegesis or religious instruction (*mpaššaḡnūtā*; cf. Pahlavi *zand* in *Bahmān Yasht* 2:55) of Theodore and others whose *mašlmānwātā* (pl.; cf. in relation *Ardā Virāf Nāmak* 101:13) were oral chains of transmission—including names like Narsai of Nisibis (d. 502) and Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373)—going back to the founder of Syrian-Mesopotamian Christianity, the apostle Addai in Edessa (second century CE).⁵⁶ At any rate, Monophysite propagandists infiltrated the East Syrian community at this stage and hindered the reconsolidation of the East Syrian *mašlmānūtā*.⁵⁷ A number of features within East Syrian *mašlmānūtā* lend itself to our definition of prophetic tradition: (1) the dogmatic nature of Theodore and Babai’s teachings—further evidenced by their defending it from “innovation”⁵⁸—; (2) the canonization of Theodore’s teachings which suggest a level of divine sanction and prophetic authority on Theodore’s part; (3) and the successive oral transmission which kept the tradition alive.

It is clear from the genre of Syriac *mēmrē* made famous by Ephrem the Syrian and later mastered by Narsai the Great—who were crucial links in the chain of transmission of the East Syrian *mašlmānūtā*—that they were strong preservers and defenders of prophetic tradition, beginning with the prophets of the Old Testament right through the divinely ordained Syriac church fathers.⁵⁹ In the exceptional case of Jacob of Serugh (d. 521)—a unique figure of Syriac Christendom who took little interest in doctrinal controversies—he held the institution of prophecy in the highest regard.⁶⁰ For Jacob placed himself in the ranks of the prophets and sought to be one them.⁶¹

53 G. J. Reinink, “Tradition and the Formation of the ‘Nestorian’ Identity in Sixth-to Seventh-Century Iraq,” *CHRC* 89:1–3, 2009, 221–2.

54 Babai the Great, *Life of George*, in Paul Bedjan (ed.) *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha, de trois autres patriarches, d’un prêtre et de deux laïques nestoriens*, Paris: Ernest Leoux; Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1895, 13–14.

55 Ibid. 236, 238; See also *ibid.* 239, 241.

56 Ibid. 240, 243.

57 Ibid. 238.

58 Ibid. 228–9.

59 Sebastian Brock, “‘Syriac Dialogue’—An example from the past,” *JAAS* 18.1, 2004, 57, 64.

60 Jacob of Serugh, *Homily extracts*, English trans. R.H. Connolly, *DR* 27, 1908, 280 (652; On the Reception of the Holy Mysteries); *Jakob von Serug. Der Prophet Hosea*, Ed. W. Strothmann, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1973. *Homiliae selectae*, 3:486–7 makes it clear that prophecy remains alive and that the apostles (*šlīḥē*) became the heirs of the prophets.

61 In *ibid.* 5:466 (On the Presentation of Our Lord) Jacob associates himself with David, Isaiah and Immanuel and asks to “play the harp of prophecy,” implying that he thought of himself, or at least aspired to be, as a prophetic figure.

On the whole, the view that the Syriac church fathers were seen as the champions of the correct prophetic tradition is reinforced by the teachings of John, Monophysite bishop of Ephesus (d. ca. 586). His reforms in Anatolia were roughly simultaneous with the development of East Syrian *mašlmānūtā* in Mesopotamia. In part 3 of his *Ecclesiastical History* John recalls the dedication of the “famous and princely convents of ladies who had fled from Antioch at the commencement of the persecution,” who resisted the heretical doctrines of a patriarch called Eutychius saying, “we will never abandon the tradition of the Eastern Fathers (*mašlmānūtā d-abhātē madnḥāyē*) for as long as we live.”⁶² This was the unity to which John looked back and desperately sought—that is the tradition preserved and passed on through the succession of Syriac church fathers.⁶³

Hence, John renewed the call to unity among the ailing and fragmented *body politic* of the Syriac-speaking churches of the Near East. With the support of Justinian I (d. 565), he supervised the brutal persecution of heretical elements from Near Eastern Christendom ultimately in order to set up a united front against the Sasanian Empire and their potent Zoroastrian religious influences.⁶⁴ However, with the ascension of Justin II (d. 578) and the subsequent persecution of Monophysites, John lost his status as chief inquisitor and ended up a humbled prisoner until his death.⁶⁵ However, the hope for a unified Near Eastern church did not die with him; nor did John’s Syriac writings go unheeded by his audience, who remained highly involved in the fate of Near Eastern church affairs.⁶⁶ However, different groups reacted differently.

Religious Disassociation: ḥanpē and ḥunafā’

Groups that disassociated from the major religions of the late antique Near East created the religious niche that would ultimately come to be dominated by the Islam of Muḥammad. Over centuries of sectarian strife and political instability, some groups within the late antique Near East highly disputed the nature of Christian doctrine and became particularly disaffected by the fragmentation of the Near Eastern churches. They were equally unsatisfied with the ethnocentricity of Judaism, outdated prophetic traditions, and pagan cults. As the puritans of their day these groups practiced ‘religious disassociation.’ Meaning, [This means that] they

62 John of Ephesus, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus*, William Cureton (ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1853, 3.19, 180; See also *ibid.* 6.22, 392 for another usage of *mašlmānūtā*. *The Lives of the Eastern Saints*, Ed. E. W. Brooks, *PO* 17, 5–308; 18, 513–700; 19, 151–283.

63 Cf. in relation Jacob of Serugh, *Homiliae selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensi*, 6 vols, Ed. Paul Bedjan, Paris: Harrassowitz, 1902–1910, 3:347–75 (On the Transfiguration: line 313–25, 359–68, 581).

64 *Ibid.* 2.21, 101, 3.6, 159–60. As a Monophysite, John’s short lived inquisition was made possible as a result of Justinian I’s Monophysite leanings. Some of the heresies which posed a challenge to the Christian dogma of the Byzanto-Anatolian sphere included Zoroastrianism and Mithraism, which was a kind of Romanized Zoroastrianism.

65 *Ibid.* 3.1, 148, makes brief mention of this.

66 The Crisis of Syriac speaking churches lay in the fact that they each offered brands of Monophysite, Melkite, and East Syrian orthodoxy which quintessentially challenged one another.

wanted no part in organized religion, especially Christianity and Judaism. They sought rather to worship the one God freely according to the laws of old. Their Christian compatriots deprecated them by referring to them by the Syriac term *ḥanpē* (sg. *ḥanpā*) which had a wide range of meaning including “heathens, pagans, godless ones, hypocrites, profane ones, impious ones, apostates, gentiles/Greeks and Sabians (for example, Matthew 10:5).”⁶⁷ At least one community of these religious disassociationists or *ḥanpē* was present in the Ḥijāz during the sixth century. By then their Syriac appellation was articulated into Arabic as *ḥunafāʾ* (sg. *ḥanif*; cf. Diatessaron 2:28; 20:48; 27:18; and so on), which lost its pejorative meaning and came to signify a monotheist who was neither Jewish nor Christian.⁶⁸

In addition to this gloss, there is a contradictory tension in the Islamic sources as to whether this term refers to polytheists or monotheists. Attempts by Crone and Luxenberg to explain this tension by arguing that early Muslims mysteriously borrowed the pagan appellation *ḥanpā* and sanitized its meaning to denote Abrahamic monotheism appear random, arbitrary and do not resolve the tension.⁶⁹ This is because they do not explain why this group would choose the word *ḥanpā* specifically, nor why they would resort to the theatrical and circuitous process of incriminating themselves as *ḥanpē* (polytheists) and then correcting the mistake by sanitizing the term to show themselves as monotheists.

The term *ḥanpē* may be more plausibly be explained as follows. The attestation of *ḥ-n-p* in late antique Hebrew and Aramaic literature as “gentile,” “heathen,” “profane,” “impious,” ensures that this communicates the original gist of the term.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the root *ḥ-n-p/f* and similar roots in other Near Eastern languages similarly convey the meaning of “deviance” and “crookedness.”⁷¹ It is

67 Brockelman, *Lexicon Syriacum*, 117; Payne-Smith, *A Compendius Syriac Dictionary*, 149; Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 473. See also De Blois, “Nasrani and Hanif,” 18–19, which among other things argues that *ḥanif* connotes a meaning similar to “gentiles” in Jewish and Christian literature. See further John 7:35. In relation to this Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*, 3:2385 preserves that *sabaʾ*, “to become Sabian” became synonymous in Arabic with *kafar*, that is, “to become an apostate, reject the faith.”

68 Nöldeke, *Neue Beiträge*, 30; Luxenberg, “Syriac Influence on the Style of the Qurʾān,” 97; Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾān*, 115; W. Montgomery Watt, EP, “Ḥanif.” I am, furthermore, aware of what Donner, “The historical context,” 33 calls “Sirā as exegesis,” that is to say the Ibn Ishāq wrote a pious history in order to suit his interpretation of the Qurʾān. However, his pious narrative concerning a group(s) of Jewish-Christian disassociationists called *ḥunafāʾ* can be meaningful insofar as one can ‘re-read’ his work critically in the context of heathens (*ḥanpē*) from the Aramaic sphere.

69 Crone, *Hagarism*, 14; Luxenberg, *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran*, 39–44.

70 William Gesenius, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament Including Biblical Chaldee*, Boston: Bicker and Brewster 1849, 331, cites glosses including “to pollute, to defile; profane; to seduce to impiety and apostasy; impious, godless, polluted; profaneness, impiety, wickedness.” See further de Blois, “Nasrani and Hanif,” 19.

71 T. M. Johnstone, *Jibbāli Lexicon*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1981, 113; Leonard Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian: II*, Providence, RI: Scribe Publications, 1984, 83–5, 118. Similar roots in this case are those roots that rhyme with *ḥ-n-p/f* but wherein, due to corruption in borrowing or change over time, one radical has changed. For more on this phenomenon known as “Reimwort-bildung,” see Rainer M. Voigt, *Die infirmen Verbaltypen des Arabischen und das Biradikalismusproblem*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1988, 81–93.

evident from Syriac Christian sources, where the word *ḥanpē* and its derivatives occur frequently, that it is used not just literally but also rhetorically and polemically. An example of its rhetorical usage is found in John of Ephesus' *Ecclesiastical History* where he reprimands his fellow believers stating, "why do you sit as a Christian and judge the servants of God as a heathen (*ḥanpāi*)?"⁷² A further polemicization and sectarianization of the term *ḥanpūtā* (lit. heathendom) is evident in the meaning "impious" or its identification of rival monotheistic sects like "Sabians" (see earlier). Therefore, *ḥanpūtā* and by extension *ḥanpē*, served as a polemical-sectarian label imposed by one religious group upon a rival group who were considered "other," and who—all the while—were monotheistic in worldview. The point is that *ḥanpē* was not always used literally (that is, polytheists) but also as a means of slander (that is, impious monotheists). This sectarian phenomenon—attacking one's enemies by calling them polytheists—was a polemical tactic not merely in the sphere of Syriac Christian literature of the late antique Near East, but also in the Qur'ān's milieu.⁷³

Jewish sources, like the Babylonian Talmud, Josephus (d. ca. 100 CE), *Jubilees*, and Christian sources like Sozomenos of Gaza (d. ca. 450) attest to the fact that Arabians in the late antique period were increasingly abandoning pagan cults and developing a religious lifestyle more akin to that of Jews and Christians prior to Islam in which Abraham and Ishmael played a major role.⁷⁴ According to the Qur'ān, the *ḥunafā'* of the Ḥijāz came to view Abraham as the earliest *ḥanīf* since he came before both Hebrew and Christian scripture—vindicating him from the heretical stain latent of the *ḥanpē* in the Aramaic sphere. It informs us that he was not one of the *mushrikūn*.⁷⁵ It states,

Abraham was neither a Jew (*yahūdiyyan*) nor a Christian (*naṣrāniyyan*) but was rather a Hanafite-Muslim (*ḥanīfan musliman*). And he was not one of the polytheists (*mushrikūn*).

(Q 3:67: see also Q 2:135, 140; 3:64)⁷⁶

Firstly, The use of *muslim* in Q 3:67 clearly does not indicate a confessional identity, but rather an adjectival or adverbial qualifier to *ḥanīf*.⁷⁷ Abraham was, therefore, the symbolic founder of the most basic, non-denominational prophetic tradition—Hanifism. In addition, this verse is an emendation to the views espoused

72 John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History*, 1.9, 6.

73 Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam*, 67–87.

74 Cited from Peters, *Muḥammad and the Origins of Islam*, 120–21. Cf. in relation Thyen, *Bibel und Koran*, 44–47.

75 The evidence in de Blois, "Nasrani and Hanif," 23–4 supports this argument as it shows the development of two trajectories to the meaning of the word *ḥanpā*, the original pejorative meaning and a later Qur'ānic one.

76 Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam*, 15, 41, 90, 101, 163.

77 Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 71. See further Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext*, 71–86.

in Paul's Letters where Abraham is portrayed as the paragon of faith.⁷⁸ Paul's emphasis on Abraham's faith, his abolishment of circumcision (Romans 4:1–25), his criticism of Jewish Law and his nullification of Jewish superiority over heathens (Galatians 3:6–29), was re-articulated by the Qur'ān to give credence to the *ḥunafā'* (see in relation Chapter 3). It states,

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen [*'ammā*] through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ . . . There is neither Hebrew nor Gentile [*armāyā*] . . . for ye are all one in Jesus Christ.

(Galatians 3:8–28)

Q 3:67's reply to Galatians 8:29 is dogmatic by further limiting Paul's language to give preeminence, not to Christianity, but to a newer prophetic tradition associated with the *ḥunafā'*.⁷⁹ Abraham was, therefore, neither a Jew nor a Christian, but rather a heathen (*'ammā*), gentile (*armāyā*) who was—all the while—not a polytheist, that is, a Hanafite-Muslim.⁸⁰ Moreover, the Qur'ān rejects Paul's perception of Abraham, that "God would justify a heathen through faith," adding at the end of Q 3:67—almost as an afterthought—that "he was not one of the polytheists." It may even have been the case that the idea of religious disassociation was—in part—inspired by an interpretation of Paul's description of Abraham which imbued his heathen and gentile qualities in a positive light.

Still, some *ḥunafā'* succumbed to the proselytization of their revivalist Christian compatriots by converting to Christianity. In relation to this point, Lüling sees Hanifism as the oldest form of Christianity in Arabia, which he describes as an anti-trinitarian heresy;⁸¹ Abū Zayd sees Hanifism not as a step backward from Judeo-Christian prophetic tradition but rather as a midway point in the transition of the Arabian peoples away from idol worship towards Christianity.⁸² Included among the ranks of the *ḥunafā'* were: Warāqah b. Nawfal, the priestly cousin of Muḥammad's first wife Khadījah; his companions 'Uthmān b. Ḥuwayrith, 'Ubayd Allāh b. Jaḥsh;⁸³

78 See in relation Ahrens, "Christliches im Qoran," 190; Blois, "Nasrani and Hanif," 22–3. See further Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:138–40, 158 which portrays Abraham as the true believer and favors circumcision. For more on the portrayal of Abraham in the three faiths cf. Jon Levenson, "The Conversion of Abraham to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam" in Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman (eds), *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, Leiden; Boston: E. J. Brill, 2004.

79 See in relation De Blois, "Nasrani and Hanif," 26.

80 For more cf. Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext*, 86–7. Cf. in relation Mahmud Abdin Dajani, "The polemics of the Qur'ān against Jews and Christians," Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1953.

81 Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 21.

82 Abū Zayd, *Mafhūm al-naṣṣ*, 70–72. See further 'Imād Sabbāgh, *Aḥnāf: Dirāsah fī al-fikr al-dīnī al-tawḥīdī fī al-mantiqah al-'arabiyyah qabl al-islām*, Damascus: Dar al-Hasar, 1998.

83 Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah*, 1:163; Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, 1:252–53; Peters, *Muḥammad and the Origins of Islam*, 122.

and Umayyah b. Abī al-Salt al-Thaqafī (d. ca. 1/623).⁸⁴ Concerning Umayyah, like Khālid b. Sinān before him, the *Sīrah* ascribes to him Qurʾān-like poetry, the authenticity of which is debated among scholars, but nonetheless portrays him as an Arabian prophet from the ranks of the *ḥunafāʾ*.⁸⁵

The Final Prophetic Tradition: islām

Many *ḥunafāʾ* who did not convert to Christianity may have taken a new path—*islām*. One *ḥanīf* in particular, who possessed all the marks of a leader, was not satisfied with the relative indifference of Hanifism towards the social injustice of tribal society and its political irrelevance. Nor was he about to simply give in to Christianity. Empowered by the sectarian dialogue of the late antique Near East (Q 22:17), sensitized by deep mystical reflection (Q 53:1–18), dismayed by the social injustice of his tribal society (Q 4:2–10; 5:89; 81:8–10; and so on), and emboldened by the rise of an Arabian ethnic consciousness (Q 41:44; 42:47)⁸⁶ Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allah b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (ca. 570–632) of the Quraysh tribe “rose up” against the corruption of his society, like a prophet straight out of the Bible (cf. Q 73; 74; Isaiah 51; Jeremiah 1:17; Psalms 88; Ephesians 5:14). He channeled his divine insights and compassion for society’s downtrodden (see Chapter 3) into an ambitious, unprecedented project that would unite not merely all the churches of the Near East, but consolidate the entire religious fabric of the region and beyond into a world empire (Q 3:103; 21:106–107; 42:7; 61:9). Furthermore, if Shoemaker’s reading of the *Doctrina Iacobi* is right then Muḥammad may have led a military campaign into the coveted city of Jerusalem himself as late as 634, which is an insightful prospect.⁸⁷ In any case the bold

84 Umayyah b. Abī al-Salt al-Thaqafī, *Umajja ibn Abi’s Salt; die unter seinem Namen ueberlieferten Gedichtfragmente*, trans. F. Schulthess, Leipzig, 1911.

85 Despite the problematic nature of the *Sīrah*, considering the possible activity of Umayyah in the Qurʾān’s milieu is meaningful because it portrays him as possessing the guidance of Hanifism, while refusing to join Muḥammad’s *islām*, which is said to have emerged from Hanafite circles nonetheless. It seems rather odd to completely fabricate the character of Umayyah—or others like him—who heroically upheld the precepts of Hanifism during the allegedly impious days of the pre-Islamic *jāhiliyyah* and yet challenged Muḥammad’s interpretation of Hanifism. These details are especially embarrassing given that they occur within the very literature whose purpose it was to validate the prophethood of Muḥammad and his new faith. It is more likely that stories concerning the pre-Islamic religious personalities like Umayyah—minus the specific pious and romantic details—either (1) preserve a kernel of historical truth or (2) were piously imagined to be true by Muslim circles a century later based on historical recollections of the community concerning a multiplicity of prophetic impulses and religious groups in the Arabian sphere during the late antique/*jāhiliyyah* period.

86 See also Suliman Bashear, *Muqaddimah fi al-tārīkh al-ākhar: Naḥw qirāʾah jadīdah li al-riwayah al-islamiyyah*, Jerusalem: S. Bashīr, 1984, trans. *Arabs and Others in Early Islam*, Princeton: Darwin Press, 1997, 1–2.

87 Stephen Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet: The End of Muhammad’s Life and the Beginnings of Islam*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012, 20–7 places more weight on the non-Muslim sources studied by Robert Hoyland and seeks a middle ground, in my view, between his view and that of Patricia Crone.

project upon which Muḥammad embarked, which far exceeded the call to Christian unity preached by patriarchs like John of Ephesus, ultimately became the final manifestation of the entire Judeo-Christian sequence of prophetic traditions—the final *mašlmānūtā*—for which Muḥammad himself was proclaimed—not unlike Jesus before him—“the messenger of God and seal of the prophets” (*rasūl allāh wa khātām al-nabiyyīn*; Q 33:40).⁸⁸ It comes, therefore, as no surprise that the Qur’ān calls Muḥammad by the standard Hebrew and Aramaic word for prophet, *nabī*,⁸⁹ and that the name it gives to the new prophetic tradition which he established was the Arabic articulation of Syriac *mašlmānūtā*—that is *islām*. It means “submission” or “surrender” to God.⁹⁰ Its verbal origin *aslam* corresponds to the Syriac *ašlēm* and is also the G-stem (aph‘ēl/af‘al) of the root *s-l-m*, where Aramaic š corresponds to Arabic *s*. The active participle in Arabic frequently functions as the *nomen agentis*; and thus the new prophet, Muḥammad, appropriately called the followers of his *islām* the *muslimūn* (sg. *muslim*)⁹¹ who, in the Qur’ān, are explicitly made the heirs to the Judeo-Christian “line of prophets” (Q 2:136; see Chapter 3). Donner argues that the earliest members of this community were a diverse group of believers (*mu‘minūn*) in God and the Final Day (Q 2:62, 177; 4:95; 6:27; 8:60–64; 9:111; 10:104; and so on). This community included Jews, Christians, and other monotheists who joined Muḥammad’s movement.⁹² Furthermore, that the *ḥanīf* in a sense evolved into a *muslim* is suggested by the Qur’ān (see later discussion) and supported by scholarly studies.⁹³ Jeffrey considers both *islām* and *muslim* to be of Syriac origin.⁹⁴ However, Qur’ān specialists who have researched

88 Robinson, “The rise of Islam,” 189 appropriately refers to Muḥammad’s “call to monotheism” and the “catholic nature of early Islamic belief.” Robinson does, however, believe that this belief was in the beginning nearly indistinguishable from Jewish tradition. Cf. Jacob of Serugh, *Homiliae selectae*, 3:347–75 (On the Transfiguration: line 387–8). For more on the Qur’ānic “seal of the prophets” and its Aramaic background cf. J. Allan and D. Sourdell, EI², “Kḥātām, Kḥātīm.” Furthermore, for a critical study on Muḥammad’s claim to be the last prophet see David Powers, *Muhammad is Not the Father of Any of Your Men: The Making of the Last Prophet*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009. See Ibn Mas‘ūd’s codex which reads “a prophet who is last” (*nabiyyan khatam*; Q 33:40) in Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān*, 75.

89 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 276.

90 This interpretation is favored by L. Gardet, EI², “Islām;” Ramazan Zuberi, “Being like a teacher,” Answering Christianity, http://www.answering-christianity.com/aramaic_society.htm, 1–6. Cf. further “submit (*ešta‘badū*, lit. “enslave”) yourselves, therefore, to God” (James 4:7).

91 Nevertheless, Q 22:78 states about Abraham, *hu sammākum al-muslimīn min qabl*, “he [Abraham] called you Muslims long ago.”

92 This is a fundamental argument made by Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 69, 176, 212. Aside from using the Qur’ān as evidence in his argument, Donner cites a fairly reliable document preserved in the Islamic literary sources called the Constitution of Medina (*ṣaḥīfat al-madīnah*), other documentary evidence, and contemporaneous non-Muslim sources. See in relation Ibn Qinnās, *Sunnat al-awwalīn*, 193–5. Josef van Ess, “The Origins of Islam: A Conversation with the German Islamic Scholar Josef van Ess,” *Fikrun wa Fann*, <http://www.goethe.de/ges/phi/prj/ffs/imp/enindex.htm> believes that any early believers’ movements would have been lacking in centralized unity and spread out, rather, among the garrison cities (*amsār*).

93 David Margoliouth, “On the Origin and Import of the Names Muslim and Ḥanīf,” *JRAS*, 1903, 467–493; C.J. Lyall, “The Words Ḥanīf and Muslim,” *JRAS*, 1903, 771–784.

94 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 62–4.

the word *islām* have not really ventured beyond the Islamic literary sources to divulge the very core of its meaning.⁹⁵ At the same time, Andrae rightly alludes to general similarities between Muḥammad's new *islām* and the *mašlmānūtā* of Babai cited earlier.⁹⁶

Still, there is a specific dimension of meaning contained within the *islām* cited in the Qur'ān which links its usage directly back to the *ḥunafā'*. It states, "position your face towards the religion as a *ḥanīf* (*aqīm wajhak li al-dīn ḥanīfan*)" (Q 10:105; 30:30). In this latter example we see the beginnings of a religion being formed out of Hanifism. Elsewhere in the Qur'ān it states,

And who is better in religion [*al-dīn*] than he who surrenders his face [*aslamwajhah*] towards God while being upright [*muḥsin*] and follows the religion of Abraham as a *ḥanīf* [*millat ibrahīm ḥanīfan*; 4:125]⁹⁷

It appears that *aqīm wajhak* (position your face) comes from an earlier stage in the development of Muḥammad's prophetic tradition where *islām* may not yet have been the name chosen for it. This changed later on when the Qur'ān states *aslam wajhah* (surrender his face)—which is not without parallels in earlier Syriac literature—where the act of *islām* or being a *muslim* (that is *aslam*) became more or less equated with Abrahamic Hanifism. Another point is that the expression *millat ibrahīm ḥanīfan* appears to be a mysterious Aramaic phrase that the exegetes had trouble interpreting⁹⁸ and a point which modern Qur'ān specialists have debated.⁹⁹ A final piece of evidence which leads us to believe that Muḥammad's *islām* was received by some as Hanifism itself is found in comparing Q 3:19 of 'Uthman's codex with that of 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd (d. 31/652). The former states, "indeed the religion before God is *islām*"; the latter states "indeed the religion before God

95 While David Margoliouth, "On the Origin and Import of the Names Muslim and Ḥanīf," *JRAS* 35, 1903, 467–93 is aware of the Hebrew (*ibid.*, 483) and Syriac (*ibid.*, 475–78) substratum of both *islām* and *ḥanīf*, it seeks to understand both terms and contextualize them through Islamic literary sources, which is problematic as these sources are too late to provide an overarching context which can be believed at face value. Cf. also D. Z. H. Baneth, "What did Muḥammad mean when he called his religion 'Islam'?: The original meaning of Aslama and its derivatives," *IOS* 1, 1971, 183–90.

96 Andrae, *Mohammad*, 89–90. Further parallels include: the existence of highly developed exegesis or a traceable line of religious instruction (*mpaššaqnūtā*) which Syriac scholars received resembling the sub-tradition known as the Sunnah; the doctrinal war waged against innovation resembling the threat of *bid'ah*; and the active role of propagandists resembling the *du'āt* of different Muslims' political factions. Cf. also sayings of Coptic and Greek church fathers in this vein.

97 Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, 211, 227, records that the codex of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī and Ibn al-Zubayr preserves the Aramaic spelling of the name, *abrahām* or even *abrahēm*, in Q 2:118, 124.

98 For example, Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 3:259 merely interprets this phrase as "faithful" (*mukhlīṣ*).

99 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, 268–9. Luxenberg, *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran*, 65–7 believes the accusative case of *ḥanīfan* should be considered the Aramaic definite articleā.

is Hanifism (*al-ḥanifiyyah*).¹⁰⁰ Tizīnī's argument in this regard is concise and summarizes the point of this discussion. He sees Muḥammad's new prophetic tradition, which he calls *al-muḥammadiyyah* or *al-islām al-muḥammadī* (Muḥammadan Islam), as a second conservative phase growing out of what he deems a transitional religious manifestation he calls *al-ḥanifiyyah al-naṣṣrāniyyah* or Hanafite Christianity.¹⁰¹ The question is when did the shift from Hanifism to Islam occur? Donner hints that this shift may have occurred decades after Muḥammad's death (presumably by when the Qur'ānic text was standardized and the Umayyad bureaucracy Arabicized; see Chapter 1).¹⁰² I suspect the shift may have occurred earlier, perhaps towards the end of Muḥammad's life or shortly thereafter during the Wars of Apostasy (*ḥurūb al-riddah*; ca. 630–34 CE; see later discussion).

However, it is crucial to note that not all *ḥunafā'* flocked to the side of Muḥammad's *islām*. The *ḥanīf* turned Christian, Waraqah, sanctioned Muḥammad's movement, although never became a *muslim* himself. Some *ḥunafā'* like Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl (d. early seventh century?) refrained from all forms of organized religion and fled Mecca for the Syriac speaking monasteries in Mosul, and later those around Syria. Allegedly heeding the words of a monk he made for a speedy return back to his homeland to meet the new Arabian prophet only to get killed along the way.¹⁰³ Other *ḥunafā'*, especially Abū 'Āmir 'Abd 'Amr b. Ṣayfī al-Rāhib and Abū Qays b. al-Aslat, accused Muḥammad of corrupting Hanifism and took up arms with the Qurashīs against him.¹⁰⁴

Some Christians in Muḥammad's locale joined him early on, as well as others from far flung Christian centers in the Near East. For example, the *Sīrah* narrates that in Esfahan, the son of a Persian *dehqān*, named Māhbeh (or Rūzbeh)—known to Islamic tradition as Salmān al-Fārisī (d. ca. 36/657)—converted from Zoroastrianism to Christianity and then visited the Syriac Christian centers of Nisibis, Mosul, and Damascus before making it to Wādī al-Qurā in search for the new prophet called Muḥammad;¹⁰⁵ similarly the Hellenized Arab known as Ṣuhayb

100 Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, 32. See also *ibid.*, 179, 184. There would have been little reason to fabricate such a compromising detail on the part of Ibn Abī Dāwūd some two centuries after Islam had become established and widespread. It is, therefore, possible that Hanifism in this Qur'ānic context may recall an early stage in the development of Muḥammad's prophetic tradition in which Hanifism was still closely related to Islam.

101 In addition to this point Tizīnī, *Muqaddimāt*, 332, 375 adds that Waraqah and Muḥammad were part of a growing circle of religious malcontents and opposition in Mecca.

102 Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 58.

103 Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah*, 1:163–66; Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, 1:260–1.

104 Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam*, 123–4.

105 G. Levi Della Vida, Ep, "Salmān al-Fārisī or Salmān Pāk." Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī's (d. 275/888) *Sunan* 27:3752 states of Salmān, "I read in the Torah that the blessing of food consists in ablution (*wuḍū'*) before it. So I mentioned it to Muḥammad. He said, 'The blessing of food consists in ablution before it and ablution after it,'" provides plausible evidence that Salmān exercised some measure of influence on Muḥammad and his formulation of Islam. Although the Hadith corpus is suspect by nature, there is reason to believe that there is some small element of truth to this story. This is especially since the ritual of water purification (*wuḍū'* in Islam), which was common to late antique Judeo-Christian prophetic traditions, and which Salmān may have had a part

b. Sinān al-Rūmī (d. 38/659) was a former captive in Constantinople who also sought out the prophet Muḥammad.¹⁰⁶ The details of Ṣuhayb and Salmān's stories are likely apocryphal. However, they demonstrate that Christian elements from the Persian and Byzantine spheres¹⁰⁷ traversed Muḥammad's locality and, perhaps, played a role in the development of his prophetic tradition.

Moreover, Muḥammad's respect for church sanctity, which he was uniting and renewing on a level that Syriac Christian patriarchs could never have imagined, prohibited him from disposing of the icon of the virgin Mary and an image of Abraham when he was smashing the idols in the Ka'bah's pantheon.¹⁰⁸ It is also fitting that the standard word for house of worship or church in the Qur'ān is *masjid* (Q 7:29, 31; 9:108; pl. *masājid* Q 2:114; 9:17–18; 72:18), which comes from (Christian?) Aramaic *masgēd*.¹⁰⁹ The Qur'ān, in turn, refers to the Meccan house of worship surrounding the Ka'bah as *al-masjid al-ḥarām* (Q 2:149; 9:7, and so on). Other Christian *masājid* and holy sites filled Muḥammad's Ḥijāzī locale; and we know from the Islamic literary sources that Christianity was likely part of Muḥammad's Qurashī ancestry (see earlier). The sources also inform us that two of Muḥammad's closest companions and Islam's first two caliphs, Abū Bakr 'Abd Allāh b. Abī Quḥāfah al-Taymī (d. 13/634) and Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb al-'Adawī (d. 23/644), were known as “the sincere” (*al-ṣiddīq*) and “the savior” (*al-fārūq*) respectively. These honorific titles likely came through the Aramaic Christian sphere where *zīdīqā* and *pārūqā* are terms of tremendous religious significance. Notwithstanding the late nature of such reports, their existence in the Islamic literary corpus compels one to acknowledge the sustained presence of Christianity among Muḥammad's community and kindred. Hishām Ja'īt makes the claim—undoubtedly influenced by earlier authors like Andrae—that Christianity was so strong in Mecca that Muḥammad learned Syriac there and studied the works of Ephrem the Syrian.¹¹⁰ This bold claim lacks substantial evidence but deserves more attention.

in establishing in its Islamic guise, may have originated from the Perso-Zoroastrian sphere. See Cyril Glasse, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam*, Third Edition, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008, 571. For a literary analysis of this story see John Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1978, 6–7.

106 Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah*, 1:134–37; Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, 1:241–45; Jonathan Brockopp, *EQ*, “Captives.”

107 Persianate Christians like Paul the Persian (d. ca. 580), Aphrahat the Persian Sage (d. 345), and Tatian (d. ca. 180), as well as Byzantine Christians like Philoxenus of Mabbug (d. 523) were key players in the development of different trajectories in Christian prophetic tradition in the late antique Near East.

108 Azraqī, *Akḥbār*, 248; A. J. Wensinck, *EI*², “Ka'ba.” The possibility of syncretism is discussed in the footnotes of Chapter 7.

109 The *kasrah* on the *jīm* in *masjid* represents the *rbāṣā* on the *gamal* of *masged*. If the word were Arabic in origin we would expect a *fathah* instead as is the case with *asmā' al-makān* in Arabic grammar, for example *maktab*, *mal'ab*, and so on. Concerning Q 7:29, cf. further Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 335.

110 Hishām Ja'īt, *Tārīkhiyyat al-da'wah al-muḥammadiyyah fī makkah*, Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalī'ah li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr, 2007, 152–74.

At any rate, even after Muḥammad's death Christian groups and tribes of Arabian origin were given special treatment well into the Umayyad era (661–750 CE) and were unconditionally allowed to keep their Christian faith.¹¹¹ In light of such evidence it appears more fruitful to understand the historical Muḥammad primarily as a literate ascetic and reformer of Judeo-Christian prophetic tradition—not unlike the historical Jesus who preached his message as a reformer of Rabbinic Judaism—whose impulses were part of the fabric of Aramaic Christianity in sixth to seventh century Arabia.

This, however, did not mean that the relationship between Muḥammad and all the Christian elements in Arabia was amicable. Against those who turned towards (*aslām*) the religion of Abraham the Hanif, were those who “rejected and turned away” (*kafarū wa tawallū*) from their prophets (Q 64:6).¹¹² There is also reason to believe that during Muḥammad's lifetime some Christian groups setup rival houses of worship to fragment the *muslimūn*. Q 9:107 accordingly refers to, “those who took up a house of worship in offense and rejection and to cause division among the Muslims” (*al-ladhīn ittakhadhū maṣjidan ḍirāran wa kufran wa tafriqan bayn al-muslimīn*).¹¹³ Furthermore, the *qawm ulī ba's shadīd*, “nation of great ferocity” in Q 48:16, may be a reference to Arabic speaking Christian tribes that exercised strong influence during Muḥammad's lifetime.¹¹⁴ Due to such strong sectarianism in the Qur'ān's milieu, Q 42:13 calls upon Muḥammad's followers to preserve the unity of the prophetic tradition proscribed to Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, saying, “establish the religion, and about it, be not divided!” After disputing with Muḥammad over the encroachment of his *islām* into Yemeni territory, the Christians of Najrān were eventually able to resolve their disagreements.¹¹⁵ Nonetheless, on the eve of Muḥammad's death, virtually all of Arabia had at least nominally joined *islām*. Still, after his death the Christian communities of the eastern provinces of Arabia around Baḥrayn, whose lands were dotted with churches dating back to the fifth century,¹¹⁶ rebelled. It is further evidence of the entrenchment of Christianity among the Arabians of late antiquity that immediately after Muḥammad's death, it was Christianity that made a large scale comeback and not pagan cults.

In Yemen and East Arabia, where Christianity exerted great influence, numerous “counter prophets” rose against Muḥammad. These included prophets like

111 The most significant concession made to Christian tribes of Arabia generally—like the Banū Kalb who were made up part of the elite military class in Umayyad era—was that they did not need to convert at all. See Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 1: 199.

112 See in relation Ernst, *How to Read the Qur'an*, 180–1.

113 Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah*, 2:608; Wāḥidī, *Asbāb nuzūl al-qur'ān*, 264–5 ascribe this to the house of worship called *al-qubā'* built by Abū 'Āmir al-Rāhib and his Byzantine and Christian associates. Cf. further Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-qur'ān*, 1:452 which ascribes this house of worship to Banū 'Amr b. 'Awf of the Anṣār.

114 M. J. Kister, *EQ*, “Musaylima.”

115 Muslim 31:5915 relates this alleged episode to Q 3:61 and claims that it was the *ahl al-bayt* were summoned to mediate this dispute (*mubāhalah*).

116 See for example G. King, and Peter Hellyer, “A Pre-Islamic Christian Site on Sir Bani Yas,” *TRIBULUS* 4.2, 1994, 5–7, for archaeological evidence proving this.

al-Aswad al-‘Ansī (‘Abhalah b. Ka‘b b. Ghawth al-Madhḥajī; d. ca. 10/632) and Ṭalayḥah (Ṭalḥah?) b. Khuwaylid b. Nawfal al-Asadī (d. ca. 21/642) respectively.¹¹⁷ The two most emboldened Christian parties were led by the prophet Maslamah b. Ḥabīb of Banū Ḥanīfah (d. 10/634) and the prophetess Sajjāḥ bt. al-Ḥāris of Banū Tamīm/Taghlib (d. ca. 10/632). Failing to join with Muḥammad, the two Christian parties joined forces to repel Muḥammad’s now rapidly expanding *islām* with a rival prophetic tradition also from within Arabia.¹¹⁸

The details of the Wars of Apostasy episode are not our interest here. Two matters are of more immediate concern. One is that the existence of several prophetic claimants—at the very least Khālīd b. Sinān, Umayyah b. Abī al-Salt, Muḥammad, al-Aswad al-‘Ansī, Ṭalayḥah, Maslamah, Sajjāḥ, and possibly Zayd b. ‘Amr, among others¹¹⁹—up to this time is proof that late antique Arabia was “ripe with the institution of prophecy” and a participant in prophetic tradition.¹²⁰ Secondly, the name *maslamah* contains an Arabic or Syriac participial-nominal substratum, like *muslim*/*mašlēm* (submitter), *muslam*/*mašlam* (submitted), *maslam*/*mašlmānā* (a place or tool of submission) or something similar.¹²¹ In any case what is suggestive is that the name *maslamah* is ultimately a title derived

117 Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, First Edition, Cairo: Sharikat Ṭab‘ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyyah, 1901, 109–11.

118 Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah*, 2:666; Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 106, significantly states that Sajjāḥ took on the role of a Christian (or Jewish-Christian?) clergywoman (*takahhanat*), like Ṭalayḥah (see *Ibid.*, 109). It is also reported that she united her religion (*dīn*) with that of her future husband Maslamah. Also see in relation Abū Mikhnaf, *Nuṣūṣ*, 1:44–5, which discusses the enmity between the (Christian?) Banū Ṭayy’ and Khālīd b. Al-Walīd. In relation to the familiarity of prophecy in the Qur’ān’s milieu see also Q 10:2 which asks, “were people surprised that We inspired a man among them to warn the people and give good news to those who believe?” Furthermore, while I share some assumptions concerning the Christian background of Maslamah, Sajjāḥ and the opposition to Muḥammad’s *islām*, Margoliouth, “On the Origin and Import of the Names Muslim and Ḥanīf,” 484–93 argues—quite differently—that the Christians (*naṣārā*) of banū Ḥanīfah were the Hanīfs, and that from their ranks Maslamah (or Musaylimah or Aslam) emerged. The Muslims, he posits, were originally followers of Maslamah’s movement. Margoliouth was onto something, but given his own bias (cf. *ibid.*, 492–3) and as a result of limiting his scope to the Islamic literary sources—while neglecting the Syriac sources from which his definition of *ḥanīf* ultimately originates—he ascribes too much “import” to the figure known as Maslamah and not enough to Muḥammad.

119 Muslim 41:6990–7004 speaks of a mysterious Jewish Antichrist by the name of Šāfī b. Sayyād (d. 63/683). While the details of these reports are likely embellishments, they are evidence that the Islamic community of later centuries recalled the vitality of prophetic tradition in seventh-century Arabia.

120 Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 71–77 alludes to this. Donner goes on to postulate how the identity of Muḥammad’s prophethood was rudimentary during his lifetime and only became well defined in the later seventh century once Islam confronted the Jewish and Christian polemical circles of the Fertile Crescent after the Islamic conquests. Among other matters, this led to the inclusion of the second Islamic confession (*shahādah*) which made it an article of faith to believe in Muḥammad’s prophethood. Furthermore, the *mḥagrāyē* (Hagarenes, that is, the Syriac name for early Arabian Muslims) remained for some time indistinguishable from their Christian (East Syrian?) cohort in the Fertile Crescent. See *ibid.*, 42–7; Ernst, *How to Read the Qur’an*, 152.

121 Margoliouth, “On the Origin and Import of the Names Muslim and Ḥanīf,” 484.

from *aslam/ašlēm*, which as explained earlier is a verb associated with prophetic tradition. The frequency of important Arabic speaking Christians with names derived from or related to this word lends more credence to a developed religious conception of *islām* as prophetic tradition circulating among Arabian *ḥunafā'* and Christians. Numerous individuals during Muḥammad's lifetime, especially of east Arabian or Persian Christian origin, possessed such names. These include the poet Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā; leader of the delegation of Banū Ḥanīfah Sulmah b. Ḥanzalah; leader of the delegation of Banū Kilāb Jabbār b. Sulmā; and Salmān al-Fārisī, to name a few.

A matter of equal significance is that both Maslamah and Sajjāḥ became prophets and charismatic leaders of their Christian communities, not unlike Muḥammad among the *ḥunafā'* (and possibly even Christians) of his community. In this regard, one may speak of different *islams*—that is, competing religious movements that emerged among the Arabian peoples in response to the sectarian fragmentation of (mainly) Syriac speaking churches, and the desire to unite them under a single, dogmatic, prophetic impulse. The other vital point about this formative episode is that later Muslim authors, as the new guardians of Islamic orthodoxy, disparage the characters of the two counter prophets in their chronicles. In virtually all the Islamic literary sources Maslamah's name is preserved as Musaylimah al-Kadhḥāb, or “lowly Maslamah the liar.”¹²² The Islamic literary sources also describe Sajjāḥ as a seductress whose beauty and eroticism ultimately caused her and Maslamah to get married.¹²³ This kind of character defamation aims to describe the “other” as immoral, sexually deviant, and is typical of similar late antique heresiographical descriptions before it. However, it does not seem logical that Maslamah and Sajjāḥ's alleged sexual exploits would lead to a noble end like marriage: plain fornication would have demonized them just fine, unless of course the marriage itself was a negative smear, which it would have been for celibate Christian leaders as they likely were.¹²⁴

At any rate, when Khālīd b. al-Walīd (d. 21/642) dealt Maslamah the final death blow, Sajjāḥ fled and their rival prophetic tradition fell apart. It was then that the one and only Islam (with a capital “I”) of Muḥammad reigned supreme. From then on and according to Q 3:19, Islam became the one and only religion (*dīn*) acceptable to God. All other religions and sects that were based on the teachings of other prophets were tolerated (Q 2:62, 256; 5:69; 7:87; 22:17; cf. Q 3:113).¹²⁵

122 On this point cf. different of opinion in M. J. Kister, EQ, “Musaylima.” With W. Montgomery Watt, EP², “Musaylima b. Ḥabīb, Abū Thumāma.”

123 M. Lecker, EP², “al-Ridda.”

124 This point, while speculative, should be considered seriously, especially given our framework of prophetic tradition in the late antique Near East, wherein holy men and women played a large part in the development and evolution of the religious scene.

125 In relation to tolerance of other faiths see Wāḥidī, *Asbāb nuzūl al-qur'ān*, 28 which claims that after Salmān al-Fārisī had told Muḥammad a story about “those of the monastery” (*aṣḥāb al-dayr*), he hastily condemned them to hell. Since this upset Salmān, Q 2:62; 5:69 was soon revealed. Cf. *ibid.* 86–7.

That the Qur'ān itself speaks favorably of the *ḥunafā'* (for example Q 98:5), and to a great extent the Christians (cf. Q 5:72–73, 82), and shows more ambivalence to adherents of other prophetic traditions like the People of the Scripture (*ahl al-kitāb*; Q 3:64, 70–75, 98–99) as well as the Jews (cf. *banī isrā'īl* in Q 2:122 with *al-yahūd* in Q 5:64, 78, 82) is consistent with Muḥammad's interaction with those groups and the energetic role Arabian peoples played in the history of late antique Hanafite and Christian prophetic traditions of the Near East.¹²⁶ Aside from one explicit mention in the Qur'ān of *al-majūs* (Q 22:17), the Zoroastrians are the “un-named other”¹²⁷ whose religious history was not as interlaced with that of the Arabian peoples and whose doctrines were not fully in harmony with the Judeo-Christian background of Muḥammad's world. Nonetheless, a simple debate over which prophetic tradition, Judaism or Christianity, or even which variety thereof, most informed the Qur'ān's discourse is misguided. It is evident from the Qur'ān alone that with regards to the nature of ritual, orthopraxy, and law, that Islam was developed with Judaism as the model (for example Q 2:238, 4:3, 5:32).¹²⁸ However, concerning the political scale of Islam and its place as an empire of salvation, the Christian example, perhaps that of the Byzantine Empire, was far more significant (for example Q 3:110).¹²⁹

The Qur'ān's awareness of Christian prophetic tradition—in its most general sense—came from numerous scriptural and liturgical sources and in different languages. The central place to begin retrieving these sources is with the foundational texts of Christianity, the Four Gospels, in the principle language they circulated within the Qur'ān's milieu—Aramaic. This examination will take place over the next four chapters, following a brief statement of my assumptions.

Assumptions

I am mindful that this study, by examining the Qur'ān critically as a historical text, is entering an arena that has been highly charged from the very start, both religiously and politically. Some of this tension goes back to the colonial era (ca. eighteenth to twentieth centuries) wherein Islam was treated by European orientalists with enmity.¹³⁰ In more recent years some of this tension has been the product

126 For more on this ambivalence, see Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 258.

127 This is most evident in Q 30:1 where the Sasanians are not named explicitly in their victory over the Byzantines.

128 For example Q 2:238 mentions a middle prayer, *al-ṣalāt al-wuṣṭā*, thereby suggesting possibly that there were three daily prayer as is the case in Judaism. Q 4:3's restriction of the number of wives a man can take to four and the injunction in the Q 5:32, “whoever kills a soul, it is as though he has killed all mankind” go back to Sanhedrin 4:1: 22a.

129 The function of the “best nation (empire?) put forth for mankind” or *khayr ummah ukhrijat li al-nās* in Q 3:110 is to “command good, forbid evil and believe in God,” which is reminiscent of the imperial Byzantine and church reforms in the sixth century, like those led by John Monophysite bishop of Ephesus. Moreover, Q 30:1–5 also favors the Byzantine Empire over their un-named adversaries, that is, the Sasanians.

130 Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1978, 3; Bernard Lewis, “Gibbon on Muhammad,” *D* 105.3, 1976, 89–101; Parvez Mansoor, “Method Against Truth: Orientalism and Qur'ānic Studies,” *MWBR* 7, 1987, 33.

of a neo-polemical strain of publications¹³¹ and international, political events that have disadvantaged Muslims.¹³² This study hopes to be free from such polemical and political motivations. In order to achieve this goal it is necessary, after having discussed the sources, method, and introductory framework, to make explicit the assumptions inherent in the methodology of this study.

Firstly, being composed of questionable Hadith reports and later pious historicalizations, the early *Strah* narratives (see earlier) are viewed highly critically but not rejected outright. This is because once the pious and romantic details of most stories—like those of Warāqah and Salmān al-Fārisī for instance—are removed, a plausible ‘historical kernel’ remains which is capable of shedding light on the Qur’ān’s development and the origins of Muḥammad’s Islam.¹³³ However, our concern regarding the authenticity of many Islamic literary sources—especially the Hadith corpus—severely hinders its applicability in interpreting the Qur’ān. This concern is not just well founded among academics, but can also be justified from within the Qur’ān, the Hadith corpus, and among contemporary Muslim scholars as well. In the Qur’ān, Muḥammad’s goal to win over the adherents of other religious communities is found in the rhetorical question posed, “therefore, in which speech [*ḥadīth*] after God and his signs will they believe?” (cf. Q 45:6 and 77:50). In line with this statement is the Hadith report—the logic of which nullifies fraudulent reports in the Hadith corpus—wherein Muḥammad warns his followers “whoever intentionally speaks a lie about me, then let him take his place in hellfire” (Bukhārī 1:52:108; Muslim 2:1:10). The spurious nature of most Hadith reports, which was one reason for spawning the meticulous science of Hadith in the first place, and its inapplicability to interpreting the Qur’ān, have been recognized by Islamic modernists like Gamāl al-Bannā¹³⁴ and even the former grand Mufti of Egypt Maḥmūd Shaltūt.¹³⁵

Additionally, that the history of Muslim scripture is mysterious or problematic is not an aberration but common to the phenomenon of scripture and all revelations.¹³⁶ Likewise, that a scripture of the late antique Near East should allude to, reference, transform, quote or in some way incorporate the sacred language and religious expression of earlier confessional traditions or civilizations should hardly be a surprise, since the same phenomenon is found in the scriptures of the ancient Near East including the Hebrew Bible and New Testament.

Furthermore, the complexity of studying Qur’ānic origins has on occasion been compounded as a result of reductionist tendencies in scholarship on the Qur’ān.¹³⁷ It is problematic—and perhaps presumptuous—to claim based on finding some

131 Donner, “The Historian, the Believer, and the Quran,” 37.

132 Khaled Abou al-Fadl, “9/11 and the Muslim Transformation” in Mary Dudziak (ed.), *September 11 in History: A Watershed Moment?*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003, 70–111.

133 Donner, *Narratives*, 18–19, 25.

134 Bannā, *Tathwīr al-qurān*, 58.

135 Zebiri, *Mahmud Shaltut and Islamic Modernism*, 35.

136 Jeffery, *The Qur’ān as Scripture*, 89.

137 One may explain the periodical re-emergence of reductionist Qur’ānic Studies in modern times as the continued legacy of Geiger’s scientific and reductionist methodology. See Vernon Robbins and Gordon Newby, “A prolegomenon to the relation of the Qur’ān and the Bible,” in *ibid.* (ed.),

sort of parallel between two texts that one is simply derived from another. The Qur'ān is part of several contexts and is not reducible to any one of them.¹³⁸ As has been demonstrated, some scholars have searched for an ancient qur'ānic *ur-text*, that is, preceding the milieu of Muḥammad, while others argue for a later context. The resulting “chaos”¹³⁹ cannot sufficiently serve as a foundation for our inquiry. Rather, concerning ourselves with the Arabic text of the Qur'ān as it has come to us, separating it from later traditional Islamic literature, and respecting the Qur'ān's integrity as a unique scripture in the diverse context of late antique Near Eastern revelation generally and seventh-century Arabia specifically, will prove a more fruitful foundation with which to begin our investigation. The premise of this paper follows that of Griffith as he states,

The Qur'ān [is] a scripture in its own right, in dialogue with previous scriptures through the oral reports of them that circulated among the Arabic-speaking Jews and Christians in the Qur'ān's own milieu.¹⁴⁰

While the Qur'ān claims that the “original” Hebrew and Christian scriptures have been corrupted and therefore lost (Q 3:93; 5:47; 28:49; 37:157; 46:4), we have on the contrary well preserved copies of both scriptural traditions in Hebrew, Aramaic (especially Syriac), Greek, and Latin stretching back centuries before Islam.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, numerous qur'ānic passages are in conversation with passages found in these Hebrew and Christian Bible translations. The corruption and loss of “original” scriptures—a belief attested in some Syriac Christian homiletic works as well¹⁴²—is a hermeneutical strategy on Muḥammad's part to voice his disapproval of what he deemed disobedience of the scriptures (Q 4:171; 5:47, 66–77; 62:5) and scribal tampering (Q 2:41, 79; 3:78; see in relation Didache 11:1–2)¹⁴³ in order to pave the way for the new dogmatic re-articulation of divine revelation (cf. Q 3:3; 4:47; 25:33; 35:31; 46:30).¹⁴⁴ This is confirmation, moreo-

Bible and Qur'ān: Essays in Scriptural Intertextuality, 24–25. Though empowered with an encyclopedic knowledge of Hebrew Scripture and Jewish commentary, Geiger's study does not take into account the complexity of interaction between Jewish and Arabian elements but is concerned rather with “tracing origins,” and infers a direct Jewish influence upon the Qur'ān. Jeffery, *The Qur'ān as Scripture*, 69, notes this problem in western scholarship.

138 Griffith, “Christian lore and the Arabic Qur'ān,” 116.

139 Reynolds, “Qur'ānic Studies and its Controversies,” in *ibid.* (ed.), *The Qur'ān in its Historical Context*, 18, quotes Neuwirth.

140 Griffith, “Syriacisms in the Arabic Qur'ān,” 89.

141 The Dead Sea Scrolls of Qumran, Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus, the *Peshitta*, and Vulgate Bible all antedate the Qur'ān by at least two centuries.

142 Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext*, 251.

143 On this point, cf. further Bart Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

144 Gabriel Reynolds, “On the Qur'anic Accusation of Scriptural Falsification (*tahrīf*) and Christian Anti-Jewish Polemic,” *JAOS* 130.2, 2010, 189–202 goes a step further and argues that the qur'ānic accusation of *tahrīf* belongs in the same category of criticisms leveled against Jews by Syriac Christian authors who “saw Christ” in Hebrew Scripture, where Jews could not.

ver, that Muḥammad's divine insights and mystical experiences were filtered—not unlike his predecessors the Psalmist and musician David, Ephrem “the harp,” and Jacob of Serugh “the flute”—through his knowledge of the melodic and hymnal qualities found in Arabian prophetic speech (*saj'*), in addition to Judeo-Christian sectarian debate.

As such, the utility of the extant Judeo-Christian corpus to interpret the Qur'ān and the events of Muḥammad's revelation and prophethood was picked up early on by numerous Muslim exegetes like Muqātil, Mujāhid, and al-Biqā'ī, as well as historians like Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām. In a similar way, the presence of numerous words from (mainly) Aramaic dialects within the Qur'ān's language has long been recognized by quite a few traditional Muslim scholarly works, at the head of which are Ibn Sallām's *Lughāt al-qabā'il*, Ibn Qutaybah's *Tafsīr gharīb al-qur'ān*, al-Jawālīqī's *Mu'arrab* and al-Suyūṭī's *Itqān*.

It has been argued earlier that the Qur'ān's understanding of *islām* and Muḥammad's place within it should be understood in the context of his Syriac Christian near contemporaries—namely Babai the Great, John of Ephesus, as well as Jacob of Serugh some decades earlier. Evidence has been adduced aligning the Qur'ān's Arabic text to earlier Aramaic Christian impulses of prophetic tradition. Not only did Muḥammad's very own pedigree, namely his ancestor 'Abd al-Masīḥ b. Buqīlah (who served the Sasanians in Syria), confess the existence of Qurashī Christians who probably knew a dialect of Aramaic, but so too did the company with whom he associated. Salmān al-Fārisī who spent time touring the Syriac monasteries of Nisibis and Mosul wherein the prophetic impulses of Jacob of Serugh and prophetic tradition (*mašlmānūtā*) of Babai the Great was well known, as well as the captive Ṣuhayb al-Rūmī who fled from Constantinople where John of Ephesus' restoration of the (mainly) Syriac speaking churches was known as well, would have contributed Christian Aramaic ideas to the Qur'ān's milieu.

Evidence has further been adduced justifying a study of the Qur'ān as an Arabic scripture which is in part a dogmatic re-articulation of the Aramaic Gospel Traditions. The presence of Aramaic speaking Arabians from a priestly or scribal background in the *Sīrah* narrative, whether semi-legendary like the Syrian monk Baḥīrā or more historically plausible figures like Warāqah b. Nawfal and Zayd b. Thābit, provide a strong precedent for the continued circulation of the Aramaic Gospel Traditions in the milieu of the Qur'ān. Still, this study does not merely compare the 'Uthmānic codex of the Qur'ān with the Syriac New Testament Peshitta—from which the majority of our literary relationships will be drawn—but rather frame a much broader discussion involving literature from the greater ancient and late antique Judeo-Christian and Zoroastrian spheres, that may have served as intermediaries between the Qur'ān's dialogue with the Aramaic Gospel Traditions. We turn to this dialogue next.

3 Prophets and their Righteous Entourage

The clearest point from which to begin our examination of the Qur'ān and its dogmatic re-articulation of the Aramaic Gospel Traditions is the shared rubric of prophetic tradition, which has been defined earlier. More specifically, this discussion will explore two related subjects. First, common articulations of prophecy—namely the place of Jesus among the Hebrew prophets in the Aramaic Gospel Traditions, as well as their role in the language and structure of the Qur'ān—will be addressed. Next will be discussed the alienated, oppressed and disenfranchised members of society in whom the prophets Jesus and Muḥammad saw righteousness and who influenced the very core of their teachings and ethics.

The Line of Prophets

The Gospel authors, who composed their accounts of the “good news” decades after the fact, recognized Jesus as a prophet (Aramaic *nabīyā*; Matthew 13:57; 21:11; Mark 6:4; Luke 4:24; 7:39; 24:19; John 4:19, 44; 6:9–17; 7:40; cf. also Thomas 52; Diatessaron 14:48; 16:38–39; 18:45–46; 21:23–24, 48–49; 24:29; 35:16; 36:26; 53:51–52) and situated him at the end of a long line of prophets and prophetic ancestors in genealogical form.¹ Matthew 1:1–16 is a genealogy of “Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham,” which documents the generations starting from Abraham and ending finally with “Jesus, who is called the Messiah/Christ (*mšīḥā*).” Similarly, Luke 3:23–38 traces Jesus’s lineage, through David, all the way back to “Adam who was the son of God.” These genealogies were fused and formulated in the appendix of the Diatessaron.² The genealogies of the Gospels were modeled after the Hebrew Bible before it (Genesis 5, 10–11; 1 Chronicles 1–3; etc; cf. in relation *Gēnzā Rbā* R2:1) and resemble the *ansāb* genre of later Islamic literature.³

1 See also Khouri, “Selected ethical themes in the Qur’ān and the Gospel of Matthew,” 50. Ephrem, “Des Heiligen Ephraem des syers Carmina Nisibena,” *CSCO* 240–1, 102–3, 1961, 32–7, 24–8 (On Satan’s Complaint) objects that some consider Jesus “merely” a prophet. Cf. further Bart Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

2 Tatian, *Diatesseron de Tattien*, 532–4.

3 For example Hishām b. al-Kalbī, *Ġamharat an-nasab: Das genealogische Werk des Hisām ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbī*, 2 vols, Ed. Werner Caskel. Leiden: Brill, 1966; Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim b.

Jesus and the Hebrew Prophets

In the Gospels, the relationship between earlier Hebrew prophets like Adam and Abraham on the one hand, and Jesus on the other, is re-defined by Paul's letters and, in turn, dogmatically re-articulated by the Qur'ān. As the chief proponent of "original sin," Paul's theological formulation of this doctrine has two parts. First, he teaches that all of humankind since the fall of Adam have become tainted with original sin or "death" (Romans 5:14). Second, he insists that only through the grace of Christ, which he calls "eternal life," can mankind be saved from original sin (Romans 5:21). Consequently, Paul states, "For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:22). These words established the religious "likeness" of Adam and Jesus. The doctrine of Jesus as the "second Adam"—discussed by Syriac speaking theologians like Aphrahat and Jacob of Serugh—were likely debated in the sectarian circles of the Qur'ān's milieu.⁴

However, the Qur'ān itself is relatively unconvinced of Paul's doctrinal framework. Nowhere does it accept the idea of original sin, but rather it gives privilege to old fashioned personal accountability (Q 6:164; 17:15; 35:18; 39:7). Nevertheless, like Paul it is equally pessimistic that, "indeed mankind is at a loss," adding the condition however, "except those who believe, do good works, give council towards the truth and give council towards endurance" (Q 103:2–3; cf. James 2:22).⁵ Furthermore, the power of redemption attributed to Jesus—or any other prophetic or saintly figure for that matter—is refuted by the Qur'ān since it goes against the very spirit of personal accountability at the center of its message (Q 74:48).⁶

Following its dogmatic reasoning, the Qur'ān makes its sectarian position clear with regards to Jesus's relationship to Adam. Hence, it states,

Indeed, the likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam (*inn^a mathal 'īsā 'ind allāh ka mathal ādam*); he created him from dust (*khalaqahū min turāb*), then said to him 'be' so he became (*thumm^a qāl lah kun fayakūn*).
(Q 3:59)

Sallām, *Kitāb al-nasab*, First Edition, ed. Maryam M. Khayr al-Dar. Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1989; Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 13 vols, Ed. Suhayl Zakkār and Muḥammad Zarkalī, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996.

4 Aphrahat, "Demonstrations," 1:217–18(On Wars); Jacob of Serugh, *Homiliae selectae*, 6:720–74 (On the Nativity I: line 285). Cf. also Samir, "The theological Christian influence on the Qur'ān," 146–47; Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext*, 48–53. See further James D. G. Dunn, ABD, "Christology."

5 Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 747 relates this Surah directly to the fall of Adam. Cf. Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, 111, 312 wherein Q 103 of Ibn Mas'ūd and al-Rabī' b. Kuthayyam's codices are starkly different.

6 Later hadiths re-introduce the idea of Muḥammad's of intercession (*shafā'ah*; *tawassul*) on the Day of Judgement, for example Muslim 4:1757.

This verse was allegedly revealed as a result of a theological dispute between Muḥammad and a Christian delegation from Najrān.⁷ The content and style of this verse are a dogmatic re-articulation of interrelated layers of Christian scripture and homiletics that likely circulated in a dialect of Aramaic.

Hence, the Arabic word *mathal*, used in the same manner of Aramaic *matlā*,⁸ communicates the meaning of “similitude” or “likeness” and, by extension, “parable.”⁹ The frequent use of parables in qur’ānic speech appears to be a hermeneutical approach to address a sectarian audience, and was inspired to a great extent by Biblical antecedents, especially the style of speech characterized by Jesus in the Gospels (Matthew 13:3, 24; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10–11; and so on).¹⁰ In addition, Q 13:6 preserves the Aramaic plural *matlātā* in *mathulāt*, “parables,” instead of the more usual *amihāl*. Furthermore, the formula *mathal* [X] *ka* [Y], “the parable/likeness of [X] is like [Y],” which this verse employs, is found in other passages throughout the Qur’ān (Q 2:264; 7:176; 14:18; 62:5; and so on) and—more importantly—reflects the formulaic and didactic speech of Jesus in the Gospels when speaking about parables (Matthew 11:16; 13:24; 22:2; Mark 4:2; Luke 6:48; and so on).

Related formulae reproduced in the Qur’ān include introductory statements in the Gospels repeated by Jesus almost verbatim before citing parables. Thus, Jesus states: “and he spoke this parable” (*w-ēmar matlā hānā*; Luke 13:6; 15:3), “and he spoke [to them], therefore, the parable of . . .” (*w-ēmar l-hūn dēyn āp matlā d . . .*; Luke 18:1; 9; Luke 21:29); “another parable he put forth unto them, saying” (*akhrānā matlā amīl/awšēp/sām*¹¹ *l-hūn w-ēmar*; Matthew 13:24, 31, 33). In the case of Luke 14:7 it states about Jesus, “and he put forth [lit. said] the parable of . . .” (*w-ēmar hwā matlā*).

The Qur’ān duplicates this formula several times with some variation. It recalls that “[Jesus] the son of Mary was put forth as an example/parable (*ḍarib mathal*)” before Muḥammad’s folk and then denied (Q 43:57). It also states about either pre-Christian prophets whom Jesus expounds upon in a parable (Matthew 21:33–41; Mark 12:1–11; Thomas 65) or his followers who prophesied and were martyred in Antioch (see below), “and he put forth [lit. struck] the parable of . . .” (*wa ḍarab lahum mathalan*; Q 36:13). Although the Aramaic and Arabic text are syntactically equivalent, the speaker in the qur’ānic verse is an unknown third person—probably God. Elsewhere this is made explicit as it states, “God put forth the parable of . . .” (*ḍarab allāh mathalan*; Q 14:24; 16:75–76, 112; 39:29; 112; 66:10–11), whose language is further reflected in Diatessaron 32:16. One further example admonishes its audience using the passive voice, “O people, a parable was put forth (*ḍarib mathal*) so listen to it!” (Q 22:73). Not only do the style of parables show tremendous correspondence between the Qur’ān and the Aramaic

7 Wāḥidī, *Asbāb nuzūl al-qur’ān*, 106–7. See further Biqā’ī, *Naẓm*, 2:10–11.

8 Jeffery, *the Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 258. See also Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 88.

9 A.H. Mathias Zahniser, *EQ*, “Parable;” cf. in relation Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, 5:1932–44.

10 Cf. in relation Neuwirth, *Der Koran als Text der Spätantike*, 573–76; Dundes, *Fables of the Ancients?*, 70–1.

11 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:185, 188.

Gospels Traditions, but so too does the content, which is a subject that will resurface in Chapter 5.

Going back to the likeness of Adam and Jesus in Q 3:59, the second layer of Christian literature with which this qur'ānic verse is in dialogue is 1 Corinthians 15:22, and the subsequent theological teachings concerning Jesus as the “second Adam.” The apparent emphasis on the human nature of Jesus as a prophet by likening his creation to that of the first prophetic ancestor Adam, namely by underscoring their common origin from dust, aims to deconstruct the mainstream Christian doctrine concerning the second Adam. This dialogue likely circulated within the Qur'ān's milieu in a dialect of Christian Aramaic.

This prospect is justified by the third layer of Christian literature in dialogue with this qur'ānic verse. God's creative “speech act,” *qāl lahū kun fayakūn*, “He said to him ‘be,’ and he became” at the end of the verse, is a formula that occurs nine times in the Qur'ān (Q 2:117; 40:68; and so on), and which—more importantly—reflects the Syriac wording of Aphrahat's (d. 345) *Demonstration on the Sabbath* as it states, *b-mellat pūmēh, emar wa hwāy*, “through the word of His mouth, He said and it became.”¹² Since this work shares the late antique context in which the Qur'ān emerged, the correspondence between God's creative speech act in Aphrahat's work and the Qur'ān is linguistically closer than—say—the Hebrew, Jewish Aramaic, or even Syriac text of Genesis 1:3.¹³

After Adam, another major patriarch plays an essential role in both the Gospels and the Qur'ān. Abraham is not merely the chief prophetic ancestor who legitimates Jesus and Muḥammad's claim to prophecy (see below), but also the father of a great nation and paragon of faith. During one incident when attacking the Pharisees (see Chapter 4), Jesus states,

Assemble, therefore, fruits (*pīrē*) that will be worthy of grace (*taybūtā*),¹⁴ and do not begin to say within yourselves, “we have Abraham as our father.” For I say to you that from these stones (*kīfē*) God [will],¹⁵ instead [of you], find children (*bnayā*) for Abraham.

(Luke 3:8: see further Matthew 21:43;
Diatessaron 4:16–17; Hebrews 6:13–17)

The goal of this verse is to demonstrate to the Pharisees—and by extension the Israelites—that they are no longer worthy of grace, and not solely based on their Abrahamic descent. As a result, Jesus prophecies that God will raise for Abraham, out of the very stones of the earth, new children—fruits that will be worthy of

12 Aphrahat, “Demonstrations,” 1:563–8 (On the Sabbath). See further Q 36:82.

13 Cf. “And God said, ‘Let there be light!’ And there was light (*va yēmar ēlohēm yēhē nūr va yēhē nūr*)” (JPS); *w-ēmar yawēy yehē nehūrā wa-hwā nehūrā* (Targum Onkelos); *w-ēmar alāhā nēhwē nūhrā wa hwā nūhrā* (Old Testament Peshitta).

14 NRSV states “repentance.”

15 The NRSV translates Greek *dunatai* as “can.” However, like Arabic, Aramaic does not have modal verbs. Consequently, the meaning “will create” is more basic and immediate to the Aramaic text of the Gospels.

grace. The elements of this verse are reorganized and re-articulated by the Qur'ān to engage Muḥammad's sectarian audience in an Arabian context. Thus, Abraham reaches the barrenness of the desert and petitions God,

Our Lord (*rabbānā*), I have indeed settled some of my offspring (*min dhuriyyatī*) in a valley that is without vegetation (*wād ghayr dhī zar'*) near your sanctified home (*'ind baytik al-muḥarram*). Our Lord, may they establish prayer (*li yuqīmū al-ṣalāh*¹⁶). So let the hearts of people (*af'idah min al-nās*) incline towards them,¹⁷ and grant them some fruits (*min al-thamarāt*) that they may show gratitude (*la'allahum yashkurūn*).

(Q 14:37: see also Q 2:126)

Q 14:37 fulfills Jesus's prophecy in Luke 3:8. Firstly, the verse is a prayer, Abraham's personal appeal voiced directly to God Himself, which opens like many other poignant Qur'ānic 'liturgical prayers'¹⁸ (Q 3:9, 193; 10:88; 60:5; and so on) in the precise manner of the Biblical antecedents with which they are in dialogue. In this respect, the Arabic *rabbānā*,¹⁹ "our Lord," corresponds to "YHWH, our Lord" (Hebrew *yehwāh adōnēyn*); "God, our Lord" (Jewish Aramaic *alāhā rabūnānā*); "Lord of ours" (Syriac *māryā māran*)²⁰ at the opening of Psalms 8:2,10; and Christian Aramaic *abūn*, "our Father," in the opening of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2; see later discussion). Knowing that the Israelites are the earlier generation of Abraham's children who have fallen from grace, God has indeed found "from . . . stones (*kīfē*)"—symbolized by "a valley without vegetation (*wād ghayr dhī zar'*)"—children/offspring (*byanā* or *dhuriyyah*) for Abraham. Furthermore, as a result of their imminent establishment of prayer and the inclination of their hearts, God will "grant them"—though not cause them "to be" as Luke states—fruits (*thamarāt* or *pīrē*) that they may show gratitude (*la'allahum yashkurūn*)."

Showing gratitude (Arabic *shukr*) is what makes one worthy of grace (Aramaic *taybūtā*) and is, furthermore, the opposite of rejectionism or rebellion (Arabic *kufṛ*; see Q 27:40; 76:3). Moreover, the imminence of God finding new children for Abraham—which has been argued earlier—is more apparent in the Aramaic text of Luke 3:8 than the Greek (see above). Lastly, what makes the Qur'ān's re-articulation of Luke's passage dogmatic is the imposition of the Ishmaelites—that is, those descended from Ishmael who lived in the wilderness (Genesis

16 See Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an*, 198–9 on the Aramaic origin of *ṣalāh*, which is *ṣlūt*—pronounced *ṣlūth/ṣlūthā* with *rukākā*. See further Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'an*, 148, 217, 272, 281 on the appearance of this exact spelling in Q 22:40–41 preserved in the codices of Ubayy b. Ka'b, Ḥafṣah, 'Ikrimah and Mujāhid.

17 For more see Ibn Qutaybah, *Tafsīr*, 233.

18 I translate the Arabic word *du'ā'* (pl. *ad'iyaḥ*), sometimes translated as "supplication" as liturgical prayer as its form and function fit in the category of Christian, Jewish, late antique and ancient Near Eastern liturgical prayers (see further Chapter 3).

19 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an*, 136–8.

20 Cf. JPS, Targum Psalms and Old Testament Peshitta.

21:18–21) and the prophetic ancestor from which Arabs of Syro-Mesopotamian origin (*al-‘arab al-musta‘rabah*) are allegedly descended, and even Muḥammad himself²¹—as Abraham’s new children worthy of grace, ultimately replacing the Israelites.

Diminishing the religious importance of the Israelites is also an outcome of Paul’s doctrine and the Qur’ān’s dogmatic re-articulation thereof. Paul’s emphasis on Abraham’s faith and his stance against Jewish legal practices (Romans 4:1–25; Galatians 3:6–29) is emended in the Qur’ān to refute Abraham’s status as a Jew, Christian or heathen/polytheist and—most importantly—establish the purity and legitimacy of Hanafite-Islam (Q 2:135, 140; 3:64, 67; see Chapter 2).

One final patriarch plays an essential role in both the Gospels and the Qur’ān alike—King David. The genealogical and authoritative portrayal of Jesus as the son of King David prevalent throughout the Gospels²² surfaces in its dogmatic form in Q 5:78. However, since this verse is a curse, it is further discussed in Chapter 4. In addition to this verse, the Qur’ān extols David’s wealth, wisdom, and his authority over the birds of the mountains (Q 38:18–20) in the spirit of the verses from the Psalms from which it is ultimately inspired (Psalms 11:1; 37:30; 50:11; and so on). It also portrays him—as do the late antique Syriac speaking churches and their literature²³—to be the model of repentance (Q 38:17).

At any rate, the tradition of the Hebrew Prophets and the institution of prophecy passed onto John the Baptist, then Jesus, and later to his followers on the day of Pentecost who preached in Jerusalem, Antioch and throughout the Near East (Acts 2:1–4, 11:27–30). The prophethood of Muḥammad and revelation of the Qur’ān were—as Biqā’ī illustrates throughout his lengthy introduction—heir to this tradition.²⁴

Muḥammad and the Qur’ān

However, in this regard the Qur’ān’s structure is quite different from that of the Gospels, and the Bible text as a whole. Being composed “at the time,” it is—quite necessarily—a collection of topically erratic yet linguistically cohesive prophetic pronouncements, and not a neatly composed historical narrative like the Gospels or Pentateuch, which were composed decades or centuries after the events they describe. It may, nevertheless, be reasonable to posit as Bennabi has done, that the closest Biblical likeness to the prophetic articulation of the Qur’ān may be found

21 Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah*, 1:18. See also Neuwirth, *Der Koran als Text der Spätantike*, 633–52.

22 For example, Jesus the Messiah is descended of David (Luke 1; John 7:41; and so on); he is born in the village of David (Luke 2); he is called “son of David;” and he refers to parables citing the authority of David (Matthew 9:27; Mark 2:25; Luke 6:3).

23 See the meaning and context of epithets like *dawīd gābyā*, “David the chosen one” in Jacob of Serugh, “Homélies contre les Juifs,” *PO* 38, 1976, 136–81. Such a usage probably stemmed from the Syriac Gospels, as in Matthew 24:22, 24, 31; Mark 13:20, 27. This also parallels the Arabic usage of words derived from the root *j-b-āin* Q 3:179; 6:87; 68:50, and so on. Furthermore, the Psalms occur at the beginning of all Syriac Christian lectionaries even to this day.

24 Biqā’ī, *Naẓm*, 1:487–91.

in the prophetic language of Jeremiah.²⁵ It follows, therefore, that the incorporation of certain Biblical prophets and their ancestors was not communicated by the Qur'ān in the form of long, comprehensive, Biblical genealogies, but rather dogmatically re-articulated as abbreviated lists of prophets accentuating the significance of faith (Q 2:133, 136; 3:84; 12:38; 38:45), revelation (Q 4:163), and criticizing Judeo-Christian sectarianism (Q 2:140). For example it states,

Say, “we believe in God, and that which was revealed (*unzil*) to us, and that which was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, the tribes (*al-asbāt*), and that which was revealed to Moses, Jesus, and that which came (*ūī*) to the prophets (*al-nabiyyūn*) from their Lord. We do not differentiate between anyone of them; and we are to Him submitters (*muslimūn*).”

(Q 2:136)

This verse portrays the Qur'ānic vision of prophetic tradition in a nutshell by starting with Abraham and ending with the transfer of prophetic responsibility to the *muslimūn*. Moreover, this verse incorporates the prophetic ancestor from which Muḥammad is said to have descended, Ishmael (see above). By including Ishmael in this list the Qur'ān is responding to and emending Biblical passages in which Ishmael is absent, and from which it is ultimately inspired (Exodus 3:15–16; 1 Kings 18:36; 1 Chronicles 29:18; Matthew 22:32; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37; Acts 3:13; and so on).²⁶ At any rate, lineage from Abraham was vital to legitimize and qualify the prophetic credentials of both Muḥammad (through Ishmael in the Qur'ān), as well as Jesus (through David in the Gospels; also cf. as well John 8:58).

Like Jesus, Muḥammad was believed to be the final link in a long line of Near Eastern prophets.²⁷ His vision of Islam as the final manifestation of the entire Judeo-Christian sequence of prophetic traditions is built into the structure of the Qur'ān text and is made evident from its intense preoccupation with Hebrew and Christian prophets, as well as other ancient charismatic figures styled after them. For example, stories of these prophets often come in the form of merging ideas from Hebrew tradition with that of Christian, Arabian, or Hellenic traditions (Q 2:136; 11:89; 14:9; 18:94; and so on). In addressing these individuals and narrating their stories, the Qur'ān makes frequent use of the terms *nabī* (prophet) and *rasūl* (messenger, apostle), both of which are treated synonymously.²⁸ For

25 Bennabi, *Le phénomène coranique*, 28–32.

26 See in relation the discussion of Q 3:67–97 in Ernst, *How to Read the Qur'an*, 187–8.

27 Khouri, “Selected ethical themes in the Qur'ān and the Gospel of Matthew,” 46–7, 52–3.

28 Cf. also Hebrew, Aramaic *nabī*, and Greek *aggelos*. Furthermore, the name of Q 21 *al-anbiyā'* never actually occurs within the Surah itself, but rather we read, “and We have not sent (*arsalnā*) a single messenger (*rasūl*) except that we reveal to him that ‘there is no God but I, so serve me’” (Q 21:25). Furthermore, it is evident from variants in the different Qur'ān codices that these words were understood synonymously. See Ibn Mas'ūd's reading of Q 65:12 in Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, 102. Cf. also Neal Robinson, *EQ*, “Apostle.” In addition, Uri Rubin, *EQ*, “Prophets and Prophethood” notes that while the two terms frequently

instance, Enoch, Ishmael, and Muḥammad are explicitly identified as both *nabī* and *rasūl* (Q 19:51, 54; 33:40). The difference in terminology may reflect a change in Muḥammad's audience or geographical location. Perhaps *rasūl*, which is employed with greater frequency in Meccan Surahs, was the term of choice among the apocalyptic Christian or Hanafite circles of Mecca, and the term *nabī* became favored in Muḥammad's prophetic lexicon when he migrated to Medina (assuming the *Sīrah* is accurate in this respect) where there was a greater Jewish audience.²⁹

At any rate, prophetic tradition in the Qur'ān is—perhaps more than any other late antique Near Eastern scripture—inseparable from the vivid apocalyptic imagery and fiery warnings for which prophets are sent.³⁰ This is evident throughout the text and is exemplified in the opening words of Q 21 entitled “The Prophets” (*al-anbiyā'*), which begins with the sharp words of warning, “The people's [day of] account has approached while they turn away in foolishness!” (Q 21:1). The subject of apocalypticism will be taken in up in more detail in Chapter 6.

Going back to the subject of prophets in the Qur'ān, of the 114 Surahs that make up the text, nine are named after prophets or prophetic ancestors: Q 3 *āl-'imrān* (The Progeny of 'Amrām);³¹ Q 10 *yūnus* (Jonas);³² Q 11 *hūd*; Q 12 *yūsuf* (Joseph); Q 14 *ibrāhīm* (Abraham); Q 19 *maryam* (Mary); Q 31 *luqmān*; Q 47 *muḥammad*; and Q 71 *nūḥ* (Noah). Similarly, three Surahs are named after salient dimensions of prophetic tradition: Q 21 *al-anbiyā'* (The Prophets), Q 28 *al-qaṣaṣ* (The Stories) and Q 78 *al-naba'* (The News).³³ In addition, the Qur'ān names 25 prophets explicitly. It also makes reference to un-named *rasūls*, possibly modeled after: the parable in Mark 12:1–5 where some of Jesus's followers who prophesied and were martyred in Antioch (Q 36:13–25; cf. 11:91);³⁴ individuals such as the mother of Moses who received revelation (*waḥy*; Q 28:7); and the virgin Mary who spoke to God through the mediation of angels (Q 3:42–48).³⁵ And while the Qur'ān admits that it only teaches about a limited number of prophets (Q 40:78), it assures that messengers were sent to every single nation (Q 16:36), some of

overlap in function, *rasūl* may be considered slightly more important. For a more nuanced study of both terms see Willem Bijlefeld, “A prophet and more than a prophet? Some observations on the Qur'anic use of the terms ‘prophet’ and ‘apostle’,” *MW* 59.1, 1969, 9–28. In relation to this point, Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 90, 117 the term demonstrates that *r-s'-l* is used in Sabaic for “messenger, envoy” in the secular sense, whereas *n-b-a* means “to vow an offering to a deity.”

29 Uri Rubin, *ibid.*

30 Andrae, *Les origines de l'islam et le christianisme*, 67.

31 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, 217 explains the qur'ānic 'Imrān as a conflation of 'Amram the father of Aaron, Moses, and Miriam, with the father of the virgin Mary. See further Q 19:28.

32 *Ibid.* 296 correctly traces the spelling of this name to CPA *yūnas*.

33 Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, 2:360 also notes that Q 27 *al-naml* (The Ants) was otherwise called by some *sulaymān* (Solomon).

34 Cf. in relation Ibn Qutaybah, *Tafsīr*, 209. Furthermore, Q 36 fuses the imagery of stone found in Genesis 19; Psalms 118 with a discourse on intercession by Syriac Christian martyrs.

35 Cf. in relation the context of Jacob of Serugh, *Homiliae selectae*, 6:720–74 (On the Nativity I: line 170–380, 555–635); 6:775–89 (On the Nativity II: line 139, 180); 6:790–807 (On the Nativity III: line 1–90); Q 3:38–50; 19:2–35. Cf. further Infancy Gospel of James 3–9; Infancy Gospel of Thomas 4, 7, 15.

whom were more gifted than others (Q 2:253), and the most important of whom it calls “the messengers of great authority” (*ulū al-‘azm min al-rusul*; Q 46:35).³⁶ This highly developed “prophetology,” and the language, motifs, and imagery of prophetic tradition—as well as apocalypticism latent within in—are prevalent in virtually every single Surah.

Interestingly, while the Qur’ān is cautious to defend Muḥammad against accusations of being a liar, poet, priest, sorcerer or being possessed (Q 51:52; 52:49; 68:2; 69:41; 81:22–25), it has no developed concept of antichrist or “false messiah.”³⁷ One may conclude, therefore, that the question of a false messiah was not a major concern in the Qur’ān’s milieu as it may have been elsewhere in the late antique Near East.³⁸ Only after the Islamic conquests of the early–mid-seventh century, when the early community of Arabian Muslims became settled among more distant Judeo-Christian and Zoroastrian populations of the Near East and they had to defend the legitimacy of their new scripture, prophet, and dominion from surrounding naysayers, did the idea of a false messiah become a relevant part of Islamic religious discourse. Therefore, Jesus’s warnings in the Gospel of Matthew against the rise of many deceitful “false Messiahs (*mšīḥē dagālē*), and false prophets (*nabīyē d-kadbūtā*) . . . [who] will show great signs and wonders” (Matthew 7:15; 24:11, 24; see in relation Luke 6:26; Acts 13:6; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1; Revelations 16:13; 19:20; 20:10)³⁹ are manifested in the apologetic literature of the early (ca. 714–845 CE) as well as later Islamic literature (after 845 CE).⁴⁰ There are an abundance of warnings Muḥammad and his companions are alleged to have expressed in the Hadith corpus against the great signs and wonders of the false Messiah, whose Arabized name *al-masīḥ al-dajjāl* is a calque for *mšīḥā dagālā* from the Aramaic Gospel Traditions (Mark 13:22; cf. 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7; see further Didache 16:6–10; *Bahmān Yashṭ* 2:24).⁴¹

In the Qur’ān, some of Muḥammad’s interlocutors who denigrate him as “a hexed man” (Q 25:8) also denigrate him for being lowly human messenger, one who “devours food (*ya’kul al-ṭa’ām*) and roams the marketplaces (*wa yamshī fī al-aswāq*).” They also ask for an angel in his stead (Q 25:7; cf. Q 5:75). In this respect he is likened to Jesus, the “glutton and drunkard” (*ākēl w-šātē*; Matthew

36 Later Hadith literature identifies these five prophets explicitly as Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad; for example Bukhārī 6:60:3; Muslim 1:373, 378. Note that while every messenger is a prophet, not every prophet is a messenger. See further Neuwirth, *Der Koran als Text der Spätantike*, 613–23.

37 My thanks go to Sean Anthony for sharing this point with me. Nonetheless, cf. the idea of “deceptive prophecy” (*al-waswās al-khannās*; Q 114:4), where Arabic *kh-n-s* is a cognate to Aramaic *n-h-š*, which denotes “divination” or “soothsaying.” See Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 909.

38 Cf. further Greek *prophetas* and *mantis*.

39 For related uses of the Aramaic root *d-g-l*, see Matthew 5:11; 13:22.

40 This gave rise to the genre of Islamic apologetic literature known as “evidence of prophecy” (*dalā’il al-nubuwwah*).

41 See Bukhārī 2:23:459; 3:30:103; 4:55:553; 5:59:685; Muslim 1:323; and so on; cf. also “false messiahs and counterfeit prophets” (*musahā’ dajjālūn wa anbiyā’ al-kadhib*; Diatessaron 42:11). See in relation Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 265–6; Neal Robinson, *EQ*, “Antichrist.”

11:19; Luke 7:34) who roamed among the poor and downtrodden masses in the “marketplace” (*šūqā*; Matthew 11:16; 20:3; Mark 6:56; Luke 7:32). Attributing alcoholic drink to the person of Muḥammad was out of the question on dogmatic grounds (cf. Q 2:219; 4:43; 5:90–1). However, the clause “who/he devours food” (*ya’kul al-ṭa’ām*) is an elaboration of “glutton” (*ākēl*), where both *ya’kul* and *ākēl* share the root *’-k-l*. Similarly, the word for “marketplaces” (*aswāq*, sg. *sūq*) comes from the Aramaic word *šūqā*, like that attested throughout the Gospels.⁴²

The Righteous Entourage

Both in the Qur’ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions, prophets are closely associated with the most righteous—and frequently least fortunate—stratum of society. This ‘righteous entourage’ is mentioned along with the prophets in the Gospels as God states, “indeed, I am sending to them prophets and righteous men (*nabīyē wa šliḥē*) . . .” (Luke 11:49; cf. Diatessaron 41:1; Didache 15:4). It is worth mentioning that the word *šliḥē*, that is, “righteous ones,” became the standard word for “apostles” in Syriac.⁴³ Elsewhere Jesus privileges his own followers over this group by stating,

Thus, truly I say to you that many prophets and sincere men (*nabīyē wa zdīqē*) have wanted to see the things which you see but have not seen [them], and to hear the things which you have heard but have not heard [them].

(Matthew 13:17)

Collectively the prophets (*nabīyē*) and their righteous (*šliḥē*) and sincere (*zdīqē*) cohort are expounded upon in Syriac Christian literature,⁴⁴ and later on in the Qur’ān. It states,

And whoever obeys God and the messenger (*al-rasūl*), they are with those whom God has granted glory among the prophets (*al-nabiyyūn*), the sincere (*al-ṣiddīqūn*), the martyrs (*al-shuhadā’*) and the righteous (*al-ṣāliḥūn*); and they are the best of companions.

(Q 4:69)

Keeping in mind morphological differences and corresponding philological reflexes between Arabic and Aramaic, this qur’ānic verse reproduces salient components of the language in the Aramaic text of Luke 11:49 and Matthew 13:17. The Arabic names for the prophets (*al-nabiyyūn*), the sincere (*al-ṣiddīqūn*, where the Arabic *ṣ* corresponds to the Aramaic *z*)⁴⁵ and the righteous (*al-ṣāliḥūn*, where

42 Cf. K. A. Nizami, EI², “Sūk.”

43 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 1564.

44 For example Narsai, *The Liturgical Homilies*, 101.

45 This may be why the codex of al-A’mash spells *aṣdaq* as *azdaq* in Q 4:4121–22. See Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān*, 317.

the Arabic *ṣ* corresponds to the Aramaic *š*) neatly match the Aramaic terms *nabīyē*, *šlīhē* and *zdiqē*.⁴⁶ The Qurʾān adds the martyrs (*al-shuhadāʾ*) to its list of the righteous entourage. This may be due to the inclusion of the martyrs (*sāhdē*) among the ranks of the righteous entourage in the works of several Syriac Christian authors,⁴⁷ or it may be due to the militarization of the righteous entourage in the Qurʾān's milieu (see Chapter 4). Furthermore, although not explicitly mentioned in the Gospel texts, the martyrs of the early church—Aramaic *sāhdē*, from which the Arabic *shuhadāʾ* comes⁴⁸—play an important role in subsequent New Testament passages (Acts 22:20; Revelations 2:13; 17:6), later Syriac literature⁴⁹ and subsequently the Qurʾān's milieu. It is little surprise, therefore, that due to the familiar nature of these epithets for the righteous entourage that the codices of both Ibn Masʿūd and Ibn ʿAbbās have *al-šādiqīn* in place of *al-šālīhīn* for Q 63:10.⁵⁰

The Elect

In relation to the righteous entourage, both Hebrew and Christian scripture speak of God's "elect," that is, those whom He has chosen. There is a great deal of diversity concerning precisely who the elect are, and the different roles they play throughout the Bible. Thus, the qūrʾanic usages of the Arabic verb *ijtabā* ("to elect," eighth form iftaʿal of the root *j-b-ā*) are diverse like their Biblical antecedents. However, it does not closely match the Hebrew and Jewish Aramaic versions of the Old Testament,⁵¹ but is adopted, rather, from the Syriac noun *gabyā* ("the elect;" from *g-b-ā*; Cf. CPA *bhīrā*) of the Old Testament Peshitta and Gospels.

In the Gospels, Jesus describes the days of great tribulation that will precede the apocalypse, stating "however, for the sake of the elect whom He elected (*gabyē da-gbā*) those days will be shortened" (Mark 13:20; cf. Matthew 24:22). Con-

46 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾān*, 194–5, 276. However, Jeffery does not include *šālīh* (*ūn*) in his study and derives *siddīq* (*ūn*) from Jewish Aramaic. See also Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qurʾān*, 206 wherein Q 63:10 substitutes *al-šālīhīn* for *al-šādiqīn* in the codex of Ibn ʿAbbas. See further Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, 85–92. See in relation Sabaic cognates in Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 88, 141, 142.

47 For example Aphrahat, "Demonstrations," 1:985–8 (On Persecution); Ephrem, "Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrer Paschahymen: de azymis, de crucifixione, de resurrectione," *CSCO* 248–9, 108–9, 1964, 84, 67 (Joy at the Resurrection); Jacob of Serugh, *Homiliae Selectae*, 3:636–48 (On Confessors and Martyrs); Simeon of Beth Arshām, "On the Himyarite Martyrs" in Irfan Shahid (ed.), *The Martyrs of Najran*, Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1971.

48 Ibid. 187. See also *s²-h-d* in Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 132.

49 For example Aphrahat, "Demonstrations," 1:985–87 (On Persecution); Ephrem, "Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrer Hymnen de paradiso und contra Julianum," 29–30, 28 (hymn 7.19). Cf. especially Connelly's comments on the typology of the righteous entourage in Narsai, *Nestorius Narsai's Narsai*, and Theodore of Mopsuestia in Narsai, *The Liturgical Homilies*, lxxvi–iii, 18, 101.

50 Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qurʾān*, 206.

51 The Hebrew word used for "elect" in Isaiah 42:1; 45:4; 65:9, 22 is *baḥīr* (JPS); and it is *baḥīrā* in Jewish Aramaic (Targum Jonathan) and CPA. Cf. also Christian Arabic *ašfiyāʾ* of the Diatessaron. Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 48 demonstrates that the Sabaic root *g-b-a* conveys a host of meanings, none of which converges with the qūrʾanic usage.

cerning the deceit of false prophets and the false Messiah he adds, “if they could they would deceive the elect (*gabyē*)” (Matthew 24:24; Mark 13:22). During the apocalypse, the angels are gathered at the sounding of the trumpet and, God “will gather his elect (*gbūhī/ahīdawī⁵²*) from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other” (Matthew 24:31; cf. Mark 13:27; Diatessaron 42:11–12, 19). Finally and most importantly, Jesus asks his followers rhetorically, “Therefore, will not God allthemore seek vengeance for his elect (*gbūhī/bhīrawī⁵³*)—who cry out to Him day and night—and with whom he suffers long?” (Luke 18:7–8; cf. Diatessaron 33:23–24).

This poignant verse has no single linguistic correspondence in the Qur’ān. However, its dogmatic re-articulation informs us of the anxiety felt by Muḥammad and the nascent Muslim community, the sectarian conflict which they endured and the vengeance they sought from God (cf. Q 2:214; 10:102; 20:130; 30:47; 40:51; 18:28; and so on). In fact, the Qur’ān also portrays the sectarian players of Muḥammad’s day accusing him of cherry-picking verses. It states, “And whenever you did not bring them a sign (*āyah*), they would say, ‘perhaps you [merely] chose a few (*lawlā ijtabaytahā*)?’ Say, I merely follow that which is revealed to me from my Lord” (Q 7:203).⁵⁴

Nonetheless, beyond the strong sectarianism of the Qur’ān’s milieu, *ijtabāis* always associated—as in the Gospels—with the prophets and their righteous entourage. Thus, the Qur’ān states,

These are the ones upon whom God has completed his favor (*ni‘mah*), among the prophets (*al-nabiyyūn*) of the progeny of Adam, from those whom We carried with Noah among the progeny of Abraham and Israel, and from those whom We guided and elected (*mimman hadaynā wa ijtabaynā*).

(Q 19:58)

Other Qur’ānic passages addressing the prophetic and righteous generations of the past also pair ‘guidance’ (Arabic *hadā*, “to guide”)⁵⁵ with election (Q 6:87; 16:121;⁵⁶ 20:122; 42:13). The favor (*ni‘mah*) of being elected—which this verse also teaches—is passed on to the prophet Muḥammad. Concerning Muḥammad’s rise to prophethood, it states, “thus, your Lord elects you (*yajtabīk*), teaches you the interpretation of stories (*yu‘alimukta’wīl al-aḥādīth*) and completes his favor (*ni‘mah*) upon you” (Q 12:6), as He did with generations of prophets like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob before. Therefore, Muḥammad’s election meant that God ‘taught’ him and—like prophets and messengers (Q 3:179) before him—completed his

52 *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament*, 2A:47.

53 *Ibid.*, 150.

54 Karl Ahrens, *Muhammed als Religionsstifter*, Leipzig: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1935, 136. Cf. in relation John 1:1–10.

55 Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘arab*, 6:4638.

56 Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 447; Rudolph, *Die Abhängigkeit des Qorans*, 10. Cf. in relation Psalms 27:1–14; Romans 8:28–31; Q 3:160.

‘favor’ upon him. In contrast, God’s election of the prophet Jonas—called “he of the fish” (*ṣāḥib al-ḥūt*)—is a kind of divine ‘rehabilitation.’ After he “angrily fled [from God] (*dhahab mughāḍiban*)” (see *dhū al-nūn*, Q 21:87), “he cried out in frustration” and so “His Lord elected him (*ijtabāh*)” and, therefore, made him one of the righteous (*ṣāliḥūn*; 68:48–50). Finally, as heir to Muḥammad’s burgeoning prophetic tradition, God also elects the Hanafite-Muslims (Q 22:78).

The concept of the elect from the Gospels is taken up in subsequent passages of the New Testament, Apocrypha (Romans 8:33; Titus 1:1; 2 John 1:13; Thomas 49; and so on) and in later Syriac literature as well,⁵⁷ which provided several potential avenues for the transmission of ideas about the elect into the Qur’ān’s milieu. Consequently, in the Qur’ān those whom God elects are the prophets (*al-nabiyyūn*) or messengers (*al-rusul*), the righteous (*al-ṣāliḥūn*) and finally the Hanafite-Muslims.

Blessed are: ṭūbā

One of the most captivating passages found in the Gospels—no less in Aramaic—is that of the Beatitudes (from Latin *beatudo* meaning “happiness”). This timeless passage alleged to have been spoken by Jesus transforms the formulae found in Hebrew Scripture originally employed to emphasize a believer’s faith and the glorification of God (Psalms 2:12; 84:4; Isaiah 30:18; and so on) to consoling all of society’s downtrodden. The portion of Matthew’s Gospel that includes the beatitudes and the verses immediately following were dogmatically re-articulated in different parts of the Qur’ān. The relevant portion from Matthew follows.

Blessed are the poor in spirit (*ṭūbayhūn/ṭūbtānā itayhūn l-mēskīnē b-rūḥ*), for them is the kingdom of heaven (*d-dīlhūn hāy malkūtā da-šmāyā*).

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be consoled.

Blessed are the meek (*mkīkē*), for they will inherit the earth (*d-hānūn nērtūn l-ar’ā*).

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (*kīnūtā/zadīqūtā*), for they shall be satiated.

Blessed are the merciful (*mraḥmānē*), for they will be shown mercy (*raḥmē*).

Blessed are the pure in heart (*aylēn d-dākīn b-labḥūn*), for they will see God (*nēḥzūn l-alāhā*).⁵⁸

Blessed are the peacemakers (*‘abday šlāmā*), for they will be called the children of God (*bnūhī d-alāhā*).

57 e.g. Anonymous, *The Odes of Solomon*, Ed. Alphonse Mingana and James Charlesworth, Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978, 40, 42, 92, 94, 119, 121.

58 Some of the exegetical literature surrounding Q 10:26 (see chapter 6), including Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 2:90 may be in dialogue with this verse as it interprets the “increase/bounty” (*ziyadah*) of those in paradise as the sight of God’s face.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness (*ētrādēfū mēṭūl kīnūtā*), for them is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people dishonor you, persecute you (*rādḥīn/mḥasrīn/sānīn lkūn*), and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven (*d-agrkūn sagī ba-šmāyā*); like this did they persecute the prophets before you (*hākanā . . . rdapū la-nbīyē d-mēn qdāmaykūn*).

You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has become tasteless, with what will anything be salted? It is, therefore, not good for anything except to be thrown out and walked upon by people. You are the light of the world (*antūn nūhrēh d'ālmā*). It is not possible to hide a city that is built on a mountain, nor can they light a lamp (*w-lā manhrīn šrāgā*) and put it under a bushel, but on a lampstand (*mnārtā*); and it illuminates all that are in the house (*wa mnāhēr l-kūl aylēn da-b-bayt ēnūn*). Let your light shine like this before people (*hākanā nēnhar nūhrkūn qdām bnay anāšā*), so that they may see your good works (*'bādaykūn ṭābē*), and glorify your Father who is in heaven (*wa nešbhūn l-abūkūn d-ba-šmāyā*).

(Matthew 5:3–16: cf. Luke 11:2–4; Thomas 24, 33, 77; Diatessaron 8:27–36)⁵⁹

This passage is, furthermore, most captivating in Aramaic where—unlike the Greek text—it rhymes. Although not poetry in the strict sense of the word, the rhyme scheme of verses 3–6 is: A-B-A-B; and for verses 7–17 it is: A-A-B-A-A-B-A-A-B-A-A. Furthermore, the rhyme morphemes at the end of each verse are (A) the Aramaic emphatic nominal singular article *ā* and (B) the Aramaic plural imperfect suffix *ūn*. It is also little surprise, therefore, that the rhyme of *ūn* or *ā* is fairly prevalent in Syriac and Christian Palestinian Aramaic religious literature.⁶⁰ This corresponds, moreover, to the two most common rhyme morphemes (Arabic *fawāṣil*; cf. *qawāfī* of poetry)⁶¹ employed at the end of Qur'ānic verses: (1) the Arabic nominal accusative case *an*, or nouns ending in *ā*; (2) and the Arabic plural verbal and nominal suffix *ūn/īn*.⁶²

However, the Aramaic Beatitudes not only made a contribution to the stylistic development of the Qur'ān, but also to its content. For the Qur'ān dogmatically rearticulates the message of the Aramaic Beatitudes when discussing the sectarian strife and the suffering withstood by the early community of faithful believers (Q 13:27–29). It consoles them stating, “[As for] those who show faith and do

59 See variant readings in Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:48–53.

60 This may be attributed to the frequency of the definite articles *ā* and *ē*, as well as the verbal plural suffix *ūn* and nominal plural suffix *īn* in hymnal or homiletic exhortation. Cf. in relation Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext*, 249.

61 See in relation Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, 5:1784–1826.

62 Cf. the dominance of this kind of rhyme in Stewart, “Saj’ in the Qur’an,” 135–8; Neuwirth, “Structural, linguistic and literary features,” 103.

good works (*al-ladhīn āmanū wa ‘amalū al-ṣāliḥāt*), for them are blessings (*ṭūbā lahum*) and an excellent fortune” (Q 13:29).

Although the root *ṭ-y-b*, from which *ṭūbā* comes, is common to Semitic languages in general,⁶³ three features of this qur’ānic verse compel us to draw a connection between it and Matthew’s Aramaic Beatitudes. One is that the phrase “for them are blessings” in Q 13:29 differs slightly from the Jewish Aramaic of the Targum and even more so from Hebrew Scripture, but shares a great deal more with its counterpart found in the Aramaic Gospel Traditions.⁶⁴ Two is that the final long *ā* vowel (*alif maqṣūrah*) corresponds to the Aramaic emphatic or definite state *ā* (functioning like the Arabic definite article *al-*) and is otherwise foreign to Arabic. The final indicator is *ṭūbā*’s conjunction with *lahum*, which is equivalent to the Aramaic noun *ṭūbā* plus third person plural pronominal *hūn*, that is, *ṭūbayhūn*, “blessed are they.” Beyond these relationships, the dogmatism of Q 13:29 in re-articulating Matthew 5:3–16 particularly is felt in its terse and summarizing approach, leaving out details that are either potentially detrimental to a strict monotheistic vision (such as “seeing God,” “the children of God,” and God as the “Father”), or too foreign in context (being “blessed when dishonored,” and being “the salt of the earth”). The style and content of the remaining details resurface in different parts of the Qur’ān and are a subject of study throughout the remainder of this book.

The Poor

For both the Qur’ān and the Gospels, the righteous entourage typically includes the poor and disaffected members of society. We learn from the Beatitudes about the underprivileged social standing of the righteous entourage that surrounded Jesus, especially the poor in spirit (*mēskīnē b-rūh*) and the meek (*mkīkē*; Matthew 5:3, 5; cf. further James 2:5). Although *mkīkē* is not found in the Qur’ān, the usage of *al-mustaḍ’afūn*, “the downtrodden” (Q 4:75, 98, 127; see further Chapter 4) is its nearest approximation.⁶⁵

However, the identical usage of *mēskīnē* in the Aramaic Gospels, and its Arabized form, *masākīn* (or sg. *miskīn*) in the Qur’ān is far more common.⁶⁶ Thus, Jesus’s deep empathy, intimate association and his subsequent self-identification with his society’s poor men and women is a salient feature of the Gospels’ message. While defending the actions of a poor woman to anoint Jesus with rather expensive oil against society’s more affluent critics, he states, “indeed, you will always have the poor (*mēskīnē*) with you, but you will not always have me” (Matthew 26:11; Mark 14:7; John 12:8; Diatessaron 39:14–15). At the same time, the importance of feeding the poor is at the core of the qur’ānic message as it

63 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 206.

64 For example Psalms 2:12; Proverbs 3:13; and so on, which contain the phrase “blessed/happy are” (*ṭūbayh ṭāb*; Targum Psalms; *aṣerē*; JPS).

65 See in relation Ibn Qirnās, *Sunnat al-awwalīn*, 53.

66 See in relation Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 264–5.

instates “as a substitute [to fasting] the feeding of a poor person” (*fiḍyah ṭa’ām miskīn*; Q 2:184; cf. Q 5:95; 58:4). The Qur’ān, therefore, dogmatizes and elevates the importance of Jesus’s concern for the poor (*mēskīnē*) by making it a penalty enforced by law (*fiḍyah ṭa’ām miskīn*). The attitude of both scriptures towards the rich *vis à vis* the poor is the same as well.

Elsewhere in the Gospels, Jesus advises a rich man how he may have eternal life by first of all keeping the commandments and then he tells him,

If you hope to be perfect, go and sell what you have and give to the poor (*hab l-mēskīnē*), and you will have treasure in heaven, and [then] come follow me. However, when the young man heard these words, he went away in distress, for he had many possessions.

(Matthew 19:21–22; cf. Mark 10:21–22; Luke 18:22–23; Diatessaron 28:49–50)

The Qur’ān similarly condemns the affluent members of society (see further Chapter 4) because it accuses them—almost as a commentary to the episode of the rich man in Matthew 19:21–22—stating,

To the contrary, indeed you do not honor the orphan (*la tukrimūn al-yaṭīm*). Nor do you advocate feeding the poor (*la taḥuḍḍū ‘alā ṭa’ām al-miskīn*). And you devour the inheritance [of orphans?] greedily. And you love wealth [too] greatly.

(Q 89:17–20; cf. Q 74:44; 107:3; 69:34)

The verse begins with blaming the rich for not honoring society’s orphans which, based on Q 93:6–11 (and the *Sīrah*), may be the result of Muḥammad’s harrowing memories as an orphan and his heightened sensitivity to their cause.⁶⁷ More significantly, the injunction from the synoptic Gospels, namely “give to the poor” (*hab l-mēskīnē*), was not fulfilled by the rich in Jesus’s day. Thus, we find in the Qur’ānic verse based on the synoptic passage a dogmatic re-articulation, “Nor do you advocate feeding the poor” (*la taḥuḍḍū ‘alā ṭa’ām al-miskīn*), which based on the usage of the verb *ḥaḍḍ* (“advocate”) and not *hab* (“give;” cf. Q 3:8; 25:74) or a verb like it, is not merely advice from a teacher but the rapprochement of God and the community. Furthermore, where the young man of the Gospels flees in distress—since he does not wish to give away his many possessions—the Qur’ān accuses him and his likes that they love wealth far too much.⁶⁸

The Qur’ān and Gospels also agree on their stance towards charity. Thus, in the Gospels, Jesus expands his concern for feeding the poor to include society’s physically handicapped, advising,

⁶⁷ Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah*, 1:97.

⁶⁸ See in relation Khouri, “Selected ethical themes in the Qur’ān and the Gospel of Matthew,” 121.

However, when you have a gathering (*qbūlā*), call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind (*qarī l-mēskīnē wa sgīfē wa ḥgīsē wa smāyā*). And you will be blessed (*tūbayk*), for they cannot compensate you (*d-layt lhūn d-nefr'ūnāk*). Indeed, your compensation will be at the resurrection of the sincere (*nēhwē gēr fūr'ūnāk ba-qyāmā da-zdīqē*).

(Luke 14:13–14, 21; Diatessaron 30:7–8; cf. further 1 Corinthians 13:3)

Two elements of this verse in Luke are re-articulated in the Qur'ān. First, the demand that “when you have a gathering, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind” resurfaces in the Qur'ān when it states concerning the feast after pilgrimage (*al-ḥajj*), “[And they should] mention the name of God in appointed days on account of whatever cattle He bestowed upon them, so eat from it and feed the miserable poor (*aṭ'imū al-bā'is al-faqīr*;” Q 22:28).

The adjective *al-bā'is* (“the miserable”), which qualifies the noun *al-faqīr* (“the poor”), should thus be understood intertextually with Luke as a grouping of society’s maimed, lame, and blind. Second, Luke’s statement to the givers of charity, namely that their “compensation (*fūr'ūn*) will be at the resurrection of the sincere,” matches the words of Noah in the Qur'ān when he states, “O my people, I do not ask of you wealth (*mālan*) for it [my prophethood], as my wages (*ajrī*) are to be paid by God” (Q 11:29; cf. Q 11:51). It also matches the words of the prophets, in general, who are repeatedly quoted in the Qur'ān to instructed their people, “I do not ask of you any wages (*ajr*) for it, as my wages (*ajr*) are to be paid by the Lord of the worlds (*rabb al-'ālamīn*)” (Q 26:109, 127, and so on; cf. Q 34:47 and similar verses). This, furthermore, goes hand in hand with the concept of reward for charity shared by both the Qur'ān and the Gospels, “As for whatever charity (*min khayr*) you present for the sake of your souls, you will find it with God (*tajidūh 'ind allāh*); indeed, God sees all what you do” (Q 2:110).

And thus, the “compensation” (Aramaic *fūr'ūn*) or “wages” (Arabic *ajr*) for charity are to be found with God on the Day of Resurrection. To ask for compensation or wages, furthermore, may have been perceived as the mark of a false prophet (Didache 11:5–16). That the Qur'ān makes use of the term *ajr* to designate the wages of humankind and their judgment may go back to Romans 6:23, where “the wages (*agūrtā/parnūsā*⁶⁹) of sin is death.”⁷⁰

As we have seen earlier, on some occasions in the Gospels, Jesus comforts the poor along with several other downtrodden members of society. Thus he quotes Isaiah 61:1 stating,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me (*mšahni*) to give good news to the poor (*l-mēsbarū l-mēskīnē*). He has sent me (*šlahni*) to heal the broken hearted (*tabīray labē*) and to preach deliverance (*šūbqānā*) to the captives (*šēbyē*), to give sight (*ḥazyā*) to the blind (*'awīrē*), and to liberate (*mēšrarū*) the bruised (*tabīray*).

(Luke 4:18; cf. further Matthew 11:5; Luke 7:22; Diatessaron 5:38)

69 *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament*, 2B: 60.

70 Cf. in relation Wim Raven, *EQ*, “Reward and Punishment.”

The grouping of the downtrodden members of society (see earlier *al-mustaḍ'afūn fī al-arḍ*) along with the poor, which was likely informed by a dialogue with the Aramaic Gospel Traditions, is frequent in the Qur'ān as well (Q 2:215; 4:36; cf. further 17:26; 24:22; 30:38; and so on). However, two Qur'ānic formulae demonstrate a dogmatic re-articulation of their Gospel antecedents. The first states, "And they give food (*yut'imūn al-ṭa'ām*), despite loving it ('*alā ḥubbih*), to the poor (*miskīnan*), the orphan (*yatīman*) and the captive (*asīran*);" (Q 76:8).

Aside from the orphan—a unique personal concern to Muḥammad—the verse's concise wording cites the poor and captive (where Arabic *asīr* reproduces Aramaic *šēbyā*) of Luke 4:18, and possibly even Isaiah 61:1 before it. Furthermore, Q 2:177 states,

Worthiness (*al-birr*) is not directing your face towards the east nor the west, but rather righteousness is [for?] he who believes in God, the last day, the angels, the scriptures, the prophets, and who gives wealth (*ātā al-māl*), despite loving it ('*alā ḥubbih*), to members of [their] relatives (*dhawī al-qurbā*), the orphans (*al-yatāmā*), the poor (*al-masākīn*), the wanderer (*ibn al-sabīl*),⁷¹ the beggars (*al-sā'ilīn*), and for [the freeing of] captives (*fī al-riqāb*), and who establish prayer (*aqāmū al-ṣalāh*), give charity (*ātū al-zakāh*), fulfillers of their covenants (*al-mūfūn bi al-'ahd*) when they make them, and the steadfast during times of hardship and harm . . .

(Q 2:177: cf. further 2:215, 215; 4:8, 36, 127; 8:41; 17:26; 24:22; 30:38; 59:7)

Similar to Luke 4:18, this verse lists the different downtrodden members of society who deserve help, including: the poor (*al-masākīn* or *mēskīnē*); relatives, orphans, wanderers (possibly traveling apostles and prophets as in Matthew 10:41; Thomas 42; Didache 12; or caravan people as in *Ardā Virāf Nāmak* 67:6; 93),⁷² and beggars who comprise those referred to by Luke as the bruised (*tabīray*) and broken hearted (*tabīray labē*). Most significantly, the Biblical prophecy "to preach deliverance to the captives" is realized by the dogmatic re-articulation of the Qur'ān's penalty for religious misdemeanors—often taken in conjunction with the penalty to feed the poor (see above)—to "free a slave [lit. a neck]" (*tahrīr raqabah*; Q 4:92; 5:89; 58:3; cf. further Exodus 21:2).

Servants or Sons of God?

It is clear, at least in light of the Greek word *pais* found in Ezra 4, that some scriptures and religious circles in the late antique Near East made little or no distinction between "servants" or "sons" of God.⁷³ This is not the case with the Qur'ān. One

71 Cf. Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, 100, 225; the codex of Ibn Mas'ūd and Zayd b. Thābit state alternately, "and the wanderer and those who migrated in the way of God" (*wa ibn al-sabīl wa muhājirīn fī sabīl allāh*; Q 49:7).

72 Cf. in relation Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-qur'ān*, 1:443; Biqā'ī, *Naḡm*, 1:180; 2:564.

73 Jarl Fossum, *ABD*, "Son of God."

explicit example of dogmatic re-articulation is found in the Qur'ān's rejection of the phrase "sons of God" (*bnūhī d-alāhā*), which originates in the Israelite mythology of Genesis 6:2–4, but was taken up by the beatitudic language of Matthew 5:9, and subsequent Christological formulations of Paul (Romans 8:14, 19; Galatians 3:26). Thus it states,

The Jews (*al-yahūd*) and the Christians (*al-naṣārā*) say, "we are the sons of God (*abnā' allāh*) and his beloved ones (*aḥibbā'ih*)"⁷⁴. Say then, "why does he punish you for your sins? To the contrary, you are human beings whom He created. He forgives whomever He wills and punishes whomever He wills"

...

(Q 5:18: cf. in relation 9:30)

The Qur'ān takes offense at the kinds of mythological and Christological descriptions that portray God's creatures somehow as divine (cf. in relation Q 37:149–154). Therefore, the closeness of God and mankind embodied in the epithet "sons of God" (Aramaic *bnūhī d-alāhā*; Arabic *abnā' allāh*), which is a staple of Christian scripture and theology but unacceptable for a stricter standard of monotheism, is re-articulated in qur'ānic terms, placing a huge gulf between God and mankind. Thus, the "servants of God," or *'ibād allāh* also join the ranks of the Qur'ān's righteous entourage (Q 44:18; 76:6; 37:40, 74, 128, 160, 169; cf. Q 25:63). The servants of God, similar to "fulfillers of their covenants" (*al-mūfūn bi al-'ahd*) cited earlier in Q 2:177, are said to "fulfill their vows (*yūfūn bi al-nadh*), and fear a day whose evil will be widespread" (Q 76:6). This is because the apocalyptic impulse—whose most salient manifestation is the Day of Judgment—is a critical feature of prophetic teachings and ethics.

Prophetic Teachings and Ethics

Islam, or the believers' movement which underlay it, consisted of three layers of prophetic teachings and ethics. These are: (1) strict monotheism, which is latent throughout the Qur'ān's dogmatic re-articulation of the Aramaic Gospel Traditions; (2) dread from the Day of Judgment, which has been alluded to but is discussed at length in Chapter 6; and (3) strict observance of revealed law—especially ritual and worship⁷⁵—which is the subject of the following section.

Good News and Testimony

One critical feature of revealed law—that is giving "good news"—is central to the Gospels (Latin *go spell*, "good news") and is dogmatically re-articulated by the Qur'ān. Although one may argue that the Arabic root for "giving good news," *bashshar*, parallels the Hebrew *bašar* (for example, Isaiah 61:1) just as

⁷⁴ Cf. in relation biblical use of Hebrew *aḥavah* and Greek *agape*, meaning "love."

⁷⁵ Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 61.

well as CPA *bsūrā* or Syriac *sbartā*—where the Aramaic root *s-b-r* appears to be a metathesis of the Hebrew or Arabic *b-š-r*—Jefferey has good reason to suspect a more immediate connection to Syriac.⁷⁶ The evidence for this connection comes in two passages from the Gospels. Firstly, the context for a relationship with Aramaic through the Gospels is provided when Gabriel appears before Zacharias stating, “I was sent to speak to you, and to give you good news (*ēsabrāk*) about these [matters]” (Luke 1:19). In the Qur’ān, this episode is recounted as follows, “O Zacharias, indeed We give good news to you of a male son (*innā nubashshiruk bi ghulām*) . . .” (Q 19:7). With the exception that God speaks in the Qur’ān—using the royal “We”—rather than Gabriel, the origin and function of *ēsabrāk* and *nubashshiruk* are identical. Second, in another passage from Matthew, Jesus states,

And this gospel (*hādē sbartā/bsūrā*⁷⁷) of the kingdom will be preached to all the world (*b-kūleh ‘ālmā*) as a testimony to all nations (*l-sāhdūtā d-kūlhūn ‘ammē/kūlēh ‘amrtā*⁷⁸); and then the end (*šūlāmā*) will come.

(Matthew 24:14: cf. in relation Matthew 26:13;
Mark 13:10, 14:9; 16:15; Luke 2:10; Diatessaron 41:58)

Similarly, the Qur’ān states,

And on that day, We will send to each nation (*kull ummah*) a witness (*shahīd*)⁷⁹ over them from themselves. And we brought you as a witness (*shahīdan*) over these [people]. And we descended the book upon you to distinguish between all things, and as a guide (*hudā*), mercy (*raḥmah*) and good news (*bushrā*) to the Muslims.

(Q 16:89: cf. Q 16:102)

In both scriptures, the good news (*sbartā/bsūrā* or *bushrā*) will reach all the world (*kūleh ‘ālmā*), that is all nations (*kūlhūn ‘ammē/kūlēh ‘amrtā* or *kull ummah*). However, in the Gospels, the good news itself will serve as a testimony—or an act of witnessing (*sāhdūtā*)—over them. Whereas in the Qur’ān the function of the witness (*shahīd*) is distanced from the good news—a conception with latent Christian undertones by the late antique period—to become “you,” that is, Muḥammad or his audience. In addition, the phrase “as a testimony to all nations (*l-sāhdūtā d-kūlhūn ‘ammē*); and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14) is dogmatically re-articulated in the verse, “Like so have We made you a middle nation, that you might be witnesses over people (*li-takūnū shuhadā’ ‘alā al-nās*) on the

76 Jefferey, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 79–80. Cf. further Isaiah 61:1, “he sent me to give good news” (*šadarnī d-ēsabr*); “he sent me to strengthen” (*šalah-nī l-taqāwpā*; Targum Jonathan).

77 *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament*, 2A:44.

78 Ibid.

79 See Dhuyayb, *al-Mu’jam al-Naba’ī*, 249 for attestations of *š-h-d*, “to witness,” in Nabataean inscriptions.

Day of Resurrection” (*yawm al-qiyaamah*; Q 2:143; 22:78). The phrase “on the Day of Resurrection” (*yawm al-qiyaamah*), which is absent from ‘Uthmān’s codex but present rather in that of Ubayy b. Ka’b (d. ca. 29/649) and reproduced in later exegetical works,⁸⁰ reproduces Matthew’s phrase “and then the end will come.”

The good news, *bushrā*, is an otherwise frequent theme in the Qur’ān which occurs numerous times (Q 2:97; 10:64; 12:19; 57:12; and so on). Among others, good news is given to believers (*al-ladhīn āmanū*, *al-mu’minūn*; Q 2:25; 10:2; 61:13; and so on), the fortunate ones (*al-mukhbitūn*; Q 22:34), the doers of good (*al-muhsinūn*; Q 22:37), and the servants of God (*‘ibādih*; Q 42:23). Moreover, in the Qur’ān Jesus states, “indeed, I give good news (*mubashshir*) of a messenger/apostle (*rasūl*) who will come after me called Aḥmad [=Muḥammad?],” referring to the Advocate (John 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7; see Chapter 1). However, the Qur’ān’s notion of the good news shows the greatest independence from its Biblical antecedents when it describes the prophets as both “giver of good news and warner” (*bashīr wa nadhīr*; Q 2:119; 5:19; 11:2; 34:28; 35:24; 41:4; cf. Q 7:118; 12:96; 18:2).⁸¹ This independence is most remarkable as the Qur’ān turns the normative meaning of *bashshar* on its head by commanding Muhammad or his audience to warn (*bashshir*) the hypocrites (*al-munaḥiqūn*; Q 4:138), those who rebel (*al-ladhīn kafarū*; Q 9:3), and others like them with an agonizing torment (Q 3:21; 84:24).⁸² The radical transformation of *bashshar*—a religious term that likely entered the Qur’ān’s milieu from the Aramaic Gospel Traditions—from giving good news into a term mocking and warning evil doers, demonstrates the intensity of dogmatic re-articulation found in the Qur’ān and the sectarian leanings espoused by Muḥammad’s mystical sensibilities.

Repentance

In the Gospels, the good news itself is that “the kingdom of Heaven/God has approached” (Matthew 10:7; Diatessaron 3:41–42; see further Chapter 5 and 6). According to the Gospels, the reception of the good news requires repentance and faith. Thus, Jesus states, “repent and believe in the good news (*tūbū wa haymēnū ba-sbartā/īwānglyūn*;⁸³ Mark 1:15; cf. Matthew 3:2; Diatessaron 5:43).” In Aramaic, the third person masculine perfect of “to repent” (*tūb*) is the D stem (Aramaic pē‘al or Arabic first form fa‘al) of *t-w-b*.⁸⁴ The third person masculine perfect of “to believe/have faith,” *haymēn*, is the G stem of *y-m-n*.⁸⁵ These verbs enter the Arabic lexicon of the Qur’ān’s milieu as: *tāb* which is also the Arabic third person masculine perfect D stem of *t-w-b*; and *āman* which is correspondingly the third

80 Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 215; Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān*, 120.

81 For more on this see Chase F. Robinson, *EQ*, “Warner.” See also Biqā’ī, *Naḥn*, 1:235.

82 For more on this see Daniel C. Peterson, *EQ*, “Good News.”

83 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 3:6 records this Harklean reading. Concerning *īwānglyūn* (Greek *evangelion*) cf. Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 17.

84 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 1625–6.

85 *Ibid.*, 341–2.

person masculine perfect G stem of *'-m-n* or *y-m-n*.⁸⁶ Most importantly, the formula of repentance and faith found in Mark is preserved five times in the Qur'ān. It states, “and indeed I am forgiving (*ghaffār*) of those who repent, believe (*tāb wa āman*), do good, and then received guidance” (Q 20:82; cf. Q 19:60; 28:67; 7:143, 153). It may further be significant that whereas Jesus in the Gospels sternly commands his audience “to repent and believe,” the Qur'ān manifests this formula in a more hopeful fashion so as to promise God's forgiveness of paradise (see earlier).

In fact, another striking formula is that of “repentance and forgiveness of sins” which is found in both scriptures.⁸⁷ Thus, it states,

John was baptizing in the wilderness and preaching the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (*ma'mūdītā/maṣbū'ay*⁸⁸ *d-taybūtā l-ṣubqānā d-ḥṭāhē*). And all the land of Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him, and he baptized them in the [river] Jordan, while confessing their sins (*kad mawdīn b-ḥṭāhayhūn*).

(Mark 1:4–5: cf. in relation Luke 3:3; 17:3–5; Diatessaron 4:12–15)

The combination of repentance with forgiveness is fairly common throughout the Qur'ān. For instance it states, “Will they not repent (*yatūbūn*) to God and seek his forgiveness (*yastaghfirūnah*)? For God is forgiving (*ghafūr*), merciful (*rahīm*)” (Q 5:74; Cf. Q 11:3, 52, 61, 90). However, one verse comes particularly close to John's words and the imagery of the Gospels. It states,

O you who believe, repent (*tūbū*)⁸⁹ to God a clear repentance (*tawbatan naṣūḥan*). Perhaps your Lord may blot out your sins (*yukaffir 'ankum sayyi'ātikum*) and enter you into gardens beneath which rivers run (*jannāt tajrī min taḥtihā al-anhār*)...

(Q 66:8)

In addition to the outward semblance between both passages above, the combination of repentance along with forgiveness is a theme found in the Old Testament book of the Prophets. Furthermore, the phrase “may blot out your sins” (*yukaffir 'ankum sayyi'ātikum*) of Q 66:8 is a re-articulation of prophetic statements found in the Hebrew Bible (Nehemiah 4:5; Psalms 51:9; Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 18:23).

Purity of the Self

Purity is a salient quality to which the Gospels and the Qur'ān call the masses. After Gabriel appears to Mary and Joseph and after the “days of her purification

86 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, 70–1, 87.

87 See in relation Khouri, “Selected ethical themes in the Qur'ān and the Gospel of Matthew,” 38–41. See generally the commentary in Biqā'i, *Naẓm*, 1:185.

88 *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament*, 2A:76.

89 Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 151–2 demonstrates that the root *t-w-b* conveys a few meanings that might fit in this context including “to testify, thank or complete work.”

(*tadkūhūn*) according to the Law of Moses,” the scene presenting the infant Jesus “before the Lord” (Luke 2:22) is summarized by the qur’ānic verse, “indeed I am a messenger of your Lord that I may grant you a pure son (*ghulāman zakīyyan*)” (Q 19:19). The ritual importance of purity in the Law is elsewhere affirmed in both scriptures (John 2:6; 3:25; Q 2:129, 151; 3:164; 62:2). The “pure in heart” (*dākin b-labhūn*; Matthew 5:8), mentioned earlier in the Beautitudes, is a theme which resurfaces in Acts 15:9. Related to this theme is the ‘purity of the self,’ which is discussed in the Gospel of John. It states, “The Passover of the Jews was near and many went up out of the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves (*d-nēdkūn⁹⁰ nafshūn*);” John 11:55; Diatessaron 38:39–40; cf. Acts 21:24, 26).

The Qur’ān recapitulates this scene as it states, “Have you not considered those (*alam tara ilā al-ladhīn*) who purify themselves (*yuzakkūn anfusahum*); Truly, God purifies (*yuzakkī*) whomever He wills, and they are not wronged [the measure of a] thread” (Q 4:49).

Aside from the similarity in imagery shared by both passages, there are a couple of reasons to argue that John 11:55 was dogmatically re-articulated by Q 4:49 in the form of a didactic, moral lesson. One is that the qur’ānic formula, “have you not considered those” (*alam tara ilā al-ladhīn*), is employed a dozen times in total to remind its audience about the errors of earlier nations (Q 2:243; 14:28; 58:14; and so on), most notably the Jews and Christians (Q 3:23; 4:44, 51; 59:11). The first link between Q 4:49 and John 11:55 is language. The Arabic phrase *yuzakkūn anfusahum* corresponds to the Aramaic *nēdkūn nafshūn*.⁹¹ The verb *yuzakkū* is the third person masculine imperfect tense of the second form fa‘‘al of *z-k-ā*. Correspondingly, *nēdkūn* is the D stem (Aramaic pa‘ēl or Arabic second form fa‘‘al) third person masculine imperfect tense of *d-k-y*, where Aramaic *d* corresponds to Arabic *z*. The other link between both passages is that Q 4:49 polemicizes the Jews. It calls their self-purification into question, which is perhaps inspired by John, among other passages in the Gospels that condemn the Pharisees and priestly class, as it criticizes their love for “the praise of men more than the praise of God” (John 12:43; Diatessaron 41:8–9). This polemicization may also inform the qur’ānic command, “do not commend [lit. purify] yourselves (*la tuzakkū anfusakum*), He knows best who is upright (Q 53:32; cf. Didache 3:14; see further Chapter 4).”⁹²

Swearing an Oath

The Qur’ān dogmatically re-articulated the function of the hypocritical Pharisees, whom Matthew calls “blind guides” for misguiding people concerning “swearing by the temple” (Matthew 23:16; cf. 23:24), by claiming that, “they took their oaths

90 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:225 records that the Sinaiticus manuscript alternatively states “to sanctify” (*nqadshūn*).

91 See in relation Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 152–3.

92 Aphrahat, “Demonstrations,” 1:191–4 (On Wars).

as a cover, so they obstructed [others] from the way of God” (Q 63:2; see further Chapter 4). This sets the context for the dialogue between both scriptures. In both the Qur’ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions the righteous entourage—and the less than righteous hypocrites—are instructed not only to fulfill their oaths, vows and covenants but also how to swear an oath. In Matthew, Jesus teaches,

Again, you have heard that it was said to the ancients, “you should not lie in your oath (*lā tdagēl/tīmē šūqrā*⁹³ *b-mawmātāk*), but carry out your oath to the Lord (*tšalēm dēyn l-māryā mawmātāk*).” But I say to you, “you should not swear at all (*lā tīmūn sāk*), neither by heaven because it is the throne of God, nor by the earth because it is the footstool beneath his feet (*wa lā b-ar’ā d-kūbšā hī d-thēt rēgalūhī*), nor by Jerusalem because it is the city of the great king” (*āplā b-ūrīšlēm da-mdīntēh hī d-malkā rabā*).

(Matthew 5:33–35; cf. Matthew 23:20–22; Diatessaron 9:1–4; 40:46–47)

Hebrew Scripture abounds with teachings on how to swear—or not to swear—an oath (for example, Leviticus 19:12; Joshua 23:7; Psalms 24:4; Zechariah 8:17).⁹⁴ In this case, Matthew’s passage tightens the restriction on one of these teachings (2 Chronicles 9:18; Isaiah 66:1; Cf. also Acts 7:49).

The Qur’ān, similarly, has its share of teachings and circumstances concerning swearing an oath (Q 16:91–94; 24:53; etc). However, it is the passage in Matthew that is dogmatically re-articulated as it teaches,

And do not make God the necessity for your oaths (*wa lā taj’alū allāh ‘urḍah li aymānikum*) when you show worthiness, virtue and righteousness between people. And God is hearing, knowing. God does not hold you accountable for carelessness in your oaths (*lā yu’ākhidhukum allāh bi al-laghw fi aymānikum*), but rather holds you accountable for what your hearts have earned (*wa lākin yu’ākhidhukum bimā kasabat qulūbukum*). And God is forgiving, forbearing.

(Q 2:224–225)

Several dimensions of this passage relate to the corresponding passage in Matthew cited earlier. First is the line “And do not make God the necessity for your oaths (*wa lā taj’alū allāh ‘urḍah li aymānikum*) when you show worthiness, virtue and righteousness between people,” which recapitulates—in the starkly abridged word “necessity” (*‘urḍah*)⁹⁵—the taboo instated by Matthew 5:33–35 and 23:20–22 against swearing by God in any form. In other words, Q 2:224 teaches its audience—like Matthew—not to invoke God even in oaths of “worthiness, virtue and righteousness.” However, Matthew’s strict prohibition against swearing by God, which the Qur’ān accepts, is qualified with a kind of loophole,

93 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:60–1 records this Harklean reading.

94 For more on this Cf. Wansbrough, *Qur’anic Studies*, 10–11.

95 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 1142; cf. also Wāhidī, *Asbāb nuzūl al-qur’ān*, 80.

namely that “God does not hold you accountable for carelessness in your oaths (*lā yu’ākhidhukum allāh bi al-laghw fī aymānikum*).”⁹⁶ Meaning, if one were to swear an oath and carelessly—or whatever error *laghw* entails (cf. Q 23:3; 25:72; 28:55; 52:23; 56:25; 78:35)⁹⁷—invoke God, He would not punish them merely on account of this mistake. For what truly matters to God from the qur’ānic perspective, and more lenient than Matthew, is “what your hearts have earned (*wa lākin yu’ākhidhukum bimā kasabat qulūbukum*),” that is, one’s intentions. In close relation to this passage, elsewhere the Qur’ān teaches,

God does not hold you accountable for folly in your oaths (*lā yu’ākhidhukum allāh bi al-laghw fī aymānikum*), but rather holds you accountable for what you have contracted [in your] oaths (*wa lākin yu’ākhidhukum bimā ‘aqqadtum al-ayman*). [Otherwise, face] a penalty (*kaffārah*) of feeding ten poor people from whatever average [food] you feed your families, clothing them, or freeing a slave. As for whoever cannot find [poor people], then fast three days. Such is the penalty of your oath if you swear (*dhālik kaffārat aymānikum idhā ḥalaftum*); so keep your oaths (*wa ihfāzū aymānakum*). Thus does God make clear to you his signs that you may show gratitude.

(Q 5:89)

Q 5:89 agrees with Q 2:224–225 but gives concrete justification for why God would tolerate folly in swearing an oath, namely that He “holds you accountable for what you have contracted [in your] oaths (*wa lākin yu’ākhidhukum bimā ‘aqqadtum al-ayman*),” that is, what one has officially stipulated, entrusted or contracted as a result of an oath.⁹⁸ All this begs the question “why?” Why would the God of the Qur’ān, based on Muḥammad’s vision of strict monotheism, tolerate such folly where the ostensibly Trinitarian Gospel of Matthew would not? The answer lies in the remainder of Q 5:89 which demonstrates that tolerating folly in swearing an oath became legislated in an innovative effort to feed, clothe, and free the poor and downtrodden members of Muḥammad’s humble but growing Muslim community. This matches similarly innovative laws which penalize those at fault by uplifting the poor and downtrodden members of society (Q 2:184; 5:95; 58:4; and so on). However, recalling Matthew 5:33 which commands that “you should not lie in your oath (*lā tdagēl/tīmē šūqrā b-mawmātāk*), but carry out your oath to the Lord (*tšalēm dēyn l-maryā mawmātāk*),” Q 5:89 concludes affirming, “so keep your oaths (*wa ihfāzū aymānakum*).”

This brings us to words used for “oaths” (*aymān*, sg. *yamīn*) in the Qur’ān, which matches neither the Syriac *y-m-y* nor the Hebrew/Jewish Aramaic *š-b-‘* of Leviticus 19:12; Zechariah 8:17, but rather shares the root *y-m-n* with the Jewish

96 See in relation Khourī, “Selected ethical themes in the Qur’ān and the Gospel of Matthew,” 85–7, 120.

97 Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 235; Farrā’, *Ma’ānī al-qur’ān*, 1:144 claim that this is heedlessly swearing by God’s name. For more on this see G. R. Hawting, *EQ*, “Oaths.”

98 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘arab*, 6:4967–8.

Aramaic text of Joshua 23:7.⁹⁹ Despite this difference, the Qur'ānic verses which expound upon swearing an oath remain in strong dialogue with Matthew 5:33–35, which brings us to one final point, namely Matthew 5:35's prohibition not to swear (*lā tīmūn*). It states, “neither by the earth because it is the footstool beneath his feet (*wa lā b-ar'ā d-kūbšā hī d-ṭḥēt rēglawhī*), nor by Jerusalem because it is the city of the great king (*āplā b-ūrīšlēm da-mdīntēh hī d-malkā rabā*)” (Matthew 5:35).¹⁰⁰

This verse may relate to God's pronouncement in Q 90:1, “Indeed, I swear by this country” (*la-uqsim bi hādihā al-balad*). This reading follows that found in the codices of 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr and Mujāhid,¹⁰¹ as well as Kropp's emendation of these class of Qur'ānic formulas (Q 56:75; 69:38; 70:40; 75:1–2; 81:15–16; 90:1). Reading the verse this way entails replacing the *lām* of negation (*nafy*) with that of emphasis (*tawkīd*). This changes the verse from the 'Uthmānic “nay! I swear” or “I do not swear” (*lā uqsim*) to “indeed I swear” (*la-uqsim*), which not only offers a more elegant reading of the Arabic orthography found in the Qur'ān codices as well as alternative readings.¹⁰² This reading is also in harmony with our principle of dogmatic re-articulation where “indeed, I swear by this country” (*la-uqsim bi hādihā al-balad*) stands in contradistinction to Matthew 5:35's “do not swear . . . by the earth . . . nor by Jerusalem” (*lā tīmūn . . . b-ar'ā . . . āplā b-ūrīšlēm*).

Worship, Glory and Authority

The case is often made that worship in the Qur'ān—and by extension the Islamic daily Islamic prayers which took hold soon afterwards—shares an intimate relationship with Hebrew Scripture and Rabbinic orthopraxy.¹⁰³ However, related expressions of worship occur frequently throughout both the Qur'ān and the Gospels as well. Although Jesus is most frequently worshipped in the Gospels (Matthew 14:33; Mark 7:7; Luke 24:52; and so on), in the Qur'ān the angels worship Adam at the

99 Cf. the corresponding verses in JPS; Targum Onkelos; Targum Jonathan and Old Testament Peshitta.

100 Cf. in relation Jacob of Serugh, *Homiliae selectae*, 3:275–94 (On Our Lord's Words, ‘Do not Swear at All’).

101 Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, 275, 284.

102 Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 166; Manfred Kropp, “Beyond single words: *Mā'ida – Shaytān – jibī* and *īqḥūt*. Mechanisms of transmission into the Ethiopic (Ge'ez) Bible and Qur'ān text” in *ibid.* (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Quran*, forthcoming. See also Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-qur'ān*, 3:207. Droge, *The Qur'ān*, 435 agrees with this reading as well.

103 Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, 6 argues that the Islamic confession (*shahādah*) is inspired by 2 Samuel 2:32 and Psalms 18:32. Cf. in relation Aphrahat, “Demonstrations,” 2 vols, Ed. Alphonse Mingana, Mosul: Typis Fratrum praedicatorum, 1905, 1:351 (On the Mysteries of the Church and on Baptism). Note that while the five obligatory prayers (*farā'id*) reflect the five daily prayers found in the Khorda Avesta, the fourth Islamic prayer is named *maghrib* like the third and final prayer of Rabbinic Judaism, *ma'ariv*, meaning “sunset/nightfall” (cf. in relation the three daily prayers of the Qur'āniyyūn). Similarly, Uri Rubin, “Morning and Evening Prayers in early Islam,” *JSAI* 10 (1987): 40–64, discusses how Friday was adopted by early Muslims as the day of congregational prayer (*jum'ah*; Q 62:9) in response to the Jewish Sabbath. Of the superogatory prayers (*nawāfil*) the night vigils (*tahajjud*; Q 17:79) bear resemblance to—among other vigils—those practiced by the Syriac speaking churches.

beginning of creation (Q 2:34; 7:11; and so on) and Joseph’s family worship him once they arrive in Egypt (Q 12:100), both scriptures explicitly state that God alone may be worshipped as a deity (Matthew 4:9–10; Luke 4:7–8; Q 41:37). Even though the word used in the Qur’ān to designate “worship” or “prostration” (*sujūd*)¹⁰⁴ (as well as the place name *masjid* and other derivatives; see Chapter 2) comes from the Aramaic sphere in general,¹⁰⁵ one case exists which may demonstrate the Qur’ān’s dogmatic re-articulation of Matthew’s Gospel in Aramaic. It states,

Therefore, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of king Herod, magi (*mgūšē/mgūšāyē*) from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “where is the king of the Jews who was born? For, we have seen his star (*kāwkbēh*) in the east, and we have come to worship him (*ētayn l-mēsgad lēh*)”.

(Matthew 2:1–2; Diatessaron 3:1–3)

The magi, Syriac *mgūšē* or CPA *mgūšāyē*, are called in some Bible translations “wise men.”¹⁰⁶ This class of magi or wise men come in order to worship (*mēsgad*) the newborn Jesus. The Qur’ān, aware of this passage’s significance—not least because the *mgūšē/mgūšāyē* are favorably acknowledged in the Qur’ān as *al-majūs* (Q 22:17; see Chapter 2)—dogmatically re-articulates its language to engage the confessional needs of Muḥammad’s early community of Muslims, stating,

Say, “[whether] you believe in Him or do not believe, indeed those who were given knowledge (*al-ladhīn ūtū al-‘ilm*) before it [that is, the Qur’ān]—if it were recited before them (*idhā tutlā ‘alayhim*)—would fall down to their chins in worship (*yakhīrrūn li al-adhqān sujjudan*).” And they would say “indeed our Lord’s promise (*wa’d rabbīnā*) has been fulfilled.” And they would fall down to their chins, weeping, and they would increase in austerity.

(Q 17:107–9)

This verse is, generally speaking, a challenge to “those given knowledge” before the revelation of the Qur’ān, that is, the Jews and Christians (cf. Q 2:145; 3:19; 16:67; 22:54; 28:80; 29:49; 30:56; 34:6; 47:16; 58:11). If understood as a response to the passage in Matthew, then those given knowledge (*al-ladhīn ūtū al-‘ilm*) may well be a reference to the “wise men” or magi of the Gospels. In this case, instead of following Jesus’s star (*kāwkbēh*) or worshipping him (*mēsgad lēh*)—which threatens the very core of the strict monotheism espoused by Muḥammad—upon hearing the Qur’ān recited before them the magi would rather fall down to their chins in worship (*yakhīrrūn li al-adhqān sujjudan*) to God and glorify God for fulfilling His promise.

104 Cf. throughout Majid Fakhry, *An Interpretation of the Qur’an: English Translation of the Meanings*, New York: New York University Press, 2004; M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, *The Qur’an: English Translation with Parallel Arabic Text*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010; Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 39.

105 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 162–3, 263–4.

106 *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament*, 2A:15; cf. also KJV and NRSV.

God is glorified in essentially the same fashion both in the Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions. The verb used to designate glorification throughout the Qur'ān is *sabbah* and, although attested in pre-Islamic epigraphic sources,¹⁰⁷ it most probably comes from Aramaic *šabāḥ*,¹⁰⁸ as in the Gospels. Jesus's community of followers frequently glorify God for the miraculous works of his prophetic ministry. For example it states, "When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they glorified God (*šabaḥū/mšabḥīn*¹⁰⁹ *l-alāhā*), who had given such authority (*šūltānā*) to mankind" (Matthew 9:8; see also Mark 2:12; Luke 2:20, and so on).

Similar to this is when Jesus states,

I exalt you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth (*mawdē enā lāk ābi mārā a-šmayā wa d-ar'ā*), because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.

(Matthew 11:25; Diatessaron 15:37)

The Qur'ān reflects a keen awareness of such passages where dozens of times *sabbah* or *subḥān* are mentioned, all of which exclusively invoke God. The phrase "That which is in the heavens and the earth glorifies God" (*sabbah/yusabbih lillāh ma fī al-samāwāt wa [mā fī] al-arḍ*; see further Chapter 5) occurs five times at the start of a sequence of related Surahs (Q 57:1; 59:1; 61:1; 62:1; 64:1; cf. Ephesians 1:3). The phrase "glorified is God," *subḥān allāh* occurs nine times (Q 12:108; 37:159; and so on). Furthermore, the Qur'ān dogmatically re-articulates Matthew 9:8 (see earlier), in which a group of followers glorify God (*šabaḥū l-alāhā*) for giving such authority (*šūltānā*) to mankind, by attacking its exaltation of mankind and—thereby—the divinity of Jesus. It states,

They said God has taken up a child (*qālū ittakhadh allāh waladan*), glorified is He (*subḥānah*)! He is the sovereign [lit. wealthy]; to Him belong that which is in the heavens and that which is in the earth (*lah mā fī al-samāwāt wa mā fī al-arḍ*). Do you have any authority (or proof; *ṣultān*) concerning this? Do you say about God that which you do not know?

(Q 10:68; cf. 2:16, 116; 4:171; 5:116; 19:35; 21:26; 23:91; 39:4; 72:3)

Some observations can be made about Q 10:68 with regards to its dogmatic re-articulation of Matthew 9:8. Whereas Jesus's divine sonship and his divine author-

107 Drijvers and Healy, *The Old Syriac Inscriptions*, 140, 193, demonstrates that as early as the sixth century BCE up to 73 CE, the root *s-b-ḥ* is attested in ancient north Arabian Lihyanite. It occurs in *jāhīlī* poetry as well, and conveys the meaning of "speed," and then "distance," which according to Nawāl Zarzūr, *Mu'jam alfāz al-qiyam al-akhlāqīyah*, 206–7, communicates the normative religious distancing of God from man. See also cf. D. Gimaret, EI², s.v. "Subḥān." In addition, al-Ḥasan, *Qirā'āt li katābāt liḥyāniyyah*, 430 demonstrates that the root *š-b-ḥ* occurs as early as the first century CE in old pagan Aramaic inscriptions attesting *yešbah*, "he glorifies."

108 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, 161–2; Mingana, *Syriac Influence on the Style of the Qur'ān*, 86; Bell, *The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment*, 51.

109 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:113 records this Sinaiticus reading.

ity are the quintessential reason for glorifying God in the Gospels, this threatened the very core of the strict monotheism espoused by Muḥammad. Instead, in an act of Qur'ānic one-upmanship, God, whose possession of all that which is in the heavens and that which is in the earth precludes a frivolous and arbitrary undertaking as a human son, is glorified (*subḥānah*)—exalted—beyond this anthropomorphic Christian model. This argument is confirmed by Q 39:4, which argues that “if God wanted to take up a son, He could have chosen out of what he creates anything that He willed [i.e. not merely humans],” and Q 23:91; 37:159; 52:43; 59:23, which rebukes—especially—the Christians stating, “glorified is God over that which they describe/ascribe (*subḥān allāh ‘an mā yaṣifūn/yushrikūn*).” The implications of these dogmatic Qur'ānic statements on the highly sectarian Arabian audience to which Muḥammad was preaching were that the stricter vision of God and authority promoted his new Islamic prophetic religion do a better job of glorifying God and are, ultimately, more truthful than their counterparts in the Aramaic Gospels. This much is proven by Q 10:68’s play on the words of Matthew 9:8, namely *šabaḥ* and *šūltānā*, which brings us to our discussion on authority.

The word *šūltānā* is used frequently in the Aramaic Gospel Traditions to mean “authority” (Matthew 21:23–24; Mark 2:10; Luke 4:6; and so on). The Arabic *sultān* is etymologically derived from Aramaic *šūltānā*,¹¹⁰ and like its Aramaic counterpart can signify secular¹¹¹ or religious, human or divine authority.¹¹² It is consequently a mysterious force, usually signifying “the moral or magical authority supported by proofs or miracles which afford the right to make a statement of religious import.”¹¹³ The essence of *šūltān*, which generally conveys authority, may be extended as the exegetes did to mean “proof” or “argument.”¹¹⁴ Another view is advanced by Lüling, who equates the term *sultān* with an actual person. He takes this a step further and discerns in it traces of Jewish and Christian angelology,¹¹⁵ especially for Q 30:35, which also challenges the idea in the Gospels that authority is bequeathed from God to men. For it states, “or have We sent down upon them an authority (*sultān*) who would speak about that which they used to ascribe (that is, associate with God, *bimā kānū yushrikūn*)?”

Similarly in Matthew we read,

And when they saw him, they worshipped him (*sgēdū lēh*) [see Chapter 3]. However, some of them doubted. And Jesus approached speaking with them, and said to them, “all authority in heaven and in earth was granted to me (*ētyahb kūl šūltān ba-shmayā wa b-ar‘ā*), and as my Father has sent me, I send you.”¹¹⁶

(Matthew 28:17–19; Diatessaron 55:3–5)

110 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 176.

111 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 1528.

112 Drijvers and Healy, *The Old Syriac Inscriptions*, 232–5; Qur’ān 3:151; 4:153; 12:40; 55:33; and so on.

113 C.E. Bosworth and J.H. Kramers, EP², s.v. “Sultān.”

114 W. Kadi, *EQ*, “Authority.”

115 Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 73.

116 This last sentence is not in the text of the Greek.

The Qur’ān emphatically responds, “And to God worship all that is in the heavens and the earth among creatures and angels (*wa li allāh yasjud mā fī al-samāwāt wa mā fī al-arḍ min dābah wa al-malā’ikah*), and they are not arrogant” (Q 16:49; see also Q 72:8).

First, the line, *li allāh yasjud mā fī al-samāwāt wa mā fī al-arḍ*, is a re-articulation of the phrases *sgēdū lēh* and *ētyahb kūl šūltān ba-shmayā wa b-ar’ā* from Matthew 28:17–19. Moreover, that a mortal—even Jesus—is worshipped and that all the authority in heaven and in earth should be granted to a mortal was naturally in conflict with Muḥammad’s vision of strict monotheism, where worship and authority is not shared by God with anyone, let alone a mortal human being.¹¹⁷

Lord’s Prayer

The impact that the Aramaic Lord’s Prayer had on the language, form and content of liturgical prayers in the Arabic Qur’ān was profound. The text of the Lord’s Prayer reads,

1. Our Father who is in Heaven (*abūn d-ba-šmayā*),
 2. Sanctified is Your name (*nētqdaš šmāk*).
 3. Your kingdom come (*tītē malkūtāk*)
 4. Your will be done (*nēhwē šebyānāk*)
 5. As in Heaven so [too] on earth (*aykanā d-ba-šmayā āp b-ar’ā*).
 6. Give us the bread that we need this day (*hab lan laḥmā d-sūnqānan yawmānā*).
 7. And forgive us our debts (*wa šbūq lan ḥawbayn*)
 8. Just as we have forgiven our debtors (*aykānā d-āp ḥnan šbaqn l-ḥayābayn*).
 9. And do not enter us into temptation (*w lā ta ‘aln l-nēsūyūnā*)
 10. But deliver us from the evil one (*ēlā fašān mēn bīšā*);
Because to you belong the kingdom, the power and glory (*meṭūl d-dīlāk hī malkūtā w ḥaylā w tēšbūhtā*) forever and ever (*l-‘ālam ‘ālmīn*).
- (Matthew 6:9–13; cf. Luke 11:2–4; Diatessaron 9:31–36; Didache 8)

Beginning with the most important qur’ānic example that was inspired by or re-articulated certain dimensions of the Aramaic Lord’s Prayer, let us consider “the Opening” (*al-fātiḥah*; seventh century CE).¹¹⁸ The liturgical prayer that begins the Qur’ān serves as the first Surah and is, furthermore, unparalleled in literary and religious importance within all Islamic literature.¹¹⁹ As Sperl demonstrates, it is a

117 That being said, Robinson, “The rise of Islam,” 174–5, 193 makes it clear that God bequeathed the political authority of the Islamic state upon Muḥammad, and subsequent Caliphs.

118 Cf. the different Biblical and qur’ānic prayers in dialogue with the *fātiḥah* and Lord’s Prayer in Thyen, *Bibel und Koran*, 204–11.

119 William A. Graham, *EQ*, “Fātiḥa.” Cf. also Surahs *al-khal’* and *al-khaḥḥ* of Ubayy b. Ka’b’s codex in Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān*, 180–1. Cf. further the style and content of Narsai, *Narsai Homiliae et carmina*, 1:292 (An Exposition on the Mysteries); Q 2:287.

prayer that comes from a long tradition of ancient and late antique Near Eastern liturgical style prayers, going back through the Gloria of the Roman mass (fourth century CE), the Lord's Prayer (first century), the Shemoneh 'Esreh of Rabbinic liturgy (first century CE?), and related to the Babylonian prayer to the moon god, Sin (first millennium BCE).¹²⁰ It should be added that the Zoroastrian liturgies—especially the Avestan Gahs—and the supplications of *Gēnzā Rbā* R1:1:1–27 are too a foundational contribution to this prayer tradition.¹²¹ At any rate, the text of the *fātiḥah*, including the *basmalah*, follows:

1. In the name of God, the Merciful, the Benevolent (*b-ism allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*)
2. Glory belongs to God, Lord of the worlds (*al-ḥamd li al-allāh rabb al-'ālamīn*)
3. The Merciful, the Benevolent (*al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*)
4. King of the Day of Judgment (*malik yawm al-dīn*)¹²²
5. You do we serve (*īyyāk na'bud*)
6. And you do we ask for help (*wa īyyāk nasta'in*)
7. Guide us to the straight path (*iḥdinā al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*)
8. The path of those whom You have favored (*ṣirāṭ al-ladhīn an'amt alayhim*)
9. Not those who incur anger (*ghayr al-maghḏūb 'alayhim*)
10. Nor the lost (*wa lā al-dāllīn*)

(Q 1:1–7)¹²³

Sperl convincingly relates the syntactic, rhetorical and symmetrical parallelism found in the Arabic *fātiḥah* to the Greek text of the Lord's Prayer. He notes that the underlying structure of the Lord's Prayer, like the *fātiḥah*—including the *basmalah*¹²⁴—is divided symmetrically into two halves “juxtaposing the human and divine sphere.”¹²⁵ Thus, according to Sperl's distribution of the lines (see

120 S.Sperl, “The Literary Form of Prayer: Qur'ān Sura One, the Lord's Prayer and Babylonian Prayer to the Moon God,” *BSOAS* 57: 1, In Honour of J. E. Wansbrough (1994), 213–27.

121 One cannot help, moreover, hearing the echoes of the *basmalah*, as well as the closing after each Surah “God the Magnificent is truthful” (*ṣadaq allāh al-'azīm*), in the invocation articulated before each chapter of the *Gēnzā Rbā*, namely “in the name of the Magnificent Living One” (*b-šūmayhūn ēd-ḥīyā rbīyā*).

122 See Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, 25, 117, 185, 195, 220, 227, 232, 254, 288 where the word *malik*, “king” is preserved in the codices of Ibn Mas'ūd, 'Ā'ishah, 'Alī, Ibn 'Abbās, 'Umar, 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, Ubayy b. Ka'b, Ṭalḥah b. Muṣarrif, and al-Rabī' b. Kuthayyām. al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ, *Ma'ānī al-qur'ān*, 2:590 and Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, 6:2228 consider this the stronger reading. This reading is more faithful to the Jewish and Christian Aramaic sphere through which it passed. See Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 284 which cites Targum literature wherein divine kingdom is directly related to “the King Messiah” (*malkā mšīḥā*). Cf. in relation Narsai, *Narsai Homiliae et carmina*, 1:355 (On the Mysteries of the Church and on Baptism).

123 Cf. further Arthur Jeffery, “A variant text of the Fatiha” in Ibn Warraq (ed.), *The Origins of the Koran: Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book*, Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1998.

124 Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, 1:165–6 records the authorities who believed the *basmalah* to be the first revelation.

125 *Ibid.*, 219.

earlier), the first five lines of both the Lord's Prayer and the *fātiḥah* concern God (glory and exaltation) and the latter five concern humankind (asking God for help). Without sharing Sperl's belief that the original language of the Lord's Prayer, which is "lost," is of secondary importance,¹²⁶ and without repeating the details of his otherwise valuable literary analysis, new insights follow making use of the Aramaic text of the Lord's Prayer, focusing on the Arabic *fātiḥah*'s dogmatic re-articulation thereof.

A report going back to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib alleges that Waraqaḥ—whose knowledge of the Aramaic Lord's Prayer may be assumed—gave Muḥamamad the courage to receive the revelation of the first four lines of the *fātiḥah*.¹²⁷ Concerning the text of the *fātiḥah* more specifically, the initial part of the *basmalah*, which states "in the name of God" (*b-ism allāh*; see also Q 27:30), begins the *fātiḥah* while invoking the phrase "sanctified is Your name" (*nētqdaš šmāk*) in the Lord's Prayer, where Arabic *i-s-m* corresponds to Aramaic *š-m*. So too is the verse "King of the Day of Judgment" (*malik yawm al-dīn*) a re-articulation of "Your kingdom come" (*tītē malkūtāk*)—possibly mediated through Syriac homilies like that of Narsai¹²⁸—where the components of kingdom (see Chapter 5) and apocalypse (see Chapter 6) are juxtaposed. Thus, "King" (*malik*) invokes "kingdom" (*malkūtā*), and the phrase "the Day of Judgment" (*yawm al-dīn*) corresponds to the Aramaic feminine singular imperative verb "Come" (*tītē*). Other pairs that function as conceptual parallels include: the verbal clauses "guide us" (*ihdinā*) and "deliver us" (*faṣān*); the construct "those who incur anger" (*al-maghḏūb 'alayhim*) and the noun with the first person plural suffix "our debtors" (*ḥayābayn*); and finally, the nouns "the lost" (*al-dāllīn*) and "temptation" (*nēsyūnā*).

The rhyme at the end of the *fātiḥah*'s verses (not lines) is the one most commonly found in the Qur'ān, *īn/īm*. According to Sperl's 10 line schema, the rhyme at the end of the *fātiḥah*'s lines is *īn/īm* (A), except for line 5 which ends in "we worship" (*na'bud*; B) and lines 8 and 9 which end in the phrase "upon them" (*'alayhim*; C), producing a rhyme scheme of A-A-A-A-B-A-A-C-C-A. Similarly, according to Sperl's schema, the rhyme scheme of the Aramaic text is stronger than that of the Greek.¹²⁹ The rhyme of the former consists of: the emphatic nominal singular article *ā* (A); the masculine singular possessive suffix *ak* (B); and the masculine plural emphatic case plus first person plural possessive suffix *ayn* (C). This produces a rhyme scheme of A-B-B-B-A-A-A-C-C-A-A. Although the *fātiḥah* and Lord's Prayer share neither rhyme morpheme nor rhyme scheme the occurrence of the stanzas C-C before a return to stanza A at the end may demonstrate the remnants of a shared liturgical substrate. Although Sperl never suggests

126 Ibid., 225.

127 Wāḥidī, *Asbāb nuzūl al-qur'ān*, 22.

128 Narsai, *Narsai Homiliae et carmina*, 2:151 (On the Mysteries of the Church and on Baptism). Cf. in relation to (*qāra*) *ba-šēm yahwēh* of Hebrew Scripture in Blachère, *Introduction au Coran*, 143; Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 32. Moreover, Grohmann, *From the World of Arabic Papyri*, 113–213 demonstrates that the *basmalah* was employed frequently in the correspondences found in early Arabic papyri.

129 The rhyme scheme for the Greek text of the Lord's Prayer is A-B-B-B-C-D-E-E-D-B.

it, rhyme is an integral phonetic component of the style employed in both the *fātiḥah* and Lord's Prayer. Finally, like their Christian counterparts who chant the Aramaic Lord's Prayer to this day, faithful Muslim worshippers chant the *fātiḥah* as an Arabic hymn and conclude it with the standard Judeo-Christian statement, *āmīn* (Aramaic *āmēn*).

The Lord's Prayer not only affected the form and content of the *fātiḥah* but likely informed—along with Hebrew Scripture and Rabbinic commentary—a number of other liturgical prayers in the Qur'ān known for their profound literary and rhythmic qualities. As an invocation, “Our Father who is in Heaven (*abūn d-ba-šmayā*)” is used very much like the *basmalah* (Q 1:1; 27:30). As an exaltation of God's name in the Spirit of Hebrew Scripture (1 Chronicles 16:35; 29:13; Psalms 44:8; Joel 2:26; and so on), “Sanctified is Your name (*nētqdaš šmāk*),” likely had some influence on the Qur'ānic phrase, “so glorify in the name of your Lord, the Great One (*fa sabbiḥ b-ism rabbik al-'aẓīm*)” (Q 56:74, 96; 69:52).

The verbal clause in line 3 of the Lord's Prayer stating, “Your kingdom come (*tītē malkūtāk*)” is adapted in the Qur'ānic formula used in prayers, “Our Lord, bring us . . .!” (*rabbānā [wa] ātinā . . .*) demanding of God's promise (Q 3:194) and mercy (Q 18:10; cf. Q 11:63; see further Q 9:75; 27:16). In this case the Aramaic verb *tītē* is the D stem of the third person feminine imperfect of the root *ā-t-y*, meaning “to come;” and the Arabic verb *ātinā* is the G stem of the masculine singular imperative of “to bring” (that is, causative, “to make come”) of the same root preserved in Arabic, *'-t-ā*.

The use of the command in line 6 of the Lord's Prayer, “give us” (*hab lan*) matches the following Qur'ānic prayers, “Our Lord, do not shake our hearts after having guided us; and give us (*hab lanā*), from Your mercy! Indeed, you are the Giver (*al-wahhāb*);” (Q 3:8); as well as, “And those who say give us (*hab lanā*) from our spouses and offspring a soothness [for our] eyes, and make us for the virtuous a guide” (Q 25:74).

The Arabic formula *hab lanā* is philologically and syntactically identical to its Aramaic counterpart *hab lan*: masculine singular imperative of the root *w-h-b/y-h-b* meaning “to give;” and the preposition *li/la* meaning “to” attached to the first person plural possessive suffix *n/nā* respectively. It follows, therefore, that the Qur'ānic use of *w-h-b* is most likely derived from Aramaic.¹³⁰

Lines 7–8 of the Lord's Prayer state, “and forgive us our debts (*wa šbūq lan ḥawbayn*), just as we have forgiven our debtors (*aykānā d-āp ḥnan šbaqn l-ḥayābayn*).” That the Qur'ān inherited the idea of “sin as debt” (Aramaic *ḥūbā*, Arabic *ḥūb*) made famous by the Aramaic Gospel Traditions is clear (Q 4:2).¹³¹ More significantly, these lines—which encapsulate the spirit of Judeo-Christian brotherhood and forgiveness taught in the Gospels—are fitted to the circumstances of Muḥammad's community as they pray,

130 This is supported by Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, 159, where alternate readings of *wahhabanā* (Q 36:52) as *habbanā* and *ahhabanā* in the codices of Ubayy b. Ka'b, Ibn Mas'ūd and others.

131 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, 116–17.

Lord, forgive us (*rabb ighfir lanā*) and our brethren who preceded us in faith (*wa li ikhwāninā al-dhīnā sabaqūnā bi al-īmān*); and do not create in our hearts animosity (*ghill*) towards those who believe. Our Lord, you are the Compassionate, the Benevolent.

(Q 59:10)

The syntax of formulae asking forgiveness for oneself in Arabic and Aramaic is the same: imperative plus preposition *li/la* plus pronominal suffix [plus ours sins/debts].

So the syntax of “forgive [for] us our debts” (*wa šbūq lan ḥawbayn*) is preserved in “forgive us our sins” (*ighfir lanā dhunūbanā*) found in the Qur’ān (Q 3:16; 3:147; 3:193; cf. Q 12:97), where the imperative “forgive” (*ighfir*) parallels “forgive” (*šbūq*) and “our sins” (*dhunūbanā*) parallels “our debts” (*ḥawbayn*). In relation to this, as line 8 of the Lord’s Prayer—“just as we have forgiven our debtors (*aykānā d-āp ḥnan šbaqn l-ḥayābayn*)”—attempts to bridge the gap between Jesus’s socially disparate community by asking for mutual forgiveness among a community of “debtors,” so too does Q 59:10 ask—as a compliment to the Gospels—that there not be mutual “animosity” (*ghill*) among the community of “brethren” and “believers.” Moreover, Muḥammad saw the spirit of brotherhood and forgiveness demonstrated in the Hebrew Scriptures and Gospel Traditions as an example for his community to follow (Q 48:29).¹³²

The translation for the word *nēsyūnāin* line 9 of the Lord’s Prayer “And do not enter us into temptation (*w lā ta’aln l-nēsyūnā*),” is rendered alternately by the NRSV as “trial.” The faithful pray in the Qur’ān for protection against both “temptation” (from *n-s-ā*) and “trial” (*fitnah*),¹³³ which are further expounded upon in Chapter 4. Thus, it states,

Our Lord, do not hold us accountable if we are tempted or mistaken
(lā tu’ākhidhnā in nasīnā aw akḥṭa’nā)
 Our Lord, nor place upon us a burden as you placed on those before us
 Our Lord, nor burden us with what we cannot withstand
 And pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us.
 You are our Lord, so give us victory over the rebellious folk
(al-qawm al-kāfirīn).

(Q 2:286)

As well as, “Our Lord, do not make us a trial for those who rebelled (*lā taj’alnā fitnah li al-ladhīnā kafarū*), and forgive us Lord. Indeed, you are the Mighty, the Wise” (Q 60:5; Cf. 10:85).

As suggested earlier, the conditional clause “if we are tempted” (*in nasīnā*; Q 2:286) and the noun for “trial” (*fitnah*; Q 60:5) are an Arabic verbal re-wording

132 See in relation Khouri, “Selected ethical themes in the Qur’ān and the Gospel of Matthew,” 132, 174–87; Daniel C. Peterson, *EQ*, “Mercy.”

133 John Nawas, *EQ*, “Trial.”

and calque—respectively—of the Aramaic word for “temptation, trial” (*nēsyūnā*). What firmly establishes the connection between these Qur’ānic prayers and line 9 of the Lord’s Prayer are the identical syntax of the negative imperatives directed towards God, “do not hold us accountable” (*lā tu’ākhidhnā*) and “do not make us” (*lā taj’alnā*), which mirror “do not enter us” (*lā ta’aln*).

As for “the rebellious folk” (*al-qawm al-kāfirīn*) or “those who rebelled” (*al-ladhīnā kafarū*) from whom the faithful flock seek refuge in the Qur’ān, they represent one manifestation of “the evil one” (*bīšā*) found in line 10 of the Lord’s Prayer. In fact, line 10 which reads “but deliver us from the evil one (*ēlā faṣān mēn bīšā*),” is dogmatically re-articulated in a number of Qur’ānic prayers. For example, Moses’ people pray,

Upon God have we placed our trust. Our Lord, do not make us a trial for the evil folk (*lā taj’alnā fītnah li al-qawm al-ẓālimīn*); and deliver us—by your mercy—from the rebellious folk (*wa najjinā bi raḥmatik min al-qawm al-kāfirīn*).

(Q 10:85–86: cf. 66:11)

Similarly, after Moses has killed an Egyptian he flees the city “fearfully looking about” and praying, “Our Lord, deliver me from the evil folk” (*najjinī min al-qawm al-ẓālimīn*; Q 28:21; cf. Q 23:28; see also 7:89; 26:169).¹³⁴ The liturgical prayer formula found in the Qur’ān, “deliver us/me from the rebellious/evil folk” (*najjinā/īmīn al-qawm al-kāfirīn/al-ẓālimīn*) reflects the syntax and meaning of “deliver us from the evil one (*ēlā faṣān mēn bīšā*)” found in line 10 of the Lord’s Prayer. The verb *najjinā/ī* is a calque for *faṣān*. Furthermore, the evil or oppressive folk (*al-qawm al-kāfirīn/al-ẓālimīn*) play the role of the perennial adversary/adversaries faced by the prophets and their righteous entourage throughout the Qur’ān—the same role played by “the evil one” (*bīšā*) in the Aramaic Gospels (Matthew 5:37; John 17:15; and so on).

Greeting the Home

The standard greeting shared by the Aramaic Gospel Traditions and the Qur’ān is that of “peace,” for which the Aramaic noun *šlāmā* corresponds to the Arabic noun *salām*.¹³⁵ Thus, Jesus warns against the Pharisees who writhe in flattery and love to receive “greetings” (*šlāmā*) in the marketplace (Matthew 23:7; Mark 12:34; Luke 11:34; 20:46). This somewhat negative portrayal of greetings is inherited by the Qur’ān as it advised its audience to both give greetings (*salām*) and shun the ignorant folk (*al-jāhilūn*; Q 25:63; 28:55). However, there is one exception in the Gospels to this negative portrayal of greeting. When teaching his disciples how to go out and preach the Gospel Jesus states,

¹³⁴ Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 3:9–11.

¹³⁵ Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 175.

And when you enter a house (*baytā*) greet the household (*šēlū šlāmēh d-baytā*). And if the house is worthy, let your greeting come upon it (*šlāmkūn nītē ‘alawhī*). If, however, it is not worthy, let your greeting return to you (*šlāmkūn ‘alaykūn nēfnē/ntūb*¹³⁶). Furthermore, whoever does not receive you, nor hear your words, when you exit that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.

(Matthew 10:12–14; Diatessaron 12:52–55)

In relation to this, Q 24 legislates to Muhammad’s early community of believers various aspects of everyday life. It teaches the etiquette of how to eat and the permissibility of eating in the homes of one’s relatives, friends and associates, then it states, “. . . So if you enter a household (*buyūtan*), then greet yourselves (*sallimū ‘alā anfusikum*)—a greeting (*taḥiyyatan*) from God, blessed and good” (Q 24:61).

Why would anyone greet themselves instead of the household into which they are entering? On its own, this verse makes less sense than if understood intertextually with Matthew 10:12–14. For in truth, the Qur’ān, conscious of the episode in Matthew, advises its audience to bypass the embarrassment of greeting an unworthy household by insisting on greeting oneself. Therefore, it is Jesus’s words in the Gospel, “let your greeting return to you” (*šlāmkūn alaykūn nēfnē*) that inspire the dogmatic re-articulation of the Qur’ān, “greet yourselves” (*sallimū ‘alā anfusikum*).¹³⁷

136 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:129.

137 See in relation Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān*, 100, for an alternate Shi’ah reading of Q 49:7 preserved in Ibn Mas’ūd’s codex, and possibly inspired by Matthew, which states, “that there may not be a dispute (*mukhālafah*) between your elders (*sādaturum*)

4 The Evils of the Clergy

Having expounded upon the role of prophets, their teachings and ethics, as well as their righteous entourage we now turn our attention to another subject shared by both the Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions, namely the evils of the clergy.¹ It is clear from the scriptures attributed to them that there was no love lost between the prophets Jesus and Muḥammad on the one hand, and the clergy of their day on the other. This chapter discusses how the Aramaic Gospel Traditions and the Qur'ān's dogmatic articulation thereof fulfill another duty of prophetic tradition, namely to utter words of condemnation—primarily directed against evils committed by the clergy—and warn their audience against misguidance.

Condemnation

The self-image of the Qur'ān and the Gospels as champion of the spirit of the Jewish Law and critic of Rabbinic authority—accused of preaching the letter of the law and abusing its power (Matthew 23:23)—is the context in which their common language of condemnation is manifested. This language can be expressed directly, as in curses, warnings of impending doom, or indirectly, as in hostile, critical, or unflattering portrayals of certain persons or groups. By reproaching Jewish groups specifically, the Qur'ān was participating in the larger sectarian polemical discourse of its day. Such is evident in Syriac homiletic works like Aphrahat's (d. ca. 345) *Demonstration on the Sabbath* and various homilies against the Jews by Isaac of Antioch (d. ca. 460) and Jacob of Serugh (d. 521).²

The Qur'ān accuses the Jews and especially their clergy of various offenses. This may also be the result of the tendentious relationship that developed between Muḥammad and the Jewish groups during his lifetime.³ Thus, where some

- 1 Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, 142–52 discusses the ambivalence of holy men from the desert towards the institution of the clergy in the late antique world.
- 2 Aphrahat, "Demonstrations," 1:541–72 (On the Sabbath); cf. also *ibid.* 1:785–816 (On Jesus Christ); 931–90 (On the Persecution). On Isaac of Antioch, see S. Kazan, "Isaac of Antioch's Homily Against the Jews," *Oriens Christianus* 45, 1961, 30–53; Jacob of Serugh, "Homélie contre les Juifs," *PO* 38, 1976, 44–181. See further Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext*, 251.
- 3 Ibn Qirnās, *Sunnat al-awwalīn*, 164–83 argues that the animosity between Muḥammad and Jewish groups can be gleaned not only from a critical reading of the Sirah literature but is, more importantly, latent in several qur'ānic verses.

passages acknowledge the legacy of the children of Israel (*banū isrāʿīl*) or Jews (*al-ladhīn hādū*) for being God's chosen nation or receiving the blessing of scripture (Q 2:47, 62),⁴ others exhibit expressions of condemnation directed towards them, sometimes along with Christians (*al-naṣārā*; Q 2:120; 5:18, 31, 64, 82; and so on). Q 4:62–63 implies, furthermore, that some Jews posed as believers and misbehaved in the same manner as the Scribes and Pharisees of old. Elsewhere in the Qurʾān, the excessive measure of Jewish dietary prohibition is criticized and doubt is cast upon its scriptural origin. It states,

All food was made lawful (*ḥillan*) to the children of Israel (*banū isrāʿīl*), except that which Israel made unlawful (*ḥarrām*) upon himself before Hebrew Scripture (lit. *al-tawrāh*) was revealed. Say, “bring the Hebrew Scripture and narrate it, if you are truthful!”

(Q 3:93)

The implication of this verse is that the Children of Israel—the Jews—have lost their scripture (see in relation Chapter 1), meaning their dietary prohibitions are a fabrication. The idea of excessive Jewish dietary prohibition is alluded to elsewhere in the Qurʾān, where it mentions that Jesus came to “confirm that which was before [him] of the Hebrew Scripture and to make lawful some of that which was forbidden to [Israel] (Q 3:50).” The excessive nature of Jewish dietary—and legal—prohibitions in the Qurʾān, as well as its account of Jesus as making formerly unlawful matters lawful reflect a number of quotes ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels.⁵ One instance of this is where Jesus scolds the Pharisees, “listen and understand! It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles” (Matthew 15:10–11; cf. Thomas 14). Christians came to perceive that this verse “makes lawful” the kosher restrictions. Another instance to which the Qurʾān may be alluding is when Jesus rebukes the Pharisees who reproach his hungry disciples for picking grain in the fields on the Sabbath, which is unlawful. He sanctions the breaking of the Sabbath by analogy to David, who “entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which was not lawful (*d-lā šalīṭ hwā*)” (Matthew 12:4). Jesus further disparages the Pharisees, “If you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice (*ḥnānā/rahmē ṣābē ʿenā w lā dēbhṭā*),’ you would not have condemned those who are without fault/innocent (Matthew 12:7; Diatessaron 7:44–45; cf. Hosea 6:6).”⁶

He quotes from Hosea 6:6 to show that “sacrifice” is merely an external, symbolic ritual act. What truly matters is the internal component of sacrifice—“mercy,” or what Nabil Khouri dubs “inward righteousness.”⁷ The dichotomy of

4 It is worthy of mention that *al-yahūd* in the Qurʾān is never used in a positive light. See Q 2:113, 120; 5:18, 51, 64, 82; 9:30.

5 See in relation Asad, *The Message of the Quran*, 214.

6 See variant readings in Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:156.

7 N. Khouri, “Selected ethical themes in the Qurʾān and the Gospel of Matthew,” 205. Cf. in relation Biqāʿī, Naẓm, 5:205–6.

God desiring inward, and not external, sacrifice is equally present in the Qur'ān (Q 22:37; cf. Isaiah 58; Didache 14:4).⁸

It would be erroneous, nonetheless, to understand Jesus's disdain for the "letter of the law" as a disdain for the law itself. This is far from the case. It is evident from numerous instances in the Gospels where Jesus makes legal judgments to the Pharisees about what is "lawful" (Matthew 19:4–7; 22:17–22; Luke 14:1–4; and so on), that he is a strong proponent of the moral spirit behind the law.⁹ The Qur'ānic reference to Jesus's confirmation of Hebrew Scripture (see above) is likely a dogmatic re-articulation—a paraphrasing—of Matthew as it states, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets (*d-ēīt d-ēšrē nāmūsā aw nabīyē*); I have come not to abolish but to fulfill (*lā ēīt d-ēšrē ēlā d-ēmalē*); (Matthew 5:17; Diatessaron 8:46–47)."

Thus, Jesus objects to the literalist reading of the law promoted by the more affluent priestly classes of Pharisees and Sadducees, because rather than accommodating "those who are without fault," like his hungry disciples, the law is used as tool of oppression. This is because Jesus was motivated by the practical needs of the poor and downtrodden elements of society with whom he socialized (see Chapter 3).

In the same way, the Qur'ān shows contempt for representatives of the clergy. Rabbinical authorities like scribes (*al-aḥbār*) and priests (*al-ruhbān*),¹⁰ are corrupted by wealth, power and strict observation of rituals. Hence, it states,

They [that is, the Jews and Christians] have taken their scribes (*aḥbārahum*) and their priests (*ruhbānahum*) as lords (*arbāban*)¹¹ above (*min dūn*) God, and the Messiah the son of Mary. And they were not commanded but to worship one God . . . O you who believe, indeed many of the scribes and priests devour the wealth of people falsely (*ya'kulūn amwāl al-nās bi al-bāṭil*) and obstruct [others] from the way of God (*yaṣuddūn 'an sabīl allāh*). And those who hoard gold and silver (*al-ladhīn yaknizūn al-dhahab wa al-ḥiḍḍah*) and do not spend it in the way of God (*wa lā yunfiqūn fī sabīl allah*), warn them of an agonizing torment (*fa bashshirrhūm bi 'adhāb alīm*).

(Q 9:31, 34)

The verse is highly polemical of Rabbinical authorities who, according to the Qur'ān, abuse their power, wrongfully appropriate wealth, being over-praised and obstructing others from the way of God. The final two offenses, namely hoarding gold and silver, and not spending in the way of God, are likely a paraphrasing of

8 Q 22:37 states, "The meat and blood of [sacrifice] do not reach God, but rather your piety reaches him."

9 Jeffery, *The Qur'ān as Scripture*, 82; Khouri, "Selected ethical themes in the Qur'ān and the Gospel of Matthew," 187.

10 See Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, 49. For the background of these terms in Hebrew Scripture, see Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 80–81.

11 Cf. In relation De Blois, "Nasrani and Hanif," 9 fn. 49, which derives *ruhbān* and *aḥbār* from a Christian context in the Persian sphere.

Jesus's position in Matthew where he disdains both gold and silver, and where he continually curses the Pharisees for their greed (Matthew 10:9; 23:16–29; cf. *Gēnzā Rbā* R2:63).¹² In fact, the curses ascribed to Jesus which he unleashes upon the clergy of his day—principally the Pharisees—are a hallmark of the Gospels, even in the Qur'ān's milieu.

License to Curse: From David to Jesus

The Qur'ān frequently illustrates the insubordination and rebelliousness of the Israelites towards their prophet Moses (Q 2:54, 61, 71, 92; 5:20; and so on). However, one verse exhibits an intriguing, uncharacteristic break from this pattern,

Cursed (*lu'in*)¹³ were those who rebelled from the children of Israel (*al-ladhīn kafarū min banī isrā'il*) on the tongue of David and Jesus the son of Mary (*'alā lisān dāwūd wa 'īsā ibn maryam*), because they disobeyed and continued to cause offense.

(Q 5:78)¹⁴

Aside from oblique parallels with Psalms 10:3, 7,¹⁵ this verse is very much in the spirit of the Gospels, where Jesus is identified closely with David (see in relation Chapter 3) and provides scathing invectives against the Jewish authorities—namely the Pharisees and Sadducees.¹⁶

The place of David is magnified by Syriac Christian authors who exalted him as an archetype of prophecy as well as repentance. Thus, the Syriac speaking churches likely played a role in keeping his religious potency alive in the Qur'ān's milieu. Not only do Syriac lectionaries begin with a reading from the Psalms (the book of King David),¹⁷ some Syriac authors like Jacob of Serugh held David in exceptionally high regard (see Chapter 3). It is plausible that the mention of Jesus's Davidic lineage, which begins in the Gospels and remains popular among Syriac speaking Christian communities, soon reached the Qur'ān's milieu, and was in turn afforded a terse dogmatic re-articulation in Q 5 in connection with condemning the representatives of Rabbinic authority.

12 Ernst, *How to Read the Qur'an*, 198.

13 See Dhuyayb, *al-Mu'jam al-Naba'i*, 147 for attestations of *l-'n* in Nabataean inscriptions.

14 For more on Qur'ānic curses with *la'an* and earlier uses in Nabataean Aramaic see J. Healey, "The realities behind tomb inscriptions: Imagining Nabataean law," in Z. al-Salameen (ed.), *Proceedings of the First Nabataean Symposium*, forthcoming; idem, "Fines and curses: Law and religion among the Nabataeans and their neighbours," in R.G. Kratz and A. Hagedorn (eds), *Law and Religion in the Eastern Mediterranean*, forthcoming.

15 See also Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 4:367–9 for David's curse against his insincere advisor Ahithophel.

16 The internal Jewish sectarian disputes between Pharisees and Sadducees are evident in the Qur'ān where it states, "When Jesus came with the proofs, he said, 'I have come with wisdom and to clarify some of that which you are disputing over. So fear God and obey me'" (Q 43:63). See also Asad, *The Message of the Quran*, 239–40.

17 Cf. the high frequency of quotes from the Psalms in Francis Burkitt, *The Early Syriac Lectionary System*, London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1923.

Persecuting the Righteous Entourage and Struggling in the Way of God

The Rabbinic authorities, and by extension, their followers did not welcome the mission of Jesus, nor that of his closest disciples and the rest of his righteous entourage. To the contrary, we recall from the Beatitudes that their suffering is likened to the persecution of the prophets before them. It states,

Blessed are you when people dishonor you (*mḥasdīn lkūn*), persecute you (*rādfīn lkūn*), and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, for my sake (*mēṭūlātī*). So rejoice and be glad (*ḥdawū wa rwazū*), for your reward is great in heaven (*d-agrkūn sagī ba-šmāyā*); like this did they persecute the prophets before you (*hākanā . . . rdapū la-nbīyē d-mēn qdāmaykūn*).

(Matthew 5:11–12; Diatessaron 8:35–36)

These words of encouragement amid the persecution they withstood may preserve some measure of historicity. They were, furthermore, the subject of discussion by Aphrahat's *Demonstration on Persecution* as a result his argument against Jewish interlocutors in which the stories of the prophets are narrated, accentuating the significance of persecution (see in relation Chapter 2).¹⁸ Incidentally, the literary style behind this genealogy of persecution reflects that of Q 26:4–190.

At any rate, Matthew 5:11–12 and the reflections of Syriac Christian authors like Aphrahat upon these verses were the inspiration for various Qur'ānic passages of encouragement. These verses were likely revealed to Muḥammad and uttered by him for the sake of consoling his righteous entourage and persecuted Muslim following as a whole (for example, 2:214; 3:140). In the Qur'ān, they cry out to God in prayer that He may reward them for their faith, sacrifice and endurance of suffering (Q 3:192–194). God responds, stating,

So their Lord answered them, "I do not squander the works of any hard worker among you, neither male nor female, each of you is like the other. As for those who migrated (*hājarū*), were expelled out of their homes (*ukhrijū min diyārihim*), and were harmed in My way (*wa ūdhū fī sabīlī*)—who fought and were killed (*wa qātalū wa qutilū*)—I will indeed blot out for them their sins (*la-ukaffiranna 'anhum sayyi' ātihim*) and I will indeed enter them into gardens underneath which rivers flow (*jannāt tajrī min taḥtihā al-anhār*) as a reward from God (*thawāban min 'in allāh*)." And God possesses the best reward.

(Q 3:195)

This verse is—in part—a dogmatic re-articulation of Jesus's words in Matthew, which has been suited to the particular circumstances of Muḥammad's

18 Aphrahat, "Demonstrations," 1:953–82 (On Persecution). Cf. furthermore the opening of *ibid.*, 981–84 and Q 2:252–53; 3:108; 11:49; 45:6. Cf. further the style of Narsai, *Narsai Homiliae et carmina*, 1:287–8 (An Exposition on the Mysteries 287–8); Q 19:2, 16, 41, 51, 54, 56; 38:41, 45, 48. For more on the "topical wandering" shared by the Qur'ān and Syriac Christian homiletic literature see Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext*, 250.

community (migration, expulsion, and retaliation).¹⁹ The Arabic third person plural passive perfect verb referring to those who “were harmed (*ūdhū*)”—that is, persecuted—encapsulates the Aramaic reference to those who are blessed when people “dishonor you (*mḥasdīn lkūn*), persecute you (*rādīfīn lkūn*), and say all kinds of evil against you falsely.” The Qur’ānic and Matthean syntax is also paralleled where the persecution of the righteous entourage is followed by Arabic *fī sabīlī*, “in My way,” reproducing the Aramaic *mētūlātī*, “for my sake.” One characteristic which underscores the dogmatic nature of the Qur’ān’s re-articulation of the Gospel text is that where Matthew portrays the righteous entourage as working for “the sake” of Jesus—which is in violation to the strict monotheism espoused by Muḥammad—in the Qur’ān they work in “the way” of God. And where their reward is given anonymously in Matthew, God is the explicit possessor and giver of the reward in the Qur’ān. The syntax of both passages continues in parallel as the penultimate statement made is the promise of a “reward” (Arabic *thawāb*, Aramaic *agrā*). The final statement in Matthew 5:11–12, namely “like this did they persecute the prophets before you” (*hākanā . . . rdapū la-nbīyē d-mēn qdāmaykūn*), does not quite match anything in Q 3:195, but is approximated elsewhere in the Qur’ān as it states, “and like this did We create for each prophet an enemy from among the criminals” (*wa kadhālik ja’alnā li kull nabī ‘aduwwān min al-mujrimīn*) . . . (Q 25:31; cf. Q 83:29–36), where the Arabic introductory marker *kadhālik* is analogous to the Aramaic *hākanā*.

Unlike the Gospels which portray Jesus as a pacifist (Matthew 26:52; although cf. Matthew 10:34), one of the consequences, on Muḥammad’s part, of identifying the suffering in his own community with that of Jesus in the Gospels was its gradual evolution into an ideology of communal protective warfare, social struggle, and internal taxation. The sequence of this evolution is outlined later in this chapter.

We have already seen earlier that Q 3:195 adds those who “fought and were killed” (*qātalū wa qutilū*) to the list of the persecuted righteous entourage. This is because warfare played a vital role in establishing earliest Islam, not merely as a prophetic tradition, but more importantly as an intertribal, national, state polity, or “*ummah*.”²⁰ At its very core, the Qur’ān is concerned with the welfare and protection of the downtrodden members in Muḥammad’s community, especially fostering the rights of women and “the downtrodden among the orphans” (*al-mustaḍ’afūn min al-wildān*; Q 4:127). For this purpose Q 4:74 sanctions fighting on the battlefield and exalts martyrdom. The next verse goes on to implore its believing audience, stating,

19 Khouri, “Selected ethical themes in the Qur’ān and the Gospel of Matthew,” 93–4, 112, also put Q 2:214 in dialogue with Matthew 5:11–12. Furthermore, on retaliation, see *ibid.*, 128–9, 168–70.

20 Cf. the “constitution of Medina” in Marco Schöller, *EQ*, “Medina”. Furthermore, the term *ummat muḥammad*, “Muḥammad’s nation,” occurs in the early Arabic papyri of Grohmann, *From the World of Arabic Papyri*, 164.

So why do you not fight (*tuqātilūn*) in the way of God and the downtrodden (*fī sabīl allāh wa al-mustaḍ'afīn*) among men, women, orphans and those who say, "O Lord release us from this town whose people are oppressive; and create for us, by Your doing, a champion (*naṣīran*)?"

(Q 4:75)

Aside from the messianic undertones of the "champion" (*naṣīr*; cf. in relation I Samuel 8:4–5; Isaiah 42:13),²¹ it is clear from this verse that combat is a communal duty whose inspiration and purpose stems from a strong desire to fend for the downtrodden. In due course, the phrase *fī sabīl allāh wa al-mustaḍ'afīn* affirms that "the way of God" is itself "the way of the downtrodden." Concerning those martyred in such warfare, similar to Matthew 5:11–12 and Q 3:195 it states, "And indeed do not think that those who were killed in the way of God (*al-ladhīn qutilū fī sabīl allāh*) are dead. Nay [they are] alive with their Lord receiving recompense (Q 3:169; cf. Q 47:4)."²²

As Muḥammad's community grew, projects of migration (*hijrah*)²³ expanded into military duty (*qīṭāl*; see also 4:84; 22:58–60) and, later on, socio-military struggle (*jihād*; see Q 4:95, 100; 8:72, 74; 9:20, 38, 41, 111 citing in relation the *tawrāh* and *injīl*). Concerning this struggle it states,

Indeed those who believe are those who believed in God and his messenger, then had no doubt, and struggled with their wealth and their selves in the way of God (*wa jāhadū bi amwālahum wa anfusahum fī sabīl allāh*). They are the sincere ones (*al-ṣādiqūn*).

(Q 49:15; Cf. Q 61:11)

Socio-military struggle (*jihād*) was waged in the "way of God" (*sabīl allāh*), which beyond setting the foundation for "holy war"²⁴ served the greater function of being a community welfare system. This system had two functions. One function required believers to provide voluntary financial support (*amwālahum*) and the other function required them to provide voluntary military service (*anfusahum*) in the way of God (*fī sabīl allāh*). Furthermore, by recasting those who struggle (*al-ladhīn . . . jāhadū*) as the sincere ones (*al-ṣādiqūn*), this ensured the militarization of the righteous entourage in the Qur'ān.

It is worth mentioning that as the military campaigns of Muḥammad's army began to yield substantial wealth and—perhaps—once they formed a unified polity of sorts, military service lead to the taxation of war booty. Thus 20 percent of all war booty (*khums*) collected went directly to Muḥammad and the poor and downtrodden members of society, including kindred, orphans, the poor, and wanderers (Q 8:41).

21 See in relation Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 98.

22 Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-qur'ān*, 3:58; Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, 34, 221 cites "fought," *qāṭalū*, instead of "were killed," *qutilū* preserved in Q 3:140–146 and 47:4 of Ibn Mas'ūd's and 'Umar's codex respectively.

23 This sequence of events is how Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah*, 1:211–60; 314–47 is framed.

24 Dmitry V. Frollov, *EQ*, "Path or Way."

On the other hand, those who rebelled (*al-ladhīn kafarū*) fight “in the way of misguidance” (*fī sabīl al-ṭāghūt*)—where *ṭāghūt* (see also Q 2:256–7; 4:51; 60, 76; 5:60; 16:36; 39:17), its active participle *ṭāghīyah*, “abomination” and its verbal form, *ṭaghā*, “to go astray,” (Q 79:37–39; 96:6) are Arabized derivations that came through an Aramaic dialect (from Ethiopic?)²⁵ as is evident from the verbal usage of *t’ā*, “to go astray” throughout the Gospels (Matthew 18:12–13; Mark 8:14; 13:5–6; Luke 12:6; John 7:47; and so on).

At any rate, there is an indication in the Qur’ān that the “socio-military struggle in the way of God” (*jihād fī sabīl allāh*)—precisely because it represented a welfare system that served the poor and downtrodden members of society—constituted a sure path to salvation (*najāh*; Q 61:10–12) and evolved further into the beginnings of internal taxation (*nafaqah*, *infāq fī sabīl allāh*; Q 2:195; 9:34; 47:38; 57:10).²⁶ This argument is supported by the possibility that the function of *sabīl allāh* as a charitable treasury may be associated with the Aramaic epithet for the “treasury,” that is “the house of offerings of God” (*bayt qūrbānē d-alāhā*; Luke 21:4) which is discussed later on.

Ultimately, it is imperative to keep in mind that, far from contemporary political discourses, *jihād* in the Qur’ān was inspired by a concern to provide military and material support for the downtrodden who composed a sizeable portion of Muḥammad’s community. Moreover, in expressing its concern for them, the Qur’ān dogmatically re-articulated related passages from the Aramaic Gospel Traditions.

Persecuting and Killing the Prophets

The persecution of the prophets referred to in the Beatitudes (see earlier) is mentioned elsewhere in the Gospels and, in turn, picked up by the Qur’ān. While condemning the Pharisees in a fairly lengthy diatribe most intensely preserved in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus states,

Therefore, behold, I send to you prophets (*nabīyē*), wise men (*ḥakīmē*), and scribes (*sāfrē*). Some of them you will kill and crucify (*mēnhūn qāṭlīn / tēqṭlūn antūn wa zāqfīn antūn / tešlūbūn*²⁷); and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute them (*wa mēnhūn mnagdīn / tēngdūn antūn . . . w-tardfūn*) from city to city.

(Matthew 23:34; Diatessaron 41:1–2)²⁸

25 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 202–3. Cf. *ṭa’awa* in Leslau, *Concise Dictionary of Ge’ez*, 220.

26 Khouri, “Selected ethical themes in the Qur’ān and the Gospel of Matthew,” 110 briefly acknowledges this but does not go in depth nor provide much nuance. See also *ibid.*, 157–9. Cf. further Paul L. Heck, *EQ*, “Taxation;” Azim Nanji, *EQ*, “Almsgiving.” It is, moreover, significant that Robinson, “The rise of Islam,” 190 lacks any context for the “struggle in the way of God,” about which he states, “meant nothing more or less than fighting on [God]’s behalf.”

27 The Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament, 2A:60.

28 See variant readings in Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:361.

Luke's Gospel presents a different narrative, "Therefore the wisdom of God says, 'I will send them prophets (*nabīyē*) and righteous men (*šlīḥē*). Some of them they will kill and persecute (*mēnhūn nērdfūn wa nēqtlūn*); (Luke 11:49)."²⁹

Finally, at the end of a parable preserved in Mark 12:1–5 concerning the persecution of prophets in a particular city, it states,

Thus, they caught him and beat him and robbed him. And again he sent to them another servant; and so they cast stones at him, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. And again he sent another. They killed him. And he sent others to many. And some of them they beat (*wa mēnhūn mahū*), then some of them they killed (*mēnhūn dēyn qatū/ qātūn*).³⁰
(Mark 12:3–5; Diatessaron 33:44–47)

That each of these Gospel passages portray the persecution and killing of a sequence of prophets sent by God is clear.³¹ However, a stylistic feature is shared between the Aramaic text of these passages as well, namely the formula:

mēnhūn + <plural verb> || *mēnhūn* / *wa* + <plural verb>

A formula virtually identical to the one above is twice preserved in the Qur'ān. Furthermore, one instance addresses the persecution and killing of the prophets in the precise manner of the Gospels. It states,

And we gave Moses the scripture and matched (*qaffaynā*) after him messengers (*rusul*). And We brought proofs with Jesus the son of Mary and aided him with the Holy Spirit (*ruh al-qudus*). Whenever a messenger (*rasūl*) came with that which did not please you, did you not grow arrogant (*istakbartum*)? Some of them you belied (*fariqan kadhdhabtum*) and some of them you kill[ed] (*wa fariqan taqtulūn*).

(Q 2:87; cf. Q 2:90;³² 6:34; 36:13–25)

By referring to Moses, Jesus, and then citing the persecution and killing of prophets after them, this verse dogmatically re-articulates the Gospel passages cited earlier. It does so by communicating their moral gist, "whenever a messenger (*rasūl*) came with that which did not please you, did you not grow arrogant (*istakbartum*)?"³³ The remainder of the verse preserves the formula found in the Gospels by stating, "some of them you belied (*fariqan kadhdhabtum*) and

29 Ibid., 3:242 records that Sinaiticus, Curetonius and Harklean versions state in reverse, "some of them they will kill and persecute" (*mēnhūn nērdfūn wa nēqtlūn*).

30 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 3:174 records this Harklean reading.

31 For a survey of Biblical parallels to the killing of the prophets in the Qur'ān see Gabriel Reynolds, "On the Qur'an and the theme of Jews as killer of the prophets," *AB* 10.2, 2012, 9–34.

32 For more on the rhetoric of condemnation shared by Q 2:90 and classical Arabic poetry cf. al-Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-qur'ān*, 1:60–1.

33 Asad, *The Message of the Quran*, 37.

some of them you kill[ed] (*wa farīqan taqtulūn*),” where the Arabic noun *farīq* (“group”)—or a synonym *tuwayf* preserved in Ibn Mas‘ūd’s codex³⁴—approximates the Aramaic *mēnhūn* (the partitive preposition “from” plus the pronominal suffix for “them”). Moreover, the verb tenses *kadhhabtum* followed by *taqtulūn* at the end of Q 2:87 reflects most closely that of the Harklean reading, *maḥū* followed by *qāṭlīn* (Mark 12:5; see earlier).³⁵ At any rate, aligning all the formulas looks like those in Table 4.1.

Three out of four of the Gospel formulas agree with the Qur’ān with respect to condemning the act of killing prophets (*qāṭlīn antun/tešlūbūn*; *nēqṭlūn*; *qaṭlū*; *taqtulūn*). However, where the persecution of the prophets at the hands of their audience is narrated in some detail among the Gospels (*zāqfīnantun*; *tardfūn*; *maḥū*; and so on), the Qur’ān sees their greatest crime in doing so that they belied (*kadhhabtum*) them.

Elsewhere in the Qur’ān the formula used to describe the persecution and killing of prophets at the hands of earlier generations of Jews is reformulated to describe—according to the *Tafsīr* literature—the defeat of the Jewish Arabian tribe of Banū Naḍīr at the hands of the earliest Muslim armies.³⁶ It states, “And he brought down those who challenged them from among the People of the Scripture (*ahl al-kitāb*) from their strongholds, and cast terror into their hearts, killing some (*farīqan taqtulūn*) and capturing some (*wa ta’sirūn farīqan*; Q 33:26)”.

Irrespective of the opinions preserved in the *Tafsīr* literature, the Gospels and Qur’ān agree that the People of the Scripture (*ahl al-kitāb*)—whether Jews, Christians or both—are guilty of killing the prophets sent to them (see above). It is of great interest, however, that as the earliest Muslim community began to dominate their Arabian context and impose their sectarian primacy over rival religious communities (*ahl al-kitāb*), the Qur’ān re-articulated—and more importantly re-defined—the formula associated with persecuting and killing the prophets to narrate the killing and capturing of those groups (*farīqan taqtulūn wa ta’sirūn farīqan*). In so doing, this overturned the normative meaning of the formula preserved in the Aramaic Gospel Traditions and which was dogmatically re-articulated

Table 4.1 Persecution Formulas

<i>mēnhūn</i> + <i>qāṭlīn antun/tešlūbūn</i>	<i>w</i> + <i>zāqfīn antun</i>	Matthew A
<i>mēnhūn</i> + <i>mnagdīn antūn</i>	<i>wa</i> + <i>tardfūn</i>	Matthew B
<i>mēnhūn</i> + <i>nērdfūn</i>	<i>wa</i> + <i>nēqṭlūn</i>	Luke
<i>mēnhūn</i> + <i>maḥū</i>	<i>mēnhūn</i> + <i>qaṭlū/qāṭlīn</i>	Mark
<i>farīqan</i> + <i>kadhhabtum</i>	<i>wa farīqan</i> + <i>taqtulūn</i>	Qur’ān

34 Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān*, 27.

35 Cf. further Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 250.

36 This is made explicit in, for example, Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 549; Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 3:43. Cf. in relation Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, 2:363, which states that some Muslims named Q 59—commonly known as *al-ḥaṣhr* (the assembly)—*banū al-naḍīr* after the Jewish tribe in Arabia whom the Surah allegedly criticizes.

earlier in the Qur'ān, in order to portray—perhaps through God's vengeance—that the Jewish or Christian parties guilty of persecuting and killing the prophets for generations (and now rejecting the prophet Muḥammad's Islam?) finally came to suffer the same bloody fate.

Self Recrimination for Killing the Prophets

In the Gospel of Matthew, the parties guilty of killing the prophets—especially the priestly class of Pharisees—are condemned by Jesus for admitting their grave crime. It states,

Thus you testify against yourselves (*mashdīn / mawdīn*³⁷ *antūn 'al nafškūn / kūl*³⁸) that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets (*da-bnayā antūn da-qṭalū la-nbīyē*) . . . How can you escape the punishment of Gehenna (*aykanā tē'rquṇ mēn dīnā da-gīhanā*)?

(Matthew 23:31–33; cf. Luke 11:47–48; 13:34; Diatessaron 40:63–64)³⁹

The killing of prophets and rejection of their message is a frequent lament and indictment in the Qur'ān (Q 2:98; 3:184; 36:18; and so on) which Speyer generally traces back to Matthew.⁴⁰ More specifically, one instance in which the Qur'ān dogmatically re-articulates Matthew's condemnation of the Pharisees for being descendents of those who killed the prophets states,

O throngs of spirits (*al-jinn*) and mankind (*al-ins*), did not messengers (*rusul*) come to you from among yourselves, narrating to you my signs and warning (*yundhirūn*) of your assembly on this day? They said, “we testify against ourselves (*shahidnā 'alā anfusinā*).” And so the life of this world captivated them, and they testified against themselves (*shahidū 'alā 'anfusihim*)⁴¹ that they were rebellious ones (*kāfirūn*).

(Q 6:130; 7:37)

The other example occurs in the following verse:

As for those who reject the signs of God, and kill the prophets without just cause (*yaqtulūn / yuqātilūn/qātilū/qatalū*⁴² *al-nabiyyīn bi ghayr ḥaqq*), and kill those who command equity, warn them of an agonizing torment (*fa bash-shirrhūm bi 'adhāb alīm*).

(Q 3:21; cf. Q 3:181; 4:155)

37 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 1:361 records this Sinaiticus reading.

38 *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament*, 2A:61.

39 See also Thyen, *Bibel und Koran*, 123.

40 On Q 3:112 See Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 365, 417–19.

41 See s2-h-d in Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 132.

42 Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-qur'ān*, 1:202.

Although, it is from Hebrew Scripture that “testifying against oneself” and “killing the prophets” first arises (Deuteronomy 31:19; Jeremiah 2:26–35; Nehemiah 9:26; Amos 2:12; 7:12–16), there is reason to argue for a close relationship between the language of the Qur’ān and Matthew. The declaration made by the spirits and mankind, “we testify against ourselves (*shahidnā ‘alā anfusinā*),” intensifies the scene in Matthew by dramatizing it on the Day of Judgment.⁴³ Furthermore, the two disparate Qur’ānic clauses *shahidū ‘alā anfusihim* together with *yaqtulūn al-nabiyyīn* closely reflects the Aramaic *mashdīn antūn ‘al nafškūn da-bnayā antūn da-qṭalū la-nbiyē*. Finally, the dogmatic nature of the Qur’ān’s re-articulation is also evident in its intensification of Matthew’s rhetorical question—which states, “how can you escape the punishment of hell?” (*aykanā tē‘raqūn mēn dīnā da-ghēnā*)—to “warn them of an agonizing torment! (*fa bashshirhum bi ‘adhāb alīm*).”⁴⁴

Jesus the Witness

The Qur’ān defends the prophet Muḥammad against the demands of his disbelieving interlocutors—presumably among the Rabbinic authorities as they would be the ones knowledgeable of religious debate—by condemning the People of the Scripture for their offenses towards Moses and the prophets after him. It goes on to enumerate their offences,

And by breaking their covenant (*bi naqḍihim mīthaqahum*), their rejection of God’s signs (*wakufrihum bi āyāt allāh*), their killing the prophets without just cause (*wa qatlihīn al-anbiyā’ bi ghayr ḥaqq*) and their statement, “our hearts are sealed (*qulūbunā ghulḥ*),” thus did God stampout (*ṭaba’*) [i.e. their hearts] by their rejection (*kufrihum*). So they do not believe, except a few. (Q 4:155)

The passage then recalls their offences during the time of Jesus and condemns them, stating,

And by their rejection (*wa bi kufrihim*) and their saying about Mary great shame (*buhtānan*⁴⁵ *‘aẓīman*). And their statement, “indeed we killed the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the messenger of God (*innā qatalnā al-masīḥ ‘īsā ibn maryam rasūl allāh*).” However, they neither killed him nor crucified him but he was emulated before them (*wa mā qatalūh wa māṣalabūh wa lākin shubbih lahum*). And as for those who dispute concerning it, they are about it truly in doubt. They do not possess knowledge but rather follow doubt.

43 See in relation Asad, *The Message of the Quran*, 29.

44 Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 417; Wansbrough, *Qur’anic Studies*, 53–5, generally notes the affinity for Qur’anic prophethood to the New Testament and Hebrew Bible.

45 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 123. Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 27 demonstrates that the Sabbaic cognate conveys “greatness,” like the word *‘aẓīm* to which it is juxtaposed.

And thus, they did not kill him with certainty, but rather God raised him up to Himself. And God is Mighty and Wise. And there are among the People of the Scripture (*min ahl al-kitāb*) [those] who [did] indeed believe in him before his death (*illā la-yu'minann bih qabla mawtih*), and he will be against them a witness (*yakūn 'alayhim shahīdan*).

(Q 4:156–59.)

Both parts of this Qur'ānic passage which condemns the People of the Scripture for various offences make up two separate but related sections. The first discusses the condemnation of the Jews, while the second condemns the Christians, or more precisely Jews at the time of Christ. The common link between the two sections is their killing of the prophets without just cause (*bi qatlihim al-anbiyā' bi ghayr haqq*)—and consequently—that they claimed to have “killed the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the messenger of God” (*innā qatalnā al-masīh 'isā ibn maryam rasūl allāh*), about which the Qur'ān demonstrates a Docetic theological inclination.⁴⁶

More significant is the assertion that “there are among the People of the Scripture (*min ahl al-kitāb*) [those] who [did] indeed believe in him before his death (*illā la-yu'minann bih qabla mawtih*),” where the word of exception *illā* followed by the emphatic particle *la* (*lām al-tawkīd*) insinuates that the People of the Scripture believed in Jesus as the Messiah, but were similarly neither faithful to nor forthcoming about this belief. In other words, it incriminates the People of the Scripture—albeit subtly—for believing in Jesus but denying him. This, in turn, is a dogmatic re-articulation of several Gospel verses: the betrayal of Jesus's disciple Judas Iscariot who hands him over to the chief priests in exchange for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14–16; Mark 14:10–11; Luke 22:2–6; John 13:2) and who later regrets his grave crime (Matthew 27:3–5); his denial three times by his most trusted disciple Peter who quickly comes to regret his actions (Matthew 26:69–75; Mark 14:67–72; Luke 22:55–62);⁴⁷ and the numerous false witnesses (*sāhdē d-šūqrā; lā šwīn sāhdūthūn*) who testified against him at the court hearing in the palace of the high priest (Matthew 26:59–60; Mark 14:55–57; Diatessaron 49:21–22). It is this last point which is the reason behind the wording of the Qur'ān's final assertion, namely that “he [Jesus] will be against them [the false witnesses, and by extension the chief priests] a witness (*yakūn 'alayhim shahīdan*).”

Deafness, Blindness, and Hardness of Heart

Going back to Q 4:155 (see earlier) which we find it states, “our hearts are sealed (*qulūbunā ghulf*),” thus did God stamp out (*taba'*) [that is, their hearts] by their rejection (*kufrihum*).” The imagery of this verse preserves a motif found in Hebrew and Christian Scripture condemning the repeated disobedience demonstrated by

46 Cf. in relation G. C. Anawati, EQ, “‘Isā.”

47 Both Judas and Peter are likely symbolic names, where the former recalls the misguidance of the tribe of “Judah” and the where latter connotes the “rock” upon which the Church is built.

the children of Israel on account of their “uncircumcised hearts” (Exodus 6:12, 30; Leviticus 26:41; Jeremiah 6:10, 9:26; Ezekial 44:7, 9; Acts 7:51; cf. Jubilees 1:23).⁴⁸ Like the Qur’ān, the Gospel of Matthew also inherits from Hebrew Scripture the frequently occurring motif of hardened hearts,⁴⁹ which is originally an attribute of the stubborn Pharaoh who refuses to let Moses’ people go. Jesus attacks the Pharisees using this motif, “it was because of the hardness of your hearts (*qašyūt labkūn*) that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives . . .” (Matthew 19:8). Similarly, after recounting an earlier episode in which the Israelites were rebellious, the Qur’ān dogmatically re-articulates the verse in Matthew by stating, “then your hearts were hardened (*qasat/qasā qulūbukum*) after that; so it is as stone or even harder . . . (Q 2:74; cf. Q 4:155).” Despite the sheer frequency of this motif in the Hebrew Bible, it is the Aramaic language of Matthew that is reflected in the Qur’ān—and not the Hebrew, Jewish Aramaic or Syriac of the Hebrew Bible—⁵⁰therefore aligning the Christian Aramaic nominal *qašyūt*, “hardness,” and the Arabic verbal *qasat*, “hardened.”

Related to this imagery on the heart is when the Qur’ān describes the dwellers of hell stating,

And We have condemned to hell many spirits (*al-jinn*) and mankind (*al-ins*). They have hearts by which they do not understand (*lahum qulūb lā yafqahūn bihā*). And they have eyes by which they do not see (*wa lahum a’yun lā yubṣirūn bihā*). And they have ears by which they do not hear (*wa lahum ādhān la yasma’ūn bihā*).

(Q 7:179).

The failing eyes and ears of those condemned are also motifs repeated as it states, “As for those who do not believe, there is deafness in their ears and it is a blindness over them (*fī ādhānihim waqr wa-huwa ‘alayhim ‘amā*; Q 41:44).”

Similarly, in Matthew it states,

For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing and they have shut their eyes (*ēt’bay lēh gēr lbēh d’ammē hānā wa b-idnayhūn yaqīrāyīt šam’ū/ awqrū*⁵¹ *wa ‘aynayhūn ‘amšū*); so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn—and I would heal them.

(Matthew 13:15: cf. Luke 8:10; Diatessaron 16:36; Thomas 28)

48 See discussion in Geiger, *Was hat Mohammed*, 12; Thyen, *Bibel und Koran*, 203; Reynolds, *The Qur’ān and its Biblical Subtext*, 147–55. Cf. in relation Jane Dammen McAuliffe, *EQ*, “Heart;” Andrew Rippin, *EQ*, “Seeing and Hearing.”

49 Wansbrough, *Qur’anic Studies*, 72–3, affirms that such motifs epitomize the magnitude of the Mosaic Law in forming the burgeoning Islamic community and the Judeo-Christian sectarian milieu in which it arose.

50 Cf. JPS; Targum Onkelos; Old Testament Peshitta of Exodus 4:21, “I will harden (Hebrew *ahazeq*; Jewish Aramaic *ētaqēp*; Syriac *a’šēn*) his heart” Cf. also Joshua 11:20; 1 Samuel 6:6; and so on, and see further Zammit, *A comparative lexical study of Qur’ānic Arabic*, Leiden: Brill, 2002, 339.

51 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 1:181 records this variant reading from Sinaiticus and Curetonius.

This verse is ultimately inspired by Isaiah 44:18–19, which would leave the possibility open that the Qur’ānic verse could reflect the language of Isaiah just as much as the Aramaic language of Matthew. However, the correspondences in content, syntax, and vocabulary are much stronger between Q 7:179; 41:44 and Matthew 13:15, making an antecedent from Hebrew Scripture less likely.⁵² The Qur’ānic phrase *fī ādhānihim waqr*, “there is deafness in their ears” is a calque of Syriac *b-idnayhūn yaqīrāyīt šam’ul awqrū*, lit., “their ears hear heavily.” The noun *waqr*, “heaviness,” is an Arabic noun that reflects the Aramaic adverb *yaqīrāyīt*, “heavily” and the verbal clause *awqrū*, “they heard heavily.”⁵³ Similarly, the Arabic noun *amā*, “blindness,” approximates the verbal use of Aramaic *maš*, “to shut the eyes.”⁵⁴

Woe unto the Scribes

In the Gospels, hypocrisy also brings together Pharisees and scribes—with the exception of the scribes sent with the prophets in Matthew 23:34 (cf. also Mark 12:32; Luke 20:39; see above)—who are a pair worthy of repeated condemnation. Jesus curses them, *wāy l-kūn sāfrē/sāfrāyē wa prīšē nāsbay b-apē*, “woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” (see throughout Matthew 23; Luke 11:44; Diatessaron 40). Although no approximation occurs of the Syriac word *sāfrē* or CPA word *sāfrāyē*, “scribes,”⁵⁵ in the Qur’ān, the Jews are mentioned therein likened to “a donkey carrying books (*asfār*; Q 62:5).” This appears to be a polemic against Jewish scribes, as they are the ones who would be carrying books. Additionally, although Jeffrey does not mention it, the two words *sāfrē* and *asfār* are of Aramaic origin; the latter was Arabized early on, since by the time it appears in the Qur’ān it occurs in the form of an Arabic broken plural (*jam’ taksīr*). Thus, Matthew and Luke’s condemnation of scribes (*sāfrē*), who were ostensibly of Jewish Pharisaic background, and the Qur’ān’s association of books (*asfār*) with polemicizing Jewish scribes, are part of a single discourse on condemnation.

What supports this claim further is the Qur’ān’s derisive attitude towards scribes. It states about them among an unspecified group(s) of Jews,

Thus, woe unto those who write the scripture with their hands (*fa wayl li al-ladhīn yaktubūn alkitāb bi aydhīhim*) and then say, “This is from God” (*thumma yaqūlūn hādhā min ‘ind illāh*), in order to earn by it a meager gain (*li yashtarū bih thamanan qalīlan*). Thus, woe unto them for what their hands

52 Cf. JPS; Targum Jonathan; Old Testament Peshitta versions of Isaiah 6:10, “Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy (Hebrew *hakkēd*; Jewish Aramaic *yaqar*; Syriac *awqēr*), and shut (Hebrew *hāša*; Jewish Aramaic *ṣamṭēs*; Syriac *maš*) their eyes . . .” cf. further Q 10:88.

53 Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān*, 311 records that Q 94:2 of al-Rabī’ b. al-Kuthayyam has *waqr* for *wizr*, meaning “weight.” The Sabbaic cognate in Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 161 means “stone.”

54 Smith, *A Compendius Syriac Dictionary*, 418.

55 1 *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament*, 2A:29.

have written, and woe unto them for what they earn (*fa wayl lahum min mā katabat aydīhim, wa wayl lahum min mā yaksibūn*)!

(Q 2:79)

The Qur’ān’s disapproval of those who “write the scripture with their hands” not only reflects the awareness of the emendation, translation, redaction, and editing of earlier Hebrew and Christian Scripture, but is more directly a condemnation of Jewish scribal abuses.⁵⁶ In addition, the Qur’ānic formula for condemnation, *wayl li* plus pronoun, “woe unto,” reflects that in the Aramaic Gospels, *wāy li* plus pronoun, “woe unto.”⁵⁷

Another relationship can be drawn between the distinctive, intentional, repetitive use of this condemnation formula. Jesus’s curse against the Pharisees, *wāy l-kūn sāfrē wa prīšē nāsbay bapē* is repeated seven times almost consecutively in Matthew 23 alone (see above). Similarly, the Qur’ān repeats the following curse ten times in the Q 77 alone, “woe unto the disbelievers on that day (*wayl yawm^a’idhⁱⁿ li-l-mukadhdhibūn*)!”⁵⁸ If we equate *al-mukadhdhibūn* with *sāfrē wa prīšē*, then the term may refer to the Rabbinic authorities who came in conflict with Muḥammad and subsequently “disbelieved” in the truth of his revelations and prophetic tradition. This formula was well understood in the Qur’ān’s highly sectarian milieu. Based on content—that is, condemning scribes of a Pharisaic/rabbinical background, on style—that is, the identical usage of *wayl li*—and its rhythmic repetition, Q 77’s dogmatic re-articulation of Matthew 23 and Luke 11:44 is clearly demonstrated. This is supported, furthermore, by Farrā’ who interprets 107:4, “woe unto those who pray” (*wayl li al-muṣallīn*; Q 107:4; see later discussion) as “woe unto the hypocrites” (*wayl li al-munāfiqūn*).⁵⁹ This relationship reproduces the condemnation formula found in Matthew 23 and Q 77, condemning the evils of the clergy (Pharisees, scribes, and so on), who are hypocrites for praying in public (see later discussion).

A final, related point concerning this subject is Matthew’s condemnation of the Pharisees, “woe unto you blind guides (*wāy l-kūn nāgūdē smayē*), for you say that whoever swears by the sanctuary is bound by nothing, but whoever swears

56 Other verses demonstrate the Qur’ān’s distrust for scribes and Jewish men of letters. Q 4:46 explains, “of those who professed Judaism (*al-ladhīna hādū*) are those who change words from their places, and say, ‘we heard and disobeyed,’ and ‘hear that which is not heard,’ and ‘look after us (*rā’inā*)’ as a twist of their tongues and a slander to religion.” For more on the use of *rā’inā* see Wāhidī, *Asbāb nuzūl al-qur’ān*, 36–37; Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 136.

57 Smith, *A Compendius Syriac Dictionary*, 107. Arabic possesses *way* as a rarer alternative to *wayl*. While suspecting a possible origin from Syriac-Aramaic, Zammit, *A Comparative Lexical Study of Qur’ānic Arabic*, 443, 616 proposes that this form is an abbreviation. The Matthean-qur’ānic context of the phrase’s usage suggests that the Aramaic phrase *wāy li* over an extended period of oral transmission merged into the Arabic *wayl*, leaving traces of the original Aramaic *wāy* in *way*.

58 For more on this see Neuwirth, *Der Koran*. Band 1, 513–16; Dundes, *Fables of the Ancients?*, 51. Ernst, *How to Read the Qur’an*, 76–77 points out that such refrains are only found in Q 55 and 77.

59 Farrā’, *Ma’ānī al-qur’ān*, 3:295.

by the gold of the sanctuary is bound by the oath” (Matthew 23:16 NRSV). This is dogmatically re-articulated by Q 63:2 which condemns the hypocrites, stating, “they took their oaths as a cover, so they obstructed [others] from the way of God” (Q 63:2; see further Chapter 3), which sets the foundation for our next discussion on charity and hypocrisy.

Charity and Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy is a tremendous crime committed by the scribes and Pharisees in the Gospels. In the Gospels, their hypocrisy is manifested sharply by their public performance of charitable works. It states about the scribes and Pharisees (*sāfrē wa prīšē*),

And all of their deeds they do, so that they might be seen by people (*wa kūlhūn ‘abdayhūn ‘ābdīn d-nēṭhazūn/yēṭhūmūn*⁶⁰ *la-bnay anāšā*). For, they widen their Tefillin, and lengthen the Tekhelet of their robes, and they love head rooms at festivities, and the head seats at the synagogues, and greetings in the market, and to be called by people, “my lord, my lord (*rabī rabī*).” However, do not be called “my lord.” For One is your Lord; and you are all brothers.

(Matthew 23:5–8; cf. Mark 12:38–39; Luke 20:46; Diatessaron 40:34–37).

Mark and Luke add to this passage, “Those who devour the households of widows (*hānūn d-āklīn bātē d-armaltē*); for a show they prolong their prayers (*b-‘ēltā d-mūrkin ṣlāthūn*). They will receive great punishment (*hānūn nēqblūn dīnā yatīrā*; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47).”

The passage immediately following states,

And Jesus looked at the rich people who were casting into the treasury their offerings (*‘tīrē aylēn d-rāmīn hwaw bayt gazā qūrbānayhūn*), and he also saw a certain poor widow who cast therein two small coins (*šmūnē trayn*). And he said, “truly, I say this to you, that this poor widow has cast in more than all of them. For all these have from their excess [of wealth] (*yatīr*) cast into the house of offerings of God (*bayt qūrbānē d-alāhā*). However, she has from her poverty cast in all that she possessed.”

(Luke 21:1–4; Mark 12:41–44; Diatessaron 32:12–15)

In the Gospels, religious deeds, works of piety, and charitable works like giving alms or even prayer should be done sincerely, that is, in private,⁶¹ unlike the public, hypocritical works of the scribes and Pharisees (see earlier).

60 *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament*, 2A:58.

61 Khouri, “Selected ethical themes,” 108–110, 212–15.

Similarly, the Qur'ān demonstrates its strong contempt for figures that represent the priestly class. It states,

They [that is, the Jews and Christians] take their scribes (*aḥbāruhum*) and their priests (*ruhbānuhum*) as lords above God (*arbāban min dūn allāh*), as well as the Messiah the son of Mary (*wa al-masīḥ ibn maryam*). Although they were not commanded but to worship one god . . . O you who believe, indeed many of the scribes and priests devour the wealth of people falsely (*la-ya'kulūn amwāl al-nās bi al-bāṭil*) and obstruct [others] from the way of God (*wa yaṣuddūn 'an sabīl allāh*). And those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of God (*wa al-ladhīn yuknizūn al-dhahab wa al-ḥiḍḍah wa lā yunfiqūn fī sabīl allah*), warn them of an agonizing torment (*bashshirhum bi 'adhāb alīm*).

(Q 9:31, 34)

The passage is highly polemical of Rabbinic and possibly even ecclesiastical authorities, which the Qur'ān sees as identical in their glorification of human lords, abuse of authority, wrongful appropriation of wealth, and obstructing others from the way of God.⁶² In addition, the Rabbinic scribes or *aḥbār*—ostensibly from *ḥibr*, “pen, script”⁶³—denote the *sāfrē* in the Aramaic text of the Gospels. The priests (*ruhbān*), like the Pharisees, are the second groups of the priestly class to be condemned. When taken as a syntactic couplet, the Arabic *aḥbāruhum wa ruhbānuhum* reproduces the Aramaic *sāfrē wa-prīšē*. In both scriptures the evil pair is corrupted by wealth, power, and the preservation of hypocritical, outwardly rituals (see also Didache 8:1–3).

In relation to this point, the condemnation of the Jews and Christians in Q 9:31, 34 for taking their scribes and priests “as lords above God” (*arbāban min dūn allāh*) is a dogmatic re-articulation of Matthew 23:5–8 where the scribes and Pharisees love to “to be called by people, ‘my lord, my lord (*rabī rabī*),” where the Arabic *arbab*, “lords,” reflects the Aramaic *rabī*, “my lord.”⁶⁴ Furthermore the Qur'ānic phrase “above God” (*min dūn allāh*) ostensibly polemicalizes Jesus’s community for failing to heed his warning, namely “do not be called ‘my lord.’ For One is your Lord; and you are all brothers.” This polemical tendency and the need to demonstrate that Jesus’s community failed him is probably the reason why the Qur'ānic phrase, “as well as the Messiah the son of Mary” (*wa al-masīḥ ibn maryam*) is appended to the end of the verse almost as an afterthought. In other words, it is to show that Christians have truly gone astray by making a lord out of the very man who warned them against making lords out of men.

Additionally, the claim that the scribes and priests “indeed . . . devour the wealth of people falsely” (*la-ya'kulūn amwāl al-nās bi al-bāṭil*) is a dogmatic

62 For more on the relationship between charity, wealth and the clergy in the late antique world see Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, 199–203, 211–26.

63 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'arab*, 2:748; Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, xxv. The Sabbaic cognate in Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 65 conveys “sorcery.”

64 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 1427.

re-articulation of Luke's condemnation of "those who devour the households of widows" (*hānūn d-āklīn bātē d-armaltē*)—where the Aramaic plural active participle *āklīn*, "they are devouring," is preserved in the Arabic imperfect plural *ya'kulūn*, "they devour." The final two references in Q 9:34, concerning "those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of God" (*wa al-ladhīn yuknizūn al-dhahab wa al-fidḍah wa lā yunfiqūn fī sabīl allah*) are a dogmatic re-articulation of the scene in Luke 21:1–4 where "the rich people . . . were casting into the treasury their offerings." This is so for several reasons. Firstly, the Arabic imperfect plural *yuknizūn*, "they hoard," is a play on the Aramaic construct noun *bayt gazā*, "treasury," as both terms originate from the Pahlavi *ganz*, meaning "treasure."⁶⁵ Secondly, the Qur'ān adds the detail that the scribes and priests hoard "gold and silver" (presumably coins) because they reflect precisely the "offerings" or "excess" of the "rich people" and their exact opposite, the "two small coins" given by the poor widow. Moreover, this sentiment reflects Jesus's disdain for gold and silver in Matthew 10:9; 23:16–29. In addition, the ending clause of Q 9:34, they "do not spend it in the way of God," rephrases Luke as it states, "all these [that is, the rich people, scribes or Pharisees] have from their excess [of wealth] (*yatīr*) cast into the house of offerings of God" (*bayt qūrbānē d-alāhā*)—where the Aramaic phrase *bayt qūrbānē d-alāhā* is reconfigured into the Arabic *fī sabīl allāh* (see earlier discussion). Finally, similar to Luke's passage which concludes, "they will receive great punishment" (*hānūn neqblūn dīnā yatīrā*), the Qur'ānic passage concludes, "warn them of an agonizing torment" (*bashshirhum bi 'adhāb alīm*).⁶⁶

Going back to Q 9:34, could the Qur'ānic reference that the scribes and priests "do not spend in the way of God" reflect refer to the Pharisees who gave alms publicly, not in the way of God but out of pretense and hypocrisy? This prospect is made more likely given two passages from the Qur'ān which condemn sectarian rivals for their greed and rejection, stating,

O you who believe, do not nullify your alms (*ṣadaqātukum*) [see later discussion] with glorification and condescension, like he who gives his money for charity in order to show off to people, and does not believe in God nor the last day (*k-al-ladhī yunfiq mālah ri'ā' al-nās wa lā yu'min bi allāh wa al-yawm al-ākhir*).

(Q 2:264)

As well as,

And those who give out their wealth in order to show-off to people and who do not believe in God nor the last day (*wa al-ladhīn yunfiqūn amwālahum ri'ā'a al-nās wa lā yu'minūn bi allāh wa lā bi al-yawm al-ākhir*). And whoever accepts Satan as a companion, he [that is, Satan] is the worst of companions.

(Q 4:38)

65 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, 251.

66 See in relation Biqā'ī, *Naẓm*, 2:224, 244, 255, 542.

The phrase *ri'ā' al-nās*, “to show-off to people,” is a calque of *d-nēṭḥazūn labnay anāšā*, “in order to be seen by people” (Matthew 23:5; cf. Matthew 6:1),⁶⁷ where the accusative case of *ri'ā'* communicates the subjunctive sense of purpose in the particle *dalēt* in *d-nēṭḥazūn*. This is confirmed by the Arabic *al-murā'ūn*, “those who show off,” used in Diatessaron 9:22 and Mujāhid’s *Tafsīr* concerning Q 17:110 (cf. Q 107:6; see later discussion).⁶⁸ In relation to this point, Rudolph rightly sees an echo in Q 107:1–7 of the opening words in Matthew 6,⁶⁹

Have you seen the one who denies judgment (*al-dīn*)? For he is the one who forsakes the orphan (*yadu* ‘*al-yatīm*), and does not encourage the feeding of the poor (*wa lā yahuḍḍ* ‘*alā ṭa’ām al-miskīn*). So, woe unto those who pray (*wayl li al-muṣallīn*); those who are mindless of their prayers (‘*an ṣalātihim sāhūn*⁷⁰). Those who show off (*al-ladhīn hum yurā’ūn*), and withhold kindness (*wa yamna’ūn al-mā’ūn*).

(Q 107:1–7)

The condemnation of “those who are mindless of their prayers” (‘*an ṣalātihim sāhūn*), “those who show off” (*al-ladhīn hum yurā’ūn*), “and [those who] withhold kindness” (*wa yamna’ūn al-mā’ūn*) is a condemnation of those who “for a show . . . prolong their prayers (*b-’ēlṭā d-mūrķīn ṣlāthūn*)” and “the rich people who were casting into the treasury their offerings” found in Luke 20:47; 21:1. Furthermore, the entirety of Q 107 is in dialogue with Q 77 and Matthew 23 which condemn the evils of the clergy (see earlier discussion). In sum, when taken collectively, the discussed qur’ānic verses, which condemn the hypocrisy of certain segments of society, including scribes and priests, reflect a dogmatic re-articulation of Jesus’s condemnation in the Aramaic Gospel Traditions concerning the hypocrisy practiced by the scribes and Pharisees (cf. in relation Q 57:13–24).⁷¹

As a result of the hypocrisy practiced by the scribes and Pharisees and which pervade the Gospels as a whole—especially concerning charity and prayer—Jesus

67 Where the standard Arabic word *nās* is not used for “people,” it is intriguing to decipher—as Luxenberg might—an Aramaic substratum to more cryptic qur’ānic phrases referring to groups of people. For example “every people” (*kul unās*)—which refers to the tribes of Israel (Q 7:82) and the masses on the Day of Judgment (Q 17:71)—may otherwise be read as the common Aramaic phrase “everyone” (*kūl anāš*). See also Q 2:60; 27:56. Similarly, the vocalization of the phrase “many people” (*anāsiyā kathīr*^m; Q 25:49) is awkward since *anāsī* is not Arabic and *kathīr* has not been pluralized as would be expected. The Aramaic vocalization of the same orthography is more natural and reveals a construct phrase like *anāšay k/yatīrē*.

68 Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 443. The G-stem of Sabbaic *r’-y* in Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 112 similarly conveys the meaning “to show someone.”

69 Rudolph, *Die Abhängigkeit des Qorans*, 13. See also Ahrens, “Christliches im Qoran,” 162; Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 450–51, 458; Thyen, *Bibel und Koran*, 193.

70 Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān*, 112 records Ibn Mas’ūd’s reading as *lāhūn*, “distracted,” in place of *sāhūn*.

71 Jeffery, *Ibid.*, 148, 217, 272 records that the codices of Ubayy b. Ka’b’s, ‘Umar and Anas b. Mālik read *ṣalawāt*, “prayers,” as *ṣalawāth*, *ṣulūth* or *ṣulūthā* (Q 22:40–41), which matches the Syriac pronunciation with *rukākā*.

warns his followers, “Therefore, be wary concerning your works of sincerity, that you do not perform them before people in order that you be seen by them (*hūrū/ ēzdahrū dēyn b-zēdqātūn / marhmanūtā dīlkūn d-lā tē’bdūnēh qdām bnay anāšā ayk d-tēthzūn lhūn*; Matthew 6:1).”⁷²

The syntax of the verse warning against performing works of sincerity “before people in order that you be seen by them” is echoed in Q 107:6 of Ibn Mas‘ūd’s codex which states, “those who merely show off [before] people” (*al-ladhūn hum innamā yurā’ūn al-nās*).⁷³ The Aramaic word *‘abdayhūn* from the first quotation comes from the plural noun *‘bādē*, meaning “deeds.”⁷⁴ It is a cognate with the Arabic *‘ibādāt*, which is the normative word for “religious works, deeds, worship or obedience” in the Qur’ān and subsequent Islamic tradition (Q 7:206; 10:29; and so on).⁷⁵ One such deed is mentioned in Matthew 6:1 (see above), *zēdqātūn*, which is from the plural noun *zēdqātā*, “sincere acts;” and like the Qur’ānic phrase *ṣadaqah* or *sadaqāt* (Q 2:276; 58:12, and so on) can mean “alms.”⁷⁶ More significantly, sharing the Gospels’ concern for the poor and downtrodden members of society, the Qur’ān dogmatically re-articulates Matthew 6:1 as it commands,

If you reveal alms (*in tubdū al-sadaqāt*) then it is well; but if you conceal (*in tukhfūhā*) them and give them to the poor then it is better for you, and He will blot out some of your sins, and God knows what you do.

(Q 2:271: cf. Q 2:274; 9:60; 13:22; 14:31; 35:29)

However, unlike Matthew’s example the Qur’ānic injunction is more moderate. The community are permitted to give alms publicly (*tubdū al-sadaqāt*) or privately (*tukhfūhā*), which is greater in the sight of God.⁷⁷ Furthermore, this sentiment of moderation is extended to the act of prayer as it states, “and do not pray out loud nor lower [your voice] but find a way between them” (Q 17:110).

Widows, Orphans and Polygamy

Another relationship may be drawn between Q 4, entitled “the Women” (*al-nisā*), and the Pharisees who devour the households of widows (Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47) and whose large sum donations into the treasury cannot match the sincerity of the miniscule charity given by widows (Luke 21:1–4; Mark 12:41–44). Verses 1–38 and 176 of this Surah form the backbone of Islamic laws regulating inheritance, spousal allowances, marriage, and gender roles.⁷⁸ Not unlike Didascalia 17–18,

72 See variant readings in Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:69.

73 Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān*, 112.

74 J. Payne-Smith, *A Compendius Syriac Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979, 397.

75 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 2778.

76 Payne-Smith, *A Compendius Syriac Dictionary*, 110; Azim Nanji, EQ, “Almsgiving.”

77 Wāḥidī, *Asbāb nuzūl al-qur’ān*, 91.

78 Q 4:130 even quotes from the early Arabic papyri of Grohmann, *From the World of Arabic Papyri*, 199. Cf. Also Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, 2:363, which states that Ibn Mas‘ūd called Q 65—commonly known as *al-ṭalāq* (Divorce)—by the name *al-nisā’ al-qušrā* (The smaller Sūrah on Women).

these verses take the financial wellbeing of widows into account (Q 4:12) and give special attention to orphans (Q 4:2). Concerning the welfare of widows and orphans, who in the Qurʾān make up an important segment of the poor and down-trodden members of society, it states,

And give the orphans their wealth (*wa ātū al-yatāmā amwālahum*), and do not exchange that which is good with that which is evil. And do not devour their wealth into your wealth (*wa lā taʿkulū amwālahum ilā amwālikum*). Indeed this would be a great debt/crime (*hūban*).⁷⁹ So if you fear that you will not [measure] equitably/honestly (*tuqsiṭū*)⁸⁰ between the orphans, then marry whatever is blessed/good for you (*ṭāb lakum*)⁸¹ among women [that is, mothers of the orphans = widows], twice, thrice or four times.⁸² And if you fear that you will not balance (*taʿdilū*) [among widowed wives?], then one [will suffice] or that which your right hand possesses [that is, a concubine]. That would be more obedient⁸³ that you may not do injustice⁸⁴ . . . Those who devour the wealth of orphans unjustly (*inn al-ladhīn yaʿkulūn amwāl al-yatāmā ḡulman*) will indeed devour fire into their stomachs; and they will reach the flames.

(Q 4:2–3, 10)

It only makes sense that the translation of this passage should take into account the Aramaic substratum of many words employed within it since Q 4:1–38 is in dialogue with the treatment of widows in the Aramaic Gospels. There is still some room for uncertainty when it comes to deciphering the meaning of the Qurʾān’s much politicized ‘polygamy passage’—especially with regards to the legality of nebulous ideas concerning devouring the wealth of orphans and balancing between the marriage of their mothers. While such a translation—which is wholly concerned with the Aramaic Gospel Traditions—may in fact be more accurate than others based on later Islamic tradition, it also opens the door to a bit more ambiguity. This is the case with the words *ḡūb*, *qisṭ*, and *ṭāb*. There can be little doubt, however, that the overall gist of this passage is to protect orphans from the predation of male guardians⁸⁵—who are likened to the evil clergy—by: (1) prohibiting them from stealing the orphans’ rightfully inherited wealth;⁸⁶ or (2) making them suitors for the mothers of such orphans, thereby ensuring the welfare of widows as well (cf. in relation Q 17:34). There is also little doubt that an

79 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 418–19. The Sabbaic cognate in Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 73 similarly means “sin.”

80 That *qisṭ* unequivocally concerns measuring is clear from Q 55:9 and Aramaic *q-s-ṭ* OR *q-š-ṭ*. See Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 1387, 1418–9.

81 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 514.

82 Cf. Aramaic *mūnāyā*, *tlūāyā* and *rbīʿāyā*.

83 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 313.

84 Cf. *ghawl* in Q 37:47 and ‘-w-l in Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 1080.

85 Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 1:213–14; Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 147.

86 Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, 1:244–5; Cf. also Ibn Qutaybah, *Tafsīr*, 83.

orphan in this context denotes a child who has lost his father—perhaps to military raids or society’s many hardships—and is left with a single mother. This was a most vulnerable and precarious situation in patriarchal, pre-modern societies.⁸⁷ In this context polygamy of up to four wives—a limit adopted from Rabbinic legal discourse⁸⁸—was established to bring justice to orphans and widows, who constituted an important segment of the poor and downtrodden members of society. This practice was considered by Muḥammad and his community and act of obedience to God, and had little to do with amassing a harem for erotic pleasure. We may conclude, therefore, that Q 4:2–3, 10 aims to safeguard the “households of widows” (*bātē d-armaltē*; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47) from guardians—greedy laymen likened to the clergy who hoard gold and silver and do not spend in the way of God—and evil men like the Pharisees of the Gospels. This connection is proven best by comparing Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47 and Q 4:10. The former states,

Those who devour the households of widows (*hānūn d-āklīn bātē d-armaltē*); for a show they prolong their prayers (*b-‘ēltā d-mūrķīn šlāthūn*). They will receive great punishment (*hānūn nēqblūn dīnā yatīrā*).

(Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47)

This verse is dogmatically re-articulated in the Qur’ānic verse, stating, “Those who devour the wealth of orphans unjustly (*inn al-ladhīn ya’kulūn amwāl al-yatāmā zulman*) will indeed devour fire into their stomachs; and they will reach the flames (Q 4:2–3, 10).”

“Those who devour the households of widows,” that is, the Pharisees, is made parallel to the “those who devour the wealth of orphans,” that is, predatory male guardians, and they are mentioned at the opening of both verses. Both verses also conclude similarly, “they will receive great punishment” and “[they] will indeed devour fire into their stomachs; and they will reach the flames.”

Against the Early Church

The verses of the Qur’ān not only condemn the Pharisees who challenged and helped kill the prophet Jesus as narrated in the Gospels, but also the early Church which developed after him as narrated in the book of Acts. Among the founders of the nascent Church of Jerusalem were the disciples Peter and James (cf. in relation Matthew 16:18). Among the “prophets and teachers” (*nabīyē w-malpānē*) sent to help found the Church of Antioch were the disciple Barnabas and the apostle Paul (Acts 13:1). At the Council of Jerusalem (ca. 50 CE) Paul and his Gentile camp defeated Peter and his Jewish following by convincing the early Church that Gentile converts to Christianity need not be shackled by the demands of Jewish Law (Acts 15; Galatians 2)—especially concerning male circumcision. In this

87 Joseph Schacht, *El*, s.v. “Yatīm;” Avner Giladi, *EQ*, “Orphans.”

88 Cf. Tractate Kethuboth 93b.

council's wake God was seen to have bestowed upon Peter the "apostleship to the circumcised," and to Paul the "apostleship to the Gentiles" (Galatians 2:8), who made up the majority of the population outside Judaea. On one occasion Paul exhorts the Gentile masses, stating,

Watch, therefore, over yourselves and all the flock (*mar'itā*) with which the Holy Spirit has entrusted to you (*aqīm kūn*) as clergy (*ēpīsqūpē*),⁸⁹ to care for the church of God (*d-tēr'ūn l-'īdtā d-alāhā*), which he purchased with his blood.
(Acts 20:28)

Concerning this episode and the formation of the early Church, Q 57:26–27 states,

Indeed We sent (*arsalnā*) Noah and Abraham; and we placed in their offspring prophecy and teachings (*al-nubuwwah wa al-kitāb*). Some of them are guided but many of them are corrupt. Then We matched (*qaffaynā*) their followers (*āthāruhum*) with our messengers (*rusul*); and We matched (*qaffaynā*) them with Jesus the son of Mary. And We gave him the Gospel (*al-injīl*) and placed in the hearts (*qulūb*) of those who followed him leniency (*ra'fah*), mercy (*rahmah*) and clergy (*rahbāniyyah*) which they perverted (*ibtada'ūhā*) [and which] We did not command it of them (*mā katabnāhā 'alayhim*) except [rather] for the desire to please God (*ibtighā' riḍwān allāh*). However, they did not care for it as it should have been cared for (*famā ra'awhā ḥaqq ri'āyatihā*). Thus We gave to those among them who believed their wage (*ajrahum*), but many of them are corrupt.

This passage is in strong dialogue with Acts 13:1 and 20:28. In Q 57:26 the progeny of Noah and Abraham in this context are the Christians of Antioch. Their "prophecy and teachings" (*al-nubuwwah wa al-kitāb*) represents none other than the "prophets and teachers" (*nabīyē w-malpānē*) of Acts 13:1. That "some of them are guided" may be a reference to the minority who clung onto the demands of Jewish Law. Thus, the statement "but many of them are corrupt" may be a denunciation of Paul's camp, and the Church of Antioch once it had amassed a large Gentile following at the expense of Jewish Law.

Q 57:27 then claims that God "matched" (*qaffā*) the corruption of the Church of Antioch with the more established and conservative Church of Jerusalem, which was rooted in the teachings of God's "prophets" (*rusul*), "Jesus the son of Mary" and "the Gospel." Furthermore, God "placed in the hearts" of the Jerusalem Christians "leniency (*ra'fah*), mercy (*rahmah*) and clergy (*rahbāniyyah*)," which are all innately good (cf. in relation Acts 8:21; 2 Corinthians 3:3; 4:1).⁹⁰ In

89 I take the NRSV translation of the Greek term *episcopos* as "overseer" to be synonymous.

90 The classical exegetes—including Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 3:327—and modern translators incorrectly truncate the alliterated tripartite list *ra'fah wa rahmah wa rahbāniyyah* so as to exclude the latter as a purely human contrivance. God placed all three parts in the hearts of Jesus's followers, the last of which, *rahbāniyyah*, was innately good but later perverted.

fact the clergy of the Church was originally established out of the “desire to please God” (*ibtighā’ riḏwān allāh*). However, this “clergy” (*rahbāniyyah*) was soon “perverted” (*ibtada’*) after the Council of Jerusalem in which the early Church conceded. For this new (perverted) Church expanding its membership to the Gentile majority was more important than abiding by Jewish Law. In this context, the meaning of the infinitive *ibtidā’* should be understood as “perversion,” that is, transforming or rejecting the spirit of Jewish Law, rather than “innovation.”

The Qur’ān, therefore, sees the “clergy” (*ēpīsqūpē*; Acts 20:28) of this now perverted Church—Paul and his camp—as “corrupt.” Moreover, their efforts to “watch over” their “flock” (*mar’ūtā*) and “care for the church of God” (*d-tēr’ūn l-’īdā d-alāhā*) in Acts 20:28 has failed. This is precisely what is meant by the statement, “they did not care for it as it should have been cared for” (*mā ra’awhā ḥaqq ri’āyatiḥā*; Q 57:27), where the Arabic verb *ra’aw* as well as the Aramaic noun *mar’ūtā* and verb *tēr’ūn* all come from the root *r-’-yā*, meaning to tend to, care for, or feed a flock.⁹¹ The concluding remark of Q 57:27 assures us that God paid a believing minority of the clergy their wages for fulfilling their role as shepherds (for example, Genesis 31:41), but insists that—once again—the majority are corrupt (cf. also Q 5:81; 57:16; cf. in relation Revelation 2:23–24).

In sum, the Qur’ān condemns the early Church only once it has stripped itself of its commitment to Jewish Law (cf. in relation Didascalia 26). This Jewish-Christian sensibility, furthermore, has its origins in the Council of Jerusalem and—before that—the debate between the Church community in Jerusalem and that of Antioch.

Temptation

As the Qur’ān dogmatically re-articulates much of the language and imagery found in the Aramaic Gospel Traditions condemning the evils of the clergy, so is the case with discussing misguidance more generally. In so doing, the Qur’ān imbues new meaning upon earlier conceptions of temptation, especially Satan’s role as mankind’s adversary, whom he tempts with worldly fortune.

Satan: An Adversary who Tempts with Worldly Fortune

In the Gospels, “Satan” (*saṭānā*) is more commonly referred to as the “adversary, slanderer, or backbiter” (*ākēlqarṣā*; lit. “eater of morsels;” or *ākēl bēsra*, lit. “eater of flesh”).⁹² In the spirit of this name, which became widespread in Syriac Chris-

91 Payne-Smith, *A Compendius Syriac Dictionary*, 545–46. The same terminology and spirit are employed in the Hadith ascribed to Muḥammad, which states, “Beware! Every one of you is a shepherd; and every shepherd is responsible for his flock . . .” (Bukhārī 20:4496). See in relation Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 113.

92 Payne-Smith, *A Compendius Syriac Dictionary*, 521. The prohibition of backbiting (*ghaybah*) among the Muslim community is mentioned in Q 49:12 and expounded upon in the Hadith corpus. Cf. Muslim 32:6265. Cf. further *Ardā Virāf Nāmā* 23:3.

tian literature (cf. also *Apocalypse of Abraham*, 40)⁹³ and the context of Adam's fall in Rabbinic literature,⁹⁴ God warns mankind in the Qur'ān against Satan (*al-shayṭān*), the "adversary, enemy, foe" ('*aduww*'; Q 2:168; 2:208; 6:142; 7:22; 12:5; 17:53; 28:15; 35:6; 36:60; 43:62; cf. *shāni*', "hated" in Q 108:3).⁹⁵ In a play on words, Q 43:36 of Ibn Mas'ūd's codex also calls Satan an "opposer" (*naqīḍ*).⁹⁶ Conversely, God also argues that whoever "give[s] out their wealth in order to show off to people and who do[es] not believe in God nor the last day" (cf. *Ardā Virāf Nāmak* 61:4) is a companion (*qarīn*) of Satan (Q 4:38).⁹⁷

In the Gospels, John the Baptist is alleged to have undertaken the Mosaic test of prophethood, namely of going into the wilderness for 40 days (cf. Exodus 24:18). Therein "he is tempted by Satan" (*mētnasē mēn sāṭānā*; Mark 1:13). Similarly, Jesus is alleged to have been led by the Holy Spirit (deliberately?) into the wilderness "in order to be tempted by Satan/the adversary/slanderer" (*d-nētnasē mēn sāṭānā/ākēlqarṣā / marmīnā*)⁹⁸; Matthew 4:1; Luke 4:2; Diatessaron 4:42–43). Once Jesus has fasted for 40 days and the effects of severe hunger have affected his consciousness, the "tempter" (*mnasyānā*; presumably Satan) torments him by telling (*ēmar*) him to transform stone into bread, to commit suicide by jumping off a stone pillar on the Temple and finally that if he worships him (that is, Satan/the adversary/slanderer/tempter), he (Jesus) will be given all the power and glory of all the kingdoms of the world (Luke 4:2–7; Matthew 4:2–9). Jesus manages to withstand Satan's torment and repel his temptation, stating, "Leave, therefore, Satan (*zēl lāk sāṭānā*)! For it is written, 'you will worship the Lord your God (*l-maryā alāhāk tēsgūd*), and Him alone will you serve'" (*wa lēh ba-lhūdawhī tēflūh*); Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:8; Diatessaron 5:1–2).

This statement is further elucidated later in the Gospels where Jesus states,

Go away from me, Satan (*zēl lāk l-bēstarī sāṭānā*)! You are a burden to me, since you do not desire that which is of God (*d-lā mētra 'ē ant d-alāhā*), but that which is of people (*ēlā da-bnay anāšā*).

(Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33; Diatessaron 23:44)

These powerful words were uttered not merely in order to get rid of Satan's worldly temptations, but more importantly they inform the Satan vs. God dichotomy. At any rate, after Satan fled the wilderness and tempted Jesus no more, it

93 For example, Ephrem, "Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrer's Hymnen de ieunio," *CSCO* 246–7, 106–107, 1964, 8, 6 (On the Fall); Aphrahat, "Demonstrations," 1:253–60, 265–70, 299–306 (On Monks). Cf. further Jacob of Serugh, *Homiliae selectae*, 3:335–62 (On the Lord's Combat with Satan).

94 Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:54, 161 portrays Satan as the "villain," "enemy" and "adversary" of Adam. It also discusses Adam's punishment and subsequent repentance. Cf. also Andrae, *Les origines de l'islam et le christianisme*, 82–83.

95 Andrew Rippin, *EQ*, "Adversary;" Robinson, "The rise of Islam," 181–82.

96 Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 200; Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, 87.

97 In relation to the enmity of Rabbinic authorities Cf. Wāḥidī, *Asbāb nuzūl al-qur'ān*, 32.

98 See variant readings in Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:35.

states, “then the adversary/tempter⁹⁹ left him, and, behold, angels came and served him” (Matthew 4:11). Also “he [Satan] departed from his presence for some time” (Luke 4:13). This passage from the Gospels which illustrates the prophet Jesus’s temptation and torment at the hands of the perceived extrinsic evil figure of the late antique Near East, Satan, is significant for a couple of reasons.

First, the episode of Satan’s temptation of Jesus in the wilderness is likely—in part—the inspiration behind the illustration of episodes involving Muḥammad in the *Sīrah*—especially: his reclusiveness in the cave of Ḥīrā’; his severe psychological distress at the indefinite suspension of revelation when Gabriel departs and his subsequent desire to commit suicide by jumping off a mountainside; and the revelation of the infamous “Satanic verses.”¹⁰⁰ This is not to utterly question the historicity of those particular events in the *Sīrah* but rather insist that the writing of such possibly historical events was framed in the prevalent discursive, apologetic, and hermeneutical style of late antique Near East religious literature. Meaning, episodes in Muḥammad’s life were recorded in the *Sīrah* literature in a manner resembling similar events in the life of Jesus, which were familiar to the general audience, and which brings us to the second significance of the temptation episodes.

Like Jesus, Muḥammad was a prophet and an object of revelation, and thus privy to the workings of the spiritual otherworld (that is, God, Holy Spirit, Gabriel, angels, demons, spirits, and so on). He was, consequently, tempted and tormented by the perceived extrinsic evil figure of the late antique Near East—Satan. This is evident not only in the *Sīrah* (see earlier), but the Qur’ān itself (Q 22:52; 52:29; 68:2; 81:22). Thus, the Qur’ān assures its recipient—be they the prophet Muḥammad or his audience—concerning its validity, “it is not the speech of a banished demon/Satan” (*wa mā huw^a bi qawl shayṭān rajīm*;¹⁰¹ Q 81:25).

In addition to this, the Qur’ān dogmatically re-articulates two dimensions of the temptation episodes found in the Gospels discussed earlier, namely Satan’s verbal temptation of people towards worldly fortune and the dichotomy of Satan vs. God. Concerning the former, it states,

So provoke those whom you can among them with your voice (*bi ṣawtik*), use against them your cavalry and infantry, share with them [their] wealth and children (*al-amwāl wa al-awlād*) and promise them (*wa ‘idhum*). Yet, Satan does not promise them except illusion (*wa mā ya‘iduhum al-shayṭān illā ghurūran*).

(Q 17:64: cf. Q 18:46)

The idea that Satan (*al-shayṭān*, from Aramaic *saṭānā*)¹⁰² should “provoke” people with his voice by verbally tempting them—which recalls “he who whispers

99 See variant readings in *ibid.*, 4:39.

100 Ibn al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-aṣnām*, 19. Cf. also the importance of the desert and monastic life in Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, 105–25.

101 See Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān*, 52, where Ibn Mas‘ūd’s Q 15:7 reads *la’īm*, “cursed,” instead of *rajīm*; and discussion in Reynolds, *The Qur’ān and its Biblical Subtext*, 54–64.

in the hearts of people” (Q 114:5)—is shared with the temptation episodes of the Gospels where Satan tells (*ēmar*) Jesus—among other things—to worship him. In relation to this, the Qur’ān quotes Satan as he vehemently promises to lead people astray, stating,

And I will, surely, indeed mislead them (*la-aḍillannahum*), tempt them (*la-umaniyannahum*), and command them (*la-āmurannahum*) so that they will indeed mark the ears of their livestock; and I will, surely, indeed command them (*la-āmurannahum*) so that they will indeed change the creation of God. . . .

(Q 4:119)

Aside from the verse’s use of the emphatic particles *la* (*lām al-tawkīd*) and *n* (*nūn al-tawkīd*) on the verbs in which Satan demonstrated his evil prowess, the verb for “I will command” (*āmur*) is found in the third person masculine imperfect G stem of *-m-r* and corresponds to Aramaic *ēmar*, meaning to say or to tell.

However, Satan’s provocative voice as a source of temptation used against people goes virtually unmentioned in the rest of the Bible (cf. 1 Chronicles 21:1). The provocativeness of Satan’s voice may further be informed by Syriac Christian works like Aphrahat’s *Demonstration on Monks* which teaches that women are “the weapon of Satan,” and through them Satan makes music like a harp.¹⁰³ The Qur’ānic verse goes on to provide examples that Satan does “not desire that which is of God (*d-lā mētra’ē ant d-alāhā*), but that which is of people” (*ēlā da-bnay anāšā*; Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33), when it states, “share with them [their] wealth and children (*al-amwāl wa al-awlād*) and promise them (*wa ‘idhum*).”

Like verses surrounding the temptation episodes in the Gospels, the Qur’ān upholds the Satan vs. God dichotomy by stating, “Satan promises (*al-shayṭān ya ‘idukum*) poverty and commands you towards indecency (*al-faḥṣā*); and God promises you (*allāh ya ‘idukum*) forgiveness from Him and grace; and God is bounteous and knowing (Q 2:268; cf. Q 3:175; 22:3; 43:36; 58:19–21).”

However, elsewhere the Qur’ān distinguishes itself from the Gospels by depicting a dichotomy which is disproportionate, favoring God’s truthfulness (*ḥaqq*) over Satan’s meager capacity to call upon (*da’ā*) people to do evil (Q 14:22; cf. Q 4:76; 59:16; Job 1:12).

Concerning indecency (*al-faḥṣā*; see earlier), the Qur’ān teaches elsewhere that prayer works against it (Q 29:45). This idea stems not only from the Gospels, which teach that prayer defends one against temptation (*nēsyūnā*; Matthew 26:41; Mark 14:38; Luke 11:16; 22:40, 46; John 8:6; Diatessaron 48:12), but also the exhortations of Syriac Christian literature like that of Aphrahat in his *Demonstration on Monks*.¹⁰⁴

102 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 187–90.

103 Aphrahat, “Demonstrations,” 1: 265–70 (On Monks).

104 Aphrahat, “Demonstrations,” 1:301–2 similarly commands its audience to “pray and keep vigil” so as not to be defeated but rather “overcome the adversary.”

Forgetfulness or Temptation?

In the Gospels, temptation is not merely an act of cunning on Satan's part, or God for that matter, but also a sign of simple behavioral weakness on the part of people (Luke 8:13). This is evident in the closing verses of the Lord's Prayer (see Chapter 3) which state, "And lead us not into temptation (*wa lā ta 'lan / tītayn*¹⁰⁵ *l-nēsyūnā*), but deliver us from evil (*bīšā*). For to you belong the kingdom (*malkūtā*), power (*ḥaylā*), and glory (*tēšbūhtā*), for ever (*l- 'ālām 'ālmīn*; Matthew 6:13; Luke 11:4; Diatessaron 9:35)."

The Aramaic word *nēsyūnā*, "temptation," comes from the root *n-s-y* meaning to "test" or "tempt."¹⁰⁶ We find a word derived from this Aramaic root preserved in the Qur'ān as it warns its audience, stating, "And We had made a covenant with Adam long ago, but he was tempted (*fā-nasiyā*) and We did not find in him dependability (*'azman*; Q 20:115)."

Similarly, Q 2:286 states, "Our Lord, do not hold us accountable if we are tempted or mistaken (*lā tu 'ākhidhnā in nasīnā aw akḥṭa 'nā*; Q 2:286)."

Similarly, following the verse that warns against the misguidance and uncertainty surrounding exactly how many sleepers were present in the cave at Ephesus it states,

And never say concerning anything, "I will indeed do so and so tomorrow," unless God wills [it]. And commemorate your Lord [in prayer]¹⁰⁷ when you are tempted (*wa idḥkur rabbak idhā nasī*) and say perhaps my Lord will guide me that I may come near this [that is, tomorrow's task?] wisely.

(Q 18:23–24)

Remarkably one of the glosses of the active participle *nāsī* provided by Ibn Manẓūr is *fāsiq*, "corrupt," which may designate a person who has succumbed to temptation.¹⁰⁸ Otherwise, the standard translation for the Arabic third person perfect D stem verb *nasiyā* is "he forgot,"¹⁰⁹ which also comes from the root *n-s-ā*. In other Qur'ānic verses this Arabic usage of *n-s-ā*—to forget—is in fact sound (Q 18:61; 19:23, 64). However, in the case of Q 20:115, the Aramaic use of *n-s-y*—to tempt, test—fits more appropriately. It is more fitting with the Biblical narrative, as well as the spirit of St. Augustine's *Confessions* according to Speyer,¹¹⁰ with which the Qur'ān is most in dialogue. Thus, temptation led Adam astray from his covenant (either by the Serpent or Eve; Genesis 3), and not simply by forgetfulness.

Furthermore, the Gospels narrate how the Pharisees would ask Jesus guileful questions in an attempt to entrap him (Matthew 19:3; 22:18, 35; Mark 10:2;

105 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:74 records this Curetonian reading.

106 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 925–6.

107 Gerhard Böwering, *EQ*, "Prayer."

108 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'arab*, 6:4403.

109 Ibid., 6:4416. The Sabbaic cognate in Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 98 conveys the meaning of "delay."

110 Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 66–7.

12:15; Luke 10:25; 20:23; 22:28), which becomes a *topos* in many Islamic literary sources that seek to explain Qur'ānic verses by means of an encounter between a group of crafty Jews and Muḥammad.¹¹¹ This too was a form of “temptation” (*nēsyūnā*). However, *nēsyūnā* in this context may better be translated as “test,” “trial” or “provocation,”¹¹² which is a usage paralleled by the nominal and verbal use of Arabic *fitnah*, meaning “test, trial,” throughout the Qur'ān (Q 20:85; 22:53; 29:3; 38:34; and so on).¹¹³ It follows, moreover, that children (as well as spouses), who are vulnerable to Satan's influence (see earlier), are one of life's greatest *fitnahs* (Q 64:14).

One final point concerning this subject is that the arena in which the Pharisees “tempt” Jesus for “a sign from Heaven” (*ātā mēn šmayā*; Matthew 16:1; Mark 8:11; Diatessaron 14:18; 23:13) is also dogmatically re-articulated in the Qur'ān. This occurs when (presumably) Muḥammad's disbelieving interlocutors ask him for “a sign from his Lord” (*āyah min rabbih*; Q 10:20). It states similarly elsewhere, “if only signs would be revealed to him [that is, Muḥammad],” (*law lā unzil 'alayh ayāt*; Q 29:49–50), or as Ibn Mas'ūd's codex—which follows the Gospels more closely—states, “if only he [Muḥammad] would bring us a sign” (*law lā ya'tinā bi āyah*).¹¹⁴

111 For example, Wāḥidī, *Asbāb nuzūl al-qur'ān*, 231, 358; Bukhārī 9:93:510, 543, 548, 554, 604. Cf. In relation Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam*, 135.

112 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 925–6.

113 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'arab*, 5:3344 provides *imtiḥān* and *ikhtibār* as glosses.

114 Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, 72.

5 The Divine Realm

In addition to condemning the evils of the clergy and favoring the prophets and their righteous entourage, the Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions expound upon another central teaching of Near Eastern prophetic tradition, that is the divine realm. Concerning this subject, the language, imagery, symbolism, and rhetorical schemes of both scriptures form another unit within which there is strong dialogue. This chapter will deal with aspects of: divine kingdom and majesty; light and word; and finally mercy and forgiveness.

Divine Kingdom and Majesty

Generally speaking, “divine kingdom” does not designate a physical or worldly realm but rather a non-physical, otherworldly realm or state of mind. First we look at the meaning and use of the word for kingdom in the Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions.

Kingdom: malakūt and malkūtā

The Aramaic word *malkūtā*, meaning “kingdom, sovereignty or reign,”¹ is used numerous times in the Gospels—approximately 120 total in total and 56 times in the Gospel of Matthew alone. Virtually all instances of the word refer in some manner to the divine kingdom ushered in by Jesus. This divine kingdom has two names in Aramaic: the “kingdom of heaven” (*malkūtā da-šmayā*) and the “kingdom of God” (*malkūtā d-alāhā*). Unlike the other Gospels Matthew uses the latter much more sparingly as it occurs only five times (Matthew 6:33; 12:28; 19:24; 21:31; 21:43). This may be ascribed to the author’s Jewish sensibilities and his subsequent reluctance to overuse the word for God (*alāhā*). Thus, to the author of Matthew, “heaven” is a metaphor for “God.”²

In the Gospels more generally, however, with a handful of exceptions wherein *malkūtā* refers to the fractious (Matthew 12:25–26; Mark 13:8; Luke 11:17–18;

1 Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 240; Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 772–3.

2 Cf. in relation M. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew*, London, SPCK, 1974.

21:10) and evil kingdoms (Mark 6:23; Luke 4:5) of men,³ “kingdom” appears almost exclusively in conjunction with the divine, whether it be God directly or heaven as an alternate divine metaphor. This understanding of kingdom is also adopted by later Syriac Christian authors.⁴ The meaning of *malkūtā* in the *Odes* may be construed, depending on the author’s original intent, as a heavenly or apocalyptic kingdom.⁵ This duality in meaning may be informed by the Gospels wherein Jesus shares the warning at the very heart of his prophetic tradition, “repent (*tūbū*), for the kingdom of heaven (*malkūtā da-šmayā*) has approached!” (Matthew 3:2; Mark 1:15) The apocalyptic dimension of this verse is dealt with in Chapter 6. At any rate, like the Gospels the Qur’ān has much to say about divine kingdom.

The phrase, “the kingdom of the heavens and the earth” (*malakūt al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ*) occurs twice in the Qur’ān. It occurs once—perhaps in dialogue with *Apocalypse of Abraham* 5⁶—when God finally reveals his kingdom to Abraham as he searches amid the constellations of the night sky, stating,

And thus do We show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth (*malakūt al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ*) that he might be among those assured (Q 6:75)

Elsewhere it is used when condemning the doubting members of Muḥammad’s audience, stating,

And as for those who reject Our signs (*ayātunā*), We shall apprehend them from whence they do not know. And I will [even] dictate to them; indeed my scheming is strong. Have they not reflected? Their companion is not possessed (*jinnah*). He is, rather, but a clear warner (*nadhīr mubīn*). Have they not looked into the kingdom of the heavens and the earth (*malakūt al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ*) and everything which God created, and that perhaps their fate has come near? So, in which speech (*ḥadīth*) after it [the Qur’ān?] will they believe? (Q 7:182–185).

Related to this is the phrase “the kingdom of all things” (*malakūt kull shay’*) used in passages portraying God’s limitless power (Q 23:88)⁷ and glorifying His sovereignty (Q 36:83). As in the Gospels, the notion of kingdom in these qur’ānic verses is divine kingdom.

However, unlike *malakūt* which denotes divine kingdom, the qur’ānic term *mulk* can be associated with either divine or human kingdoms (See also Q 2:247; 43:51).⁸ The word *mulk* occurs 38 times in the Qur’ān with a range of meanings,⁹ at least one of which coincides with that of qur’ānic *malakūt*, and ultimately Matthew’s *malkūtā*. This is especially evident in qur’ānic passages in which the fairly

3 It is noteworthy that “the kingdom of our father David,” which is ostensibly human in origin, is praised in heaven (Mark 11:10) and conferred upon Christ that he may rule forever (Luke 1:33).

4 For example, Anonymous, *The Odes of Solomon*, 77, 79, 89–90, 92, 94; Jacob of Serugh, *Homiliae Selectae*, 1:167–9, 193 (On the Baptism of Our Redeemer).

5 Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 239–40.

6 Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 166.

7 On similarities to Q 23:88, cf. Umayyah b. Abī al-Salt, *Umajja ibn Abi’s Salt*, 43–4, 100–1.

8 L. Marlow, *EQ*, “Kings and Rulers.” Geiger has mistakenly posited its Hebrew origin. Cf. Abraham Geiger, *Judaism and Islam*, 44.

9 These meanings include “authority” (Q 2:247) and “power” (Q 2:248, 251; 3:26).

common phrase “kingdom of the heavens and the earth” (*mulk al-samāwāt wa al-ard*) occurs and which portray God’s limitless power (*qudrah*) to do with mankind as He pleases and—correspondingly—mankind’s utter helplessness without Him (Q 2:107; 5:40; 5:120; 9:116; etc). The early Muslim exegetes were correct in such instances to equate *malakūt* with the Arabic infinitive *mulk*, in so far as both terms refer to creation (*khalq*).¹⁰

The Arabic word *malakūt* is clearly derived from the Aramaic construct noun *malakūt*.¹¹ The consonantal skeleton *mlkt* attested in ancient north Arabian inscriptions while philologically related to the qur’ānic *malakūt*, is less likely its predecessor.¹² Rabin argues that the word, and all Arabic words with suffix-*ūt*, are an archaic absolute state preserved in the Aramaic dialect of the Ḥijāzī Jews in Arabia.¹³ In passing, Lüling asserts that the unification of the *ummah* by the Arabs in the 7th century was the implementation of “the kingdom of God on earth,”¹⁴ an intriguing explanation but one that assumes—as Lüling does—that the Arabian context in which the Qur’ān’s was revealed was a full-fledged Christian one. Katsh argues, given the volume of Rabbinic teachings in the Qur’ān, that the word is related to the language of the Midrash.¹⁵ While these diverse scholarly opinions exhibit the challenge of understanding the Qur’ān’s complex milieu and its sectarian nature, more likely is Mingana’s conclusion that the Qur’ān’s adoption of the word for kingdom (*malakūt*) comes explicitly from Matthew’s “kingdom of heaven.”¹⁶

In addition, the expression [*X*] *al-samāwāt wa al-ard* is a frequent qur’ānic formula whose function is to address, describe or demonstrate the sovereignty of God and—more importantly—embody divine kingdom. This is exemplified, for instance in “Lord of the Heavens and the Earth” (*rabb*¹⁷ *al-samāwāt wa al-ard*;

10 Cf. Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 1:209 (Q 3:189). Cf. further Q 1:355’s distinction between the *mulk* of Nimrod and the *malakūt* of God (Q 6:75). See further M. Plessner, *EF*, s.v. “Mulk.”

11 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 270.

12 Thamudic and Safaitic inscriptions use the word to mean a variety of abstract nouns some of which are, “possession,” and “royalty,” and at least once used in conjunction with “force.” See Branden, *Les inscriptions thamoudéennes*, 515; Winnett, *Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns*, 225, 613. These connotations are virtually synonymous with “kingdom.” While this further establishes the antiquity of a word whose consonantal skeleton is *mlkt* and its usage to denote kingdom, in the Arabian sphere, the word *malakūt* (that is, *m-l-k* in *-ūt* form) seems to have entered the Qur’ān from the Aramaic sphere.

13 Chaim Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian*, 109.

14 Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 358.

15 Katsh, *Judaism in Islam*, 96.

16 Mingana, *Syriac Influence on the Style of the Qur’ān*, 86.

17 While Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 136–137 and Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 72–3 ultimately trace the qur’ānic usage of *rabb* to Aramaic, each scholar derives its meaning differently. Jeffery prefers the more conventional meaning, “lord” or “master.” Lüling, on the other hand, prefers “leader” or even “archangel.” The wur’ānic use of *rabb*, however, most resembles that which Murray claims when speaking about the Aramaic term *rab baytā* (Arabic *rabb al-bayt*), “master of the house.” Cf. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 193–4; Luxenberg, *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran*, 166. Cf. identification of *rabb al-‘ālamīn* with “le seigneur des tribus” (lord of the tribes) in Jacqueline Chabbi, *Le coran décrypté*, 199, 251–69.

Q 13:16; 44:7; 78:43; etc), which Kropp considers the “Muslim answer to the Nicene Creed.”¹⁸ Likewise in the Gospels, when speaking about God as the master of divine kingdom, Jesus explicitly includes the earth in the formula, “Lord of heaven and earth” (*mārā da-šmāyā wa d-ar’ā*; Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21; Diatessaron 15:37; cf. Acts 17:24; see Chapter 3).¹⁹ The Qur’ānic formula cited earlier and corresponding formulae from the Aramaic Gospel Traditions were likely inspired by Hebrew scripture. This is most evident in NRSV of Psalms 89:12 for example where it states, “The heavens (*šamayim*) are yours; the earth (*ārēš*) also is yours; the world and all that is in it—you have founded them” (cf. also Psalms 108:5; 135:6; Deuteronomy 10:14).

It remains striking that in the Qur’ānic articulation of divine kingdom the heavens are always accompanied by the earth,²⁰ whereas Matthew excludes the latter (save for Matthew 11:25 which references “Lord of heaven and earth”). One could speculate as to why this Gospel’s vision of divine kingdom does not, like Hebrew Scripture before it, closely incorporate the earth into this vision. It is certainly plausible that Matthew’s Gospel agrees with the new Christocentric vision illustrated in John’s Gospel wherein Jesus states, “my kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36; Diatessaron 49:53). By re-incorporating the earth, while making explicit the gulf between the heavenly world of God and the earthly world of men, the Qur’ān emphasizes a strict monotheistic vision emerging from Hebrew Scripture and dogmatically re-articulates the very concept of divine kingdom found in the Aramaic Gospels. Thus, the purpose of Matthew’s kingdom of heaven is to designate a religious community on earth such as a church, or at least the symbolic heavenly authority over such a community.²¹ Divine kingdom in the Qur’ān, on the other hand, represents the manifestation of God’s absolute sovereignty, limitless power, and supreme authority.²² Hence, it also lacks the immediate apocalyptic connotation of divine kingdom found in the Gospels. Therefore, while Matthew’s *malkūt da-šmāyā* and the Qur’ān’s *malakūt al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ* are philologically and syntactically related, they serve two relatively different purposes.

Finally, concerning the kingdom of God, Jesus introduces the parable of the mustard seed (see later discussion) in Mark’s Gospel, stating, “what is like the kingdom of God and with what parable can it be compared” (*wa b-aynā matlā namtlīh*; Mark 4:30). There is evidence that the Qur’ān dogmatically re-articulated this verse and perceives the kingdom of God here as a reference to paradise. For it introduces the portrayal of the luxuries in paradise stating, “the likeness/parable of the paradise promised to the conscious ones” (*mathal al-jannah al-laṭī wu’id*

18 Manfred Kropp, “Tripartite, but Antitrinitarian formulas in the Qur’ānic corpus, possibly pre-Qur’ānic,” in *ibid.* (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Quran*, New York: Routledge Press, 258.

19 Droge, *The Qur’ān*, 1 makes the connection between these passages and *rabb al-‘ālamīn*.

20 Q 14:48; 20:4 expresses divine kingdom chiasmatically as “the earth and the heavens” (*al-arḍ wa al-samāwāt*).

21 Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 240–1.

22 M. Plessner, *EP*, s.v. “Mulk.”

al-muttaqūn; Q 13:35; 47:15). Although the content of the parables between both verses is different, it is clear that Q 13:35; 47:15 is in dialogue with the many parables of the kingdom of God/Heaven in the Gospels (cf. further Matthew 13:24; Mark 4:26; Luke 13:18, 20; and so on).

Keys to the Kingdom: maqālīd, qlīdā and kleis

In another verse found in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells his chief disciple Peter, “I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven” (*lak ʔetal qlīdē/iqlīdē²³ d-malkūtā da-šmāyā*; Matthew 16:19; Diatessaron 23:38).

It is, moreover, not uncommon in the Christian literature of late antique Near East for keys—wherein the Aramaic absolute noun *qlīd* or *iqlīd*²⁴ comes from Greek *kleis*—to symbolize the “binding and loosening . . . of legal or moral authority.”²⁵ Similarly, elsewhere in the New Testament and Apocrypha, we find reference to “keys of knowledge” (Luke 11:52; Diatessaron 40:44; cf. Thomas 39), the Son of man’s possession of the “keys of hell and death” (Revelation 1:18), the “key of David” (Revelation 3:7), and so on. However, the use of keys as a metaphor of authority, established in Matthew, is carried on in Syriac Christian literature by prolific fourth-century Syriac authors like Aphrahat and Ephrem.²⁶ The effect of this metaphor was far reaching and it circulated in the Qur’ān’s milieu. For it states about God, “he possesses the keys of the heavens and the earth” (*lah maqālīd al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ*; Q 39:63; 42:12). Classical exegetes and modern scholars agree that *maqālīd* is an Arabic broken plural of *iqlīd*, meaning key.²⁷ By using the word *maqālīd*, as opposed to the standard Arabic word for keys, *mafātīḥ/īḥ* cited in Q 28:76 and Diatessaron 23:38; 40:44,²⁸ the Qur’ānic verse is appropriating Matthew’s notion of “keys to the kingdom of heaven,” but transforming the more exclusivist Christian interpretation of “heaven” to the more inclusivist Qur’ānic formula, “the heavens and the earth.” This also explains the difference in meaning between both usages. In Matthew, the verse explicitly entrusts divine authority—symbolized by keys—to a man, the disciple Peter, who was to become the foundation of the Christian Church (Matthew 16:18). The Qur’ān, in contrast, dogmatically re-articulates this profoundly Christian conception to reflect a stricter monotheistic one. It never explicitly grants the intermediacy of divine authority to any human being, but rather keeps it with God alone (cf. Qur’ān 55:33 vs. Matthew 28:18).

23 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 1:243; 3:243.

24 Payne-Smith, *A Compendius Syriac Dictionary*, 506; Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 1370.

25 Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 182.

26 For example, Aphrahat, “Demonstrations,” 1: 963–66 (On Persecution); Ephrem, “Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de paradiso und contra Julianum,” 5,5; 9, 9; 19, 18–19; 25, 24; 33, 31; 42, 40; 63, 58.

27 Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 580; Jawālīqī, *Mu’arrab*, 68, 362; Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 268.

28 Cf. in relation Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 580.

Giving Up the Kingdom to Another Nation

After the prophetic tidings and warnings of the Surah entitled “Muḥammad,” Q 47 concludes criticizing the stingier members of Muḥammad’s community—not unlike the Pharisees—for failing to give charity “in the way of God,” which is a dogmatic re-articulation of the sacrificial works done “for the sake of” Jesus in the Gospels (see Chapter 4). The verse concludes, stating,

So whoever is stingy (*man yabkhal*) is, indeed, stingy against his own soul. And God is wealthy and you are poor. And if you turn away, He will substitute a nation other than you (*yastabdil qawman ghayrakum*), and they will not be like you (*thumm^a lam yakūnū amthālakum*).

(Q 47:38)

We have already examined how the abuse of charity is an issue of central importance to the ethics of the Qur’ān as well as the Gospels. What this verse adds is that the abuse of charity will cause God to dispose of a formerly favored nation with a newly chosen one. This idea is a dogmatic re-articulation of Jesus’s words in the Gospels as he attacks the Pharisees, stating, “The kingdom of God will be taken from you (*tēštqēl mēnkun malkūtā d-alāhā*) and given to a nation that will bear fruit (*wa tētyahb l-‘ammā da-‘bad pīrē*)” (Matthew 21:43; Diatessaron 33:57–58; cf. Thomas 41).

The Aramaic verbs *tēštqēl*, “it will be taken,” and *tētyahb*, “it will be given,” are subsumed in the Arabic verb *yastabdil*, meaning, “He will substitute.” Furthermore, the words for nation, *qawm*²⁹ and *‘ammā*, are taken in parallel. Although the Qur’ānic verse makes general reference to a people being substituted and does not explicitly mention that “the kingdom of God will be taken from you,” there is another reason to argue for a relationship between both passages. This is, namely, the reference in Matthew to “a nation that will bear fruit” (above) which is likely a reference to the “fruits that will be worthy of grace,” and that will spring forth from stones and replace the Jews as the children of Abraham (Luke 3:8). This conceptualization is dogmatically re-articulated in the Qur’ānic portrayal of Abraham’s descendents who were rewarded for their gratefulness with fruits (Q 14:37; see Chapter 2).

Inheritance

Fruits are not the only manifestation of divine reward for the prophets and their righteous entourage in both the Qur’ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions. So too do they inherit the divine realm which God has promised them. This realm may be of heavenly or earthly provenance. Amid the apocalyptic, prophetic passages at the end of Q 21, entitled “the Prophets” (*al-anbiyā’*), is a verse whose language emanates from the Aramaic Gospels and whose content is inspired by the Hebrew

29 Otherwise called “folk.”

Bible. Thus it states, “And We have written in the Psalms (*al-zabūr*),³⁰ after the [Hebrew?] scriptures (*al-dhikr*), that the earth will be inherited by my righteous servants (*al-arḍ yarithuhā ‘ibādī al-ṣāliḥūn*)” (Q 21:105).³¹

There is no denying that this Qur’ānic verse is in dialogue with the Psalms that state, “but the humble/poor shall inherit the land (Hebrew *w-‘ēnawīm yēršū āra’*; Jewish Aramaic *w-‘aynwātīn yērtūn ar‘ā*; Syriac *w-mēskīnē yartīn ar‘ā*), and delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Psalms 37:11 JPS; cf. Psalms 2:8; 37:9; 82:8; Q 25:63).³² However, when considered alongside Qur’ānic verses (see later discussion) the articulation of Q 21:105 is most in line with corresponding verses from Matthew.

One of these comes from the Beatitudes as it states, “blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth” (*tūbayhūn la-mkīkā d-hānūn nērtūn l-ar‘ā*; Matthew 5:5). The Arabic phrase *al-arḍ yarithuhā* matches the Aramaic *nērtūn l-ar‘ān* both syntax and meaning;³³ both are composed of the third person masculine plural imperfect verb of the D stem from the root *y-r-t*, “to inherit,” where the Arabic non-human plural pronominal suffix, *hā*, follows *yarithuhā* as it refers to the subject “my servants” (*‘ibādī*). This verb is adjoined to the standard noun for the earth in the accusative, *al-arḍ* and *l-ar‘ā*, where Aramaic ‘ regularly corresponds to Arabic *ḍ*. The subject of both verbs, too, may be taken as lexically equivalent as the relationship between the “meek” (*mkīkā*) and the “righteous” (*al-ṣāliḥūn*) has been established in Chapter 3.

The other verse from Matthew that relates to Q 21:105 takes place on the Day of Judgment when Jesus—who in this case is portrayed as a divinely sanctioned judge—extols the virtues of those at his right hand and rewards them (see Chapter 6), stating, “Then the king will say to those at His right hand, come (*taw*), you the blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you (*īratū malkūtā da-‘īdā/mṭībā*)³⁴ from the beginning of the world” (Matthew 25:34; Diatessaron 43:46).

While this verse employs the masculine plural imperative verb of the D-stem from the root *y-r-t*, “to inherit,” it is the kingdom of heaven which is inherited, not the earth. Still this portrayal of divine kingdom has the added feature of resembling the paradise of the Qur’ān (Q 7:49; 56:27–31, 90–91; cf. Matthew 26:29). This is especially the case with scenes in the Qur’ān where God invites the righteous into paradise stating, “enter paradise” (*udkhulū al-jannah*; Q 7:49; 16:32; 36:26; 43:70), where the Arabic *udkhulū*, “enter” and Aramaic *taw*, “come,” are imperatives taken in parallel.

30 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 148.

31 Cf. Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān*, 262 for Q 35:32, 35 of Ṭalḥah b. Muṣarrif’s codex.

32 Cf. the text of JPS; Targum Psalms; Old Testament Peshitta. See also Thyen, *Bibel und Koran*, 216–17. And concerning Deuteronomy 34:1–5 see Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 285.

33 Mingana, *Syriac Influence on the Style of the Kur’ān*, 91–3.

34 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:392 records this Harklean reading.

A final point concerning inheritance as a divine reward is that the other Gospels mention neither the inheritance of earth nor kingdom. However, the questions of Jesus's audience members asking how they "can inherit eternal life" (*d-īrat ḥayē da-l-‘ālmā*; Mark 10:17; Luke 10:25; 18:18; Diatessaron 29:10)³⁵ may demonstrate the linguistic association of the root *y-r-t*, "to inherit" with "until eternity" (*l-yawmāt ‘ālmā*), found in earlier pagan Aramaean or Arabian will-testimonies left by kings and nobles for their heirs which were written in the Syriac dialect.³⁶

The Mustard Seed

In the Gospels, Jesus's inquiring audience asks to what can they compare the kingdom of God/heaven (see earlier discussion). Jesus replies,

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed (*damyā malkūtā da-šmayā la-frēdtā d-ḥardlā*) . . . it is smaller than all seeds, but when it grows it is greater than all shrubs and it becomes a tree, so that the birds of heaven come and make nests in its branches.

(Matthew 13:31–32; cf. Mark 4:31; Luke 13:19; Diatessaron 17:10–12)

Later Jesus advises his audience,

For truly I say to you, if there be within you faith like a mustard seed (*haymānūtā ayk frēdtā d-ḥardlā*), you could say to this mountain, "move from here," and it would move, and nothing would prevail over you.

(Matthew 17:20; cf. Luke 17:6; Diatessaron 24:46)

In the former passage, the kingdom of heaven is a spiritual, non-physical entity. In conjunction with the latter verse, the kingdom of heaven represents a party of the faithful. The mustard seed embodies membership in divine kingdom and, more importantly, the very core of faith that grows and prospers. In other words, it represents a small investment with large gains, towards which new members will flock and empower the group with the strength to move mountains.

In the Qur'ān however, the mustard seed is dogmatically re-articulated to signify the absolute, microscopic reach of God's justice.³⁷ It states,

We shall set up the just scales for the Day of Judgment, and no soul will be wronged at all, and if there were the weight of a mustard seed (*mithqāl ḥabbah min khardal*) We would bring it; and enough are We as a jury.

(Q 21:47)

35 Note that Sinaiticus state *sītar*, "can increase," which is a metathesized form of the Peshitta's *sīrat*, "can inherit." See in relation Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 585–6, 590.

36 Drijvers and Healy, *The Old Syriac Inscriptions of Edessa and Osrhoene*, 151, 163, 178.

37 See further Dundes, *Fables of the Ancients?*, 25.

The second occurrence of the phrase occurs as the prophet Luqmān advises his son, “If there were the weight of a mustard seed (*mīthqāl*³⁸ *ḥabbah min khardal*) within in a rock, or in the heavens or in the earth, God would bring it; verily God is sublime and informed” (Q 31:16; Cf. 10:61; 34:3; cf. Jubilees 5:14).

These pronouncements are in line with similar statements in the Qur’ān proclaiming that, “indeed, God does not wrong the weight of an atom” (*innā allāh lā yaḏlim mīthqāl dharrah*; Q 4:40; cf. 34:22; 99:7–8). The phrases *ḥabbah min khardal* is inspired by *frēdtā d-khardlā*, where the noun *ḥabbah* is a calque for *frēdtā*, and where Arabic *khardal* comes from Aramaic *ḥardlā*.³⁹

God’s Throne

Shifting our attention slightly from divine kingdom, the royal majesty of God is a motif shared by Hebrew Scripture (Psalms 9:7–8; 11:4; 45:6–7; 47:8–9; 93:2; 97:2; Isaiah 66:1–6; Jeremiah 3:17),⁴⁰ Rabbinic commentary (Mishna Sanhedrin 4:5),⁴¹ Christian Scripture (Matthew 5:34; 19:28; 23:22; 25:31; Acts 7:4; Hebrews 1:8; 4:16; 8:1; cf. also Revelation 3:21; 4:1–10; 7:10; 19–22), the poetry of Umayyah b. Abī al-Salt⁴² and the Qur’ān (Q 2:255).⁴³ While the Qur’ān’s notion of God’s throne is probably informed by the entirety of this intertextual chain, its form and context are a dogmatic re-articulation of the corresponding passages in Matthew’s Gospel in Aramaic, which warn about the gravity of swearing by heaven. Thus Jesus teaches,

Again, you have heard that it was said to the ancients, “you should not lie in your oath, but carry out your oath to the Lord.” But I say to you, “you should not swear at all, neither by heaven because it is the throne of God (*lā ba-šmayā d-kūrsyā hū d-alāhā*), nor by the earth because it is the footstool beneath his feet (*wa lā b-ar’ā d-kūbšā hī da-thēt rēgalūhī*), nor by Jerusalem because it is the city of the great king (*āplā b-ūrīšlem da-mdīnteh hī d-malkā rabā*).

(Matthew 5:33–35; Diatessaron 9:1–4)

Jesus further reprimands the wicked Pharisees and teaches that swearing by a sacred object entails swearing by all the holiness which lay within it, stating,

So, whoever swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything that is upon it; and whoever swears by the Temple, swears by it and by He who dwells in it; and whoever swears by heaven (*man d-yamē ba-šmayā*), swears by the throne

38 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 258.

39 Ibid., 122; See also Ahrens, “Christliches im Qoran,” 101; Dundes, *Fables of the Ancients?*, 26. Cf. further Tephēn Dähne, *EQ*, “Weights and Measures.”

40 Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 444.

41 Geiger, *Was hat Mohammed*, 102; see also Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 322.

42 Umayyah b. Abī al-Salt, *Umajja ibn Abi’s Salt*, 24–5, 84.

43 Jamal Elias, *EQ*, “Throne of God.”

of God and by He who sits upon it (*yamē b-kūrsyēh/maytūbītēh*⁴⁴ *d-alāhā wa b-man l-‘ēl mēnēh*).

(Matthew 23:20–22; Diatessaron 40:48–52;
cf. 2 Chronicles 9:18; Isaiah 66:1; Acts 7:49)

The relationship between the Qur’ān’s teachings of swearing an oath and those found in the Gospels have been discussed in Chapter 3. Concerning the “throne of God,” the Qur’ān states,

God, there is no god but He. He is not seized by aging nor sleep. To Him belong that which is in the Heavens and that which is in the earth. Who is the one who can show abundance before Him except with his permission? He knows that which is before them and that which is behind them. And they do not encompass any part of His knowledge except that which he wills. His throne occupies the heavens and the earth (*wasi’ kursiyuh al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ*). Nor does preserving them encumber Him, and He is the high, the great.
(Q 2:255)

The imagery of God’s throne is nothing less than an affirmation of the imagery in Matthew, “you should not swear at all, neither by heaven because it is the throne of God (*lā ba-šmayā d-kūrsyā hū d-alāhā*), nor by the earth because it is the footstool beneath his feet (*wa lā b-ar‘ā d-kūbšā hī da-ṭḥēt rēgalūhī*),” which is itself inherited from Hebrew Scripture. Since Matthew teaches that God’s throne is in heaven and His footstool—perhaps too anthropomorphic to be adopted by the Qur’ān—is on earth, it follows then that “His throne occupies the heavens and the earth (*wasi’ kursiyuh al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ*).” In sum, Q 2:255 is in dialogue with 2 Chronicles 9:18; Isaiah 66:1, but mediated through Matthew’s reformulation of those verses.

Divine kingdom is a central teaching of both the Qur’ān and the Aramaic Gospels. The former’s emphasis on strict monotheism, as well as the historical circumstances surrounding Muḥammad’s early Muslim community, explain why aspects of “the keys of the kingdom,” the symbol of “the mustard seed” and “God’s throne” (among others) were dogmatically re-articulated from Matthew’s Gospel especially.

Light and Word

The use of Light to signify divine kingdom, guidance, or the forces of good probably originates with the ancient astrological infatuation with the illuminating, life-giving powers of the sun.⁴⁵ This notion of light is fairly common to the Semitic, Iranian, and Hellenic prophetic traditions of the late antique Near East,⁴⁶ not least because Zoroastrian dualism and Neoplatonic impulses exercised great influence

44 *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament*, 2A:29.

45 Cf. also Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 579 which alleges that even Muḥammad read the stars. See further Q 56:75–76.

46 T.J. de Boer, *EP*, s.v. “Nūr”; Chaim Rabin, “Islam and the Qumran Sect” in *ibid.* (ed.) *The Qur’ān: Style and Contents*, 3; Han Drijvers, *Bardaisan of Edessa*, Assen: Van Gorcum & Co, 1966, 205.

on Christian theology. So too did the principle of Greek philosophical discourse known as “word, speech or reason” (*logos*) exercise great influence on Christian theology. These metaphors—light and word—were also part and parcel of the Qur’ān’s milieu and were informed by the Aramaic Gospel Traditions.

The Light of the World

The famous ‘lamp-light verse’ of the Qur’ān states,

God is the light of the heavens and the earth (*allāh nūr al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ*). The likeness of His light (*mathal nūrih*) is like a niche (*mishkāh*) within which is a lamp (*miṣbāh*). The lamp is within a glass. The glass is as though it were a brilliant constellation, kindled (*tūwqaḍ*) by a blessed olive tree, [which lay] neither east nor west. Its oil illuminates (*taḍī*) without being touched by fire (*nār*), light upon light (*nūr ‘alā nūr*). God guides to His light whoever he wills, and God puts forth parables for people; and God is about all things knowing. (Q 24:35)

Immediately following the lamp-light verse, it states,

[the lamp shines] within buildings (*buyūt*) which God has allowed to be erected and in which His Name is commemorated. Therein He is glorified (*yusabbah*) mornings and evenings—by men who are not distracted by trade or selling from the remembrance of God, nor from establishing prayer or giving charity. (Q 24:36)

Light as a metaphor, which plays an important role in the Qur’ān⁴⁷ was common in late antique Near Eastern prophetic tradition. It informs the Gnostic sensibilities found in Sabian-Mandaean propheticology (*Gēnzā Rbā* R4) and is even attested in *jāhili* poetry.⁴⁸ However, this verse is more specifically a dogmatic re-articulation of those in the Aramaic Gospels. Jesus proclaims to his poor and downtrodden followers in the “sermon on the mount,”

You are the light of the world (*antūn ēnūn nūhrēh d-‘ālmā*).⁴⁹ It is not possible to hide a city built on a mountain. They do not light a lamp (*šrāgā*) and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand (*mnārtā*), and it illuminates everything (*manhar l-kūl aylēn*) that is in the house. Like this, let your light shine (*nēnhar nūhrkūn*) before people that they may see your deeds (*‘bādaykūn*) and glorify (*nšabhūn*) your Father who is in heaven.

(Matthew 5:14–16; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16; 11:33; Diatessaron 8:41–43)

47 Jamal Elias, *EQ*, “Light.”

48 Nawāl Zarzūr, *Mu‘jam alfāz al-qiyam al-akhlāqīyah*, 130.

49 For the qur’ānic adaptation of Aramaic *‘ālmā*, namely *al-‘ālamīn*, see Chapter 6; Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 209–10.

Similarly, in the Gospel of John, Jesus proclaims on the Mount of Olives challenging the Pharisees, stating, “I am the light of the world (*ēnā ēnā nūhrēh d-‘ālmā*). Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will find for himself the light of life (*nūhrā d-ḥayē*)” John 8:1 = 8:12 NRSV; Diatessaron 35:23–24).

Later, just before healing a blind man, Jesus states, “I must do the work of He who sent me while it is daytime; nighttime is coming when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world (*nūhrēh d-‘ālmā ēnā*)” John 9:5; Diatessaron 36:13–14; cf. in relation Q 30:57; *Gēnzā Rbā* R5:174–6).

Concerning Q 24:35, unlike the passages from Matthew and John where Jesus proclaims himself and his followers to be the light of the world—which is expounded upon by Aphrahat⁵⁰—Muḥammad’s anti-trinitarian sensibilities and his vision of strict monotheism found the proximity of mankind with the divine manifestation—light—to be problematic. So, the statement “you are the light of the world” (*antūn ēnūn nūhrēh d-‘ālmā*) or “I am the light of the world” (*ēnā ēnā nūhrēh d-‘ālmā; nūhrēh d-‘ālmā ēnā*) is dogmatically re-articulated replacing the pronouns “I” and “you” with God. Thus, “God is the light of the heavens and the earth” (*allāh nūr al-samāwāt wa al-ard*). By claiming that the semblance of God’s light is that of a “lamp” (*miṣbāḥ*) within a glass within a “niche” (*mishkāh*), like a brilliant constellation whose oil “illuminates” (*taḏīr*) . . . “light upon light” (*nūr ‘alā nūr*), the lamp-light verse is reusing the language and imagery of Matthew’s “lamp” (*ṣrāgā*) placed on a “lampstand” (*mnārtā*), and which “illuminates everything” (*manhar l-kūl aylēn*). The singular nouns *miṣbāḥ* and *mishkāh*⁵¹—are calques for *ṣrāgā* and *mnārtā*. Furthermore the Arabic verb *taḏīr*, “it illuminates” fulfills the function of the Aramaic active participle *manhar*, “it illuminates/is illuminating.” So too does the Arabic root *n-w-r* (as in *nūr*) correspond in meaning to Aramaic *n-h-r* (as in *nūhrā/ēh*, *manhar*, *nēnhar*, and so on).⁵²

Concerning Q 24:36, that God “is glorified (*yusabbah*) mornings and evenings—by men who are not distracted by trade or selling from the remembrance of God, nor from establishing prayer or giving charity” is a dogmatic re-articulation of “let your light shine (*nēnhar*) before people that they may see your deeds (*‘bādaykūn*) and glorify (*nṣabhūn*) your Father who is in heaven” in Matthew 5:16 (see earlier). Not only is the same verb used to express glorifying God (*sabbah*, *ṣabah*; see earlier) but it has been argued earlier that the Aramaic plural noun *‘bādē* (from *‘bādaykūn*, “your deeds”), like Arabic *‘ibādāt* is the normative word for deeds in both scriptures, including prayer and giving charity (see Chapter 3). In addition, the “buildings” (*buyūt*) spoken of in Q 24:36 may well have been churches as Trimmingham suggests,⁵³ or perhaps given the tenets of remembrance, morning and nightly prayer (vigils?), and charity, some other Judeo-Christian house of worship (Luke 13:35). Furthermore, in 2 Samuel 7: 13, 26; 22:51 “the house for God’s name” is established to forever bless David’s kingdom which is a

50 Aphrahat, “Demonstrations,” 1: 21–26 (On Faith).

51 Jefferey, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 266.

52 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 894.

53 Trimmingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, 265.

divine kingdom mandated by God unto Israel and inherited by Jesus—who is the heir of David—in the Gospels.

The statement “let your light shine (*nēnhar*) before people that they may see your deeds (*bādaykūn*) and glorify (*nšabḥūn*) your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16; see earlier) has two implications. One is that as the kingdom of heaven/God approaches, Jesus’s poor and downtrodden followers, who were oppressed by the hypocritical deeds of the Pharisees and Rabbinic authorities of their day (Matthew 23:5–8; Mark 12:38–44; Luke 20:46–47; 21:1–4; see Chapter 4), will finally have the opportunity to openly share their good deeds and glorify the Father, which bring us to the missionary dimension of this language. That Jesus’s followers should “let their light shine before people, show their deeds and glorify the Father” is likely a missionary proclamation, one that is picked up by the Qur’ān as it condemns those who belied the prophet Jesus. More specifically, they are condemned for rejecting their prophet’s call (*da’wah*) to the prophet Aḥmad and the religion of Islam (Q 61:6–7), stating, “They want to extinguish the light of God (*nūr allāh*) with their mouths, yet God will fulfill his light (*nūrih*) even to the hatred of the rebellious ones” (Q 61:8; cf. 9:32).

The “light of God” (*nūr allāh*)—which is an emendation of Matthew’s “your light” (*nūhrkūn*)—represents the expansion of the faith, and which is obstructed by “their mouths”—originally those of the Pharisees (Matthew 12:34; 15:11–18; Luke 6:45)—but fulfilled nonetheless.

And so in sum, the Arabic text of Q 2:35–36 and Q 61:6–8 dogmatically re-articulates the Aramaic text of Matthew 5:14–16; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16; 11:33 and John 8:1; 9:5 insofar as it: reclaims the metaphor of light—which is one manifestation of divine kingdom and proselytism—from the human realm to the divine realm; employs the imagery of the illuminating lamp; mentions the glorification of men who perform good deeds, especially prayer and giving charity; and illustrates the spread of the faith.

The Lamp

The “lamp” (*šrāgā*) is a symbol that appears in a number of uplifting passages found in the Aramaic Gospel Traditions. The symbol of the lamp is also found in the Talmud, the work of Clement of Rome (d. ca. 101 CE) and Ephrem’s commentary on Genesis.⁵⁴ The symbol of the lamp is, in turn, incorporated into verses of the Qur’ān. Thus, the Qur’ān speaks of a “lamp” (*sirāj*) among the constellations (Q 25:61; 71:16; 78:13). It further states,

O you who believe, commemorate God in frequent remembrance. And glorify Him morning and night. He is the One who prays over you, and his angels, in order to take you out of dark places into light (*li yukhrijakum min al-ẓulumāt ilā al-nūr*). And he is to the believers benevolent . . . O you prophet

54 Genesis Rabba 30:7; Sanhedrin 108; Ephrem, “In Genesim et in Exodum commentarii,” *CSCO* 152–3, 71, 1955, 58–60; Clement of Rome cited in Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Quran*, 94.

[Muḥammad], we have sent you as a witness (*shāhidan*), a giver of good news (*mubashshiran*) and a warner (*nadhīran*), and a missionary towards God with his permission (*wa dā'īyan ilā allāh bi idhnih*), and an illuminating lamp (*wa sirājan munīran*).

(Q 33:41–46)

This verse bestows upon Muḥammad the duties of being a prophet. These duties are to be a “witness (*shāhidan*), a giver of good news (*mubashshiran*) and a warner (*nadhīran*),⁵⁵ and a missionary towards God with his permission (*wa dā'īyan ilā allāh bi idhnih*)”—which emanate from a strong dialogue with the Aramaic Gospels (see earlier discussion and Chapter 3)—and finally an “illuminating lamp (*wa sirājan munīran*),” where both the singular noun *sirāj* and active participle *munīr* come from the Aramaic sphere.⁵⁶ This reference to the prophet Muḥammad is unique. For, while the Qur'ān demonstrates how the “lamp” (*miṣbāḥ*) is part of the divine realm (Q 24:35), the “lamp” (*sirāj*) is identified—as in the Gospels—with the human realm. What could account for this apparent break in the strict monotheistic vision of espoused by Muḥammad and manifested in the Qur'ān? The answer lies in the Gospel of John wherein Jesus honors the deceased John the Baptist, stating, “He was a lamp that burned and illuminated (*srāgā hwā d-dālēq wa manhar*), and you wanted to boast for an hour in his light (*b-nūhrēh*). But I have a testimony (*sāhdūtā*) greater than John's” (John 5:35–36; Diatessaron 22:43–44).

The phrase, “he was a lamp that burned and illuminated (*srāgā hwā d-dālēq wa manhar*)” is dogmatically re-articulated by Q 33:46 as “an illuminating lamp (*sirājan munīran*).” Furthermore, Jesus's greater “testimony” (*sāhdūtā*) is preserved by the prophet Muḥammad who is “a warner” (*shāhidan*), where the Arabic active participle *shāhid* (from *sh-h-d*) is informed by the Aramaic noun *sāhdūtā* (from the root *s-h-d*; see Chapter 6).⁵⁷

The Word: kalimah, meltā and logos

The Gospel of John's content and literary style are distinct from those of the Synoptic Gospels.⁵⁸ One of the salient features present in John is the theological conception of the “word” inherited from the wisdom literature of Hebrew Scripture,⁵⁹ and which comes at the very start of the Gospel, “In the beginning was the word (*mēltā*), and the word (*mēltā*) was with God, and the word became God (*w-alāhā itawhī hwā hū mēltā*)” (John 1:1; Diatessaron 1:1).

It continues,

55 See in relation Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 91.

56 Jefferey, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, 166–7.

57 See also Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 430–31. See further Jamal Elias, *EQ*, “Lamp.”

58 Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 92.

59 See Thomas H. Tobin, *ABD*, “Logos.”

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (*wamēltābēsrā hwā w-agēn⁶⁰ ban*). And we saw his glory (*šūbhēh*), the glory as of the only [begotten?]⁶¹ one of the Father (*šūbhā ayk d-īhīdāyā d-mēn abā*), who is full of grace and truth (*da-mlē ṭaybūtā wa qūštā/šrārā*).⁶²

(John 1:14; Diatessaron 3:53)

The “word” (*mēltā*) is a calque for Greek *logos* and is identified by John with the person of Jesus. The theological and philosophical discourses on this subject are vast and were expounded upon by Syriac Christian authors.⁶³ Nevertheless, the identification of the “word” with the person of Jesus circulated in the Qur’ān’s milieu and was affirmed by its verses as the angels give good news to Mary, stating,

When the angels said, “O Mary, indeed God gives you good news of a word (*kalimah*) from Him whose name is the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, handsome in the world and the hereafter and one of the near ones (*al-muqarrabīn*).”

(Q 3:45)

Elsewhere, it polemicizes the People of the Scripture, reiterating,

O People of the Scripture, do not go to extremes in your religion! And say not about God except the truth (*al-ḥaqq*)! The Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary is merely the messenger of God (*innamā al-masīḥ ‘īsā ibn mayram rasūl allāh*), His word that He spoke to Mary and a spirit from Him (*wa kalimatuh alqāhā ilā maryam wa rūḥ minh*). So believe in God and his messengers and do not say “three” (*thalāthah*). It is better for you. God is merely one. Glorified is he [beyond?] having a son (*subḥānah an yakūn lah^u walad*). To Him belong that which is in the heavens and that which is in the earth. And God suffices as a representative (*wakīlan*).⁶⁴

(Q 4:171)

There is exists a strong dialogue between Q 3:45; Q 4:171 and John 1:1, 14—and possibly Revelation 19:13⁶⁵—concerning the theological implications of the

60 Cf. *ajinnah* in Q 53:32 and *CAL*, “’-g-n.”

61 This is implied but not explicit in Aramaic text.

62 See Curetonius and Harklean readings in Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:6.

63 For example, Jacob of Serugh, *Homiliae selectae*, 2:158–83 (On ‘In the Beginning was the Word;’ On the Only Begotten Word). See further Wansbrough, *Qur’anic Studies*, 77; Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 775. See further Thomas H. Tobin, *ABD*, “Logos.” Certain impulses within these discourses likely informed the Qur’ānic understanding of “words, talk” (*kalām*) and “speech” (*ḥadīth*).

64 Cf. in relation Ibn Qutaybah, *Tafsīr*, 18. See in relation Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 160.

65 Brady, “The Book of Revelation and the Qur’an,” 218.

“word,” for which the Arabic *kalimah* is a calque of Aramaic *meltā*, which is in turn a calque for Greek *logos*.⁶⁶

Naturally, the theological formulation that the “word” (*mēltā*)—identified with the person of the prophet Jesus—“was with God, and . . . became God” was unacceptable to Muḥammad’s strict monotheistic vision. Therefore, Q 3:45 and Q 4:171 redefine Jesus’s nature by dogmatically re-articulating John’s text. The verses portray him as “handsome in the world and the hereafter and from among the near ones,” and, furthermore, that “the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary is merely (*innamā*) the messenger of God, His word (*kalimatuh*) that he spoke to Mary and a spirit (*rūh*) from Him.”

The Qur’ān also attacks the People of the Scripture—presumably Christians or Jewish Christians—again by dogmatically re-articulating the language of John 1:14. Aware of John’s text, “And we saw his glory (*šūbhēh*), the glory (*šūbhā*) as of the only one of the Father, who is full of grace (*ṭaybūtā*) and truth (*qūštā*),” it states “say not about God except the truth (*al-ḥaqq*)! . . . Glorified is he [beyond] having a son (*subḥānah an yakūn lah^u walad*) . . . And God suffices as a representative (*wakīlan*).” In John’s Gospel, Jesus has glory (*šūbhā*) for the expressed purpose of being “the only one [that is, son] of the Father [that is, God];” in the Qur’ān, this glory (*subḥānah*) is reclaimed by God for the expressed purpose of not having a son at all. Furthermore, the word “truth” (*qūštā*) which characterizes the word’s nature, is revived in the Qur’ān as *al-ḥaqq*, which is a virtue demanded of the deluded “People of the Scripture.”

Words that Do Not Pass Away

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus teaches that “it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away (*nē’brūn*), than one letter of the law to pass away (*tē’bar*)” (Luke 16:17). Later, when speaking of events prior to the impending apocalypse, Jesus states, “Heaven and earth will pass away (*nē’brūn*) and my words will not pass away (*wa mēlay lā ne’brān*; Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33; Diatessaron 42:29, 28; cf. Thomas 11).

The Qur’ān combines this language from the Gospels with the imagery of the “brook/waters that pass away” in Job 6:15; 11:6. Preceding the final verse of Q 18—which employs the rhetorical style “say, indeed” (*qul innamā*; Q 18:110) of Jesus’s speech “truly I say to you” (*amīn ēmar lak [ūn]*; see Chapter 1)—it states,

Say, “if the sea (*al-baḥr*) were a pen (*midādan*) for the words of my Lord (*kalimāt rabbī*), then the sea would have finished before the words of my Lord would have finished (*la nafidh al-baḥr qabl an tanfadh kalimāt rabbī*). Even if we brought as much to supply it.

(Q 18:109)

66 Cf. Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’an*, 18. See in relation Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 77.

Elsewhere it similarly states,

For if, indeed, on earth all the trees were pens (*aqlām*) and the sea supplied them [ink] (*wa al-baḥr yamudduh*), followed by seven more seas (*min ba'dih sab'at abḥur*), the words of God would not finish (*mā nafidhat kalimāt allāh*). Indeed, God is Mighty, Wise.

(Q 31:27: cf. Q 43:28)

In Q 18:109; 31:27, the Gospels' "heaven and earth" are substituted with Job's imagery of the "waters," resulting in the metaphor of the pen—made up of all the world's trees—that are supplied with ink as deep and vast as the seas.⁶⁷ Additionally, by referring to the human Jesus the clause "my words will not pass away" (*wa mēlay lā ne'brān*) conflicts with Muḥammad's vision of strict monotheism. It is, therefore, dogmatically re-articulated in order to restore the divine power of words back to God, stating "the words of God would not finish (*mā nafidhat kalimāt allāh*)."⁶⁸

God's seemingly infinite verbosity in the Qur'ān may too be a dogmatic re-articulation of the final verses of John's Gospel, which state,

This is the disciple that testifies about all these [things], and that wrote them. And we know that his testimony is true. There are, therefore, also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, not the world I suppose could suffice for the books that would be written.

(John 21:24–25; Diatessaron 55:16–17)

In keeping with Muḥammad's vision of strict monotheism, it is not Jesus but God rather whose plethora of words cannot be restricted.

The Qur'ān clearly conveys its message concerning two salient manifestations of God's majesty in the late antique Near East, namely light and word. In doing so, it dogmatically re-articulated—among other verses—those from the Aramaic Gospels which portray Jesus as the divine lamp and eternal word.

Mercy and Forgiveness

Mercy and forgiveness are salient dimensions of the divine realm throughout the Biblical and qur'ānic corpus. The vocabulary used in the Aramaic Gospel Traditions to articulate God's mercy upon his prophets, their righteous entourage, as well as the poor and downtrodden members of society is shared by the Qur'ān. So too does the Qur'ān adapt and dogmatically re-articulate the formulae and imagery used in the Aramaic Gospel Traditions with regards to the forgiveness of sins.

67 Cf. in relation Ibn Qutaybah, *Tafsīr*, 344.

68 Cf. in relation Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies*, 77.

Mercy

The Qur'ānic manifestations of God's mercy—which are in strong dialogue with those found in Hebrew and Christian Scripture—are so numerous in form and diverse in content, as to constitute God's very essence and His most basic, fundamental attribute. This is especially the case for the prophetic tradition that would flourish into Islam (Q 4:27; 9:27; 12:92; 16:119; 39:53; 44:42; and so on).⁶⁹ Among a host of divine attributes (*al-asmā' al-ḥusnā*; Q 7:180; 17:110; 20:8; 59:24; cf. *Gēnzā Rbā R1*; names of Ahura Mazda in the *Pazand*) God is “the most merciful of those who show mercy” (*arḥam al-rāḥimīn*; 7:151; 12:64, 92; 21:83) and “the merciful, the benevolent” (*al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*; Q 1:1, 3; 2:163; 27:30; 41:2; 59:22).⁷⁰

Following the articulation of “mercy” (*raḥmē*) found in the Aramaic Gospel Traditions,⁷¹ the Qur'ān conceives of “mercy” (*raḥmah*) in both the divine and human realm. Therefore, in both scriptures mankind prays for God's mercy (for example, Q 7:151; 11:47; 23:109; Luke 16:24; 18:13; and so on). Similarly, as the Gospels teach their audience, “blessed are the merciful,” (Matthew 5:7) and that people should “be merciful as [their] Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36), so too does the Qur'ān teach its audience that the hearts of Jesus's followers were filled with leniency (*ra'fah*) and mercy (*raḥmah*; Q 57:27). In relation to this, it is worthy of mention that the Qur'ān describes both God and Muḥammad as “lenient, merciful” (*ra'ūf raḥīm*; Q 9:128; 24:20; 59:10; etc)—which may like the phrase “the merciful, the benevolent” (*al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*; see earlier discussion; Chapter 3)—relate to the attributes of God in James 5:11, “the merciful . . . and the compassionate” (*mraḥmān . . . wa mraḥpān*).⁷² The Qur'ān also teaches the growing Muslim community to follow the example (*mathal*) of Hebrew Scripture and the Gospel Traditions (*al-tawrāh wa al-injīl*) by showing mercy to one another (Q 48:29; cf. Q 49:10).

However, the greatest point of divergence between both the Qur'ān and the Gospels concerns the original dispenser—that is, the source—of mercy. In the Gospels, the masses of blind men, foreign women, and other poor and downtrodden members of society invoke Jesus, stating: “Have mercy on me! My lord son of David (*ētraḥam/raḥēm*)⁷³ ‘lay māri brēh d-dawīd)” (Matthew 15:22); “[Jesus] son of David, have mercy on me!” ([iṣū'] *brēh d-dawīd ētraḥam 'lay*; Mark 10:47–48; Luke 18:38–9); “have mercy on us!” [My lord] son of David” (*ētraḥam 'layn [māri] brēh d-dawīd*; Matthew 9:27; 20:30 cf. Matthew 20:30–1) or something similar (Matthew 17:15; see further Luke 16:24; Diatessaron 12:34; 20:49; 31:25). Only in Luke's Gospel there occurs the invocation, “God, be compassionate to [me] a sinner!” (*alāhā ḥūnaynī l-ḥatāyā*;⁷⁴ Luke 18:13; Diatessaron 32:20–21; see

69 This is evident most clearly in Q 59:22–24 and among the exegetical literature, for example, Ibn Qutaybah, *Tafsīr gharīb al-qur'ān*, 6. Cf. also D. B. Macdonald, *EP*, “Allāh.”

70 See in relation Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 116–17.

71 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 1455–56.

72 Cf. *r-ḥ-p* in *ibid.*, 1458.

73 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 1:225–6 records this in Sinaiticus.

74 *Ibid.*, 3:365 records that Sainaiticus and Curetonius alternately state “have mercy” (*ētraḥam*), and the Harklean states “absolve/purify” (*ḥsā*).

further Luke 1:46–78). However, in the Qur’ān, God alone is invoked for mercy. Thus, a typical qur’ānic invocation for mercy comparable to those in the Gospels but adapted to the Qur’ān’s milieu and Muḥammad’s community is found in Adam and Eve’s plea, “They said, ‘our Lord, we have wronged ourselves; and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us (*in lam taghfir lanā wa tarḥamunā*), we will surely be one of the lost ones’” (Q 7:23; cf. 7:149, 155; 11:47; 23:109, 118).

According to Muḥammad’s vision of strict monotheism Jesus was not “Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14, 8:8; Matthew 1:23) nor God incarnate as the Gospel writers may have believed, but “merely a prophet before whom prophets came” (Q 5:75). Thus, in the Qur’ān Jesus cannot be invoked for mercy; Mercy is, after all, the most essential divine attribute and may be possessed by God alone (Q 17:8; 18:98; 36:44; 44:42). He has, moreover, obligated mercy upon himself (Q 6:12, 54), which is a testament to God’s divine majesty, as well as a repudiation of the Gospels wherein Jesus is endowed with the power of giving mercy.

Forgiving for You Your Sins

Just as the Qur’ān describes God as merciful, so too is He described as “forgiving” (*ghāfir*; 2:218; 60:7; and so on) and in Q 40, entitled “the Forgiver” (*ghāfir*), He is referred to as “the Forgiver of sins” (*ghāfir al-dhanb*; Q 40:2). In Surah 7, which like many others enumerates a sequence of prophets and their rebellious followers, it states concerning the Israelites as they came out of the wilderness into Canaan,

And so it was said to them, “inhabit this village and eat from eat whatever you will, speak humbly, and enter the gate in worship,” We forgive for you your sins (*naghfir lakum khaṭī’ātikum*). We will increase the workers of good.

(Q 7:161)

The events that Q 7:161 recall come from Hebrew Scripture (for example, Leviticus 14:34; Numbers 34:2; Deuteronomy 7:1). The syntax of the clause “We forgive for you your sins (*naghfir lakum khaṭī’ātikum*)” is similar to that of formulae asking forgiveness for oneself in the Qur’ān and Aramaic Gospels (see Chapter 3), namely:

verb + preposition *li/la* + pronominal suffix + your (pl.) sins

Taken alongside this general syntactic relationship shared by both scriptures, the word choice, “your sins” (*khaṭī’ātikum*; sg. *khaṭī’ah*) which remains the standard Christian Arabic word for “sin”⁷⁵—instead of the normative qur’ānic *dhunūbukum* (Q 3:31; 71:4; and so on)—the entire clause lends itself as a dogmatic re-articulation of Jesus’s words in the Aramaic Gospels. More specifically, these are his words intended to uplift the poor and downtrodden members of society, stating,

75 Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān*, 151, 154, 297 cites that the codices of Ubayy b. Ka’b and al-Rabī’ b. Kuthayyām preserve *khaṭāyās* an alternate plural for “sins” (Q 19:11–12; 26:82), which more closely matches Syriac *ḥṭāhā*, “sins.” See in relation Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 63.

“Your sins are forgiven (*šbīqīn lāk ḥtāhāyk*)” (Matthew 9:2, 5; Mark 2:5, 9; Luke 5:23; Diatessaron 7:19; 15:8; cf. further Joshua 24:19; 1 John 2:12). The difference is where Jesus’s statement is ambiguous by virtue of the passive construction “forgiven for you is” (*šbīqīn lāk*), God’s statement in Q 7:161 is an unambiguous and active verbal construction, “We will forgive for you” (*naghfir lakum*). This shift may reflect, once again, Muḥammad’s strict monotheistic vision which fixes power of forgiveness firmly within the grasp of God alone, without associating or delegating it as affectation to Jesus or another representative.

Seventy Times or More?

The Qur’ān condemns the hypocrites of Muḥammad’s community—those who openly accept but secretly reject the teachings of Islam by not giving charity from the riches God has granted them (Q 9:74). This seminal passage goes on to describe their hypocritical traits and the helplessness of praying for their forgiveness. It continues,

And among them [the community] are those who make a covenant with God [saying], “surely if He gives us out of his bounty, surely we would give alms (*ṣadaqāt*) and we would be one of the righteous.” So when He gave them from His bounty they clung to it greedily and turned away in aversion. So hypocrisy (*nifāq*) followed them into their hearts, until the day they will meet Him concerning the promise upon which they reneged against God and concerning their lies . . . Those who criticize the believers who freely give alms and those who cannot find except their labors [to give as alms], and mock them, God mocks them and they have a painful torment! [Whether] you ask their forgiveness or you do not ask their forgiveness (*istaghfir lahum aw lā tastaghfir lahum*)—even if you ask their forgiveness seventy times (*in tastaghfir lahum sab‘īn marrah*)—God will not forgive them (*fa lan yaghfir allāh lahum*). That is because they rebelled (*kafarū*) against God and his messenger. And God does not guide the corrupted folk.

(Q 9:75–80: cf. Q 63:6)

We have already demonstrated that the link the Qur’ān draws between hypocrisy (*nifāq*) and the failure to give alms (*ṣadaqah*) or charity (*zakāt*) is an impulse which comes from the portrayal of the wealth, greed, and the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and their cohort in the Aramaic Gospel Traditions (see Chapter 4; cf. in relation *Bahmān Yasht* 2:44). According to Q 9:80, this hypocrisy—which like the Gospels is based upon a failure to pay up rather than adopt a form of correct theology—constitutes an act of rebellion (*kufṛ*) against both God and his messenger.⁷⁶ However, why would Q 9:80 pose the scenario of asking the forgiveness

⁷⁶ Contrast our interpretation of hypocrisy (*nifāq*), which is inextricably tied to financial greed, with its normative definition in later Islamic literary sources like Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, 6:4509 which argues that hypocrisy constitutes a theological or doctrinal unfaithfulness to Islam. Cf. further Bukhārī 2:23:359 and parallels.

of the hypocrites and rebellious ones in the first place? And, furthermore, why specifically does it stipulate 70 times? The answer lies in the Gospel of Matthew which states,

Then Peter approached him [Jesus] and said, “my lord, how many times if my brother wrongs me should I forgive him (*kmā zabnīn ēn naskēl/nēhṭē bī āhī ēšbūq lēh*)? Up to seven times (*‘damā la-šba‘ zabnīn*)?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you up to seven but up to seventy times seven-seven (*lā āmēr ēnā lāk ‘damā la-šba‘ ēlā ‘damā l-šab‘īn zabnīn šba‘ šba‘*).”

(Matthew 18:21–22; Diatessaron 27:22–24)⁷⁷

Having established that the Qur’ān envisions a Muslim community built upon the foundation of mercy shared among Jews and—especially—Christians (see earlier; Q 48:29; Q 49:10), the hypocritical member of Muḥammad’s Muslim community was inspired by Peter’s wrong-doing brother.⁷⁸ Such a person cannot be forgiven and is prayed for seven and “up to seventy times seven-seven.” Aside from the reference to “seven-seven,”—present in all the Syriac manuscripts except the Harklean which simply states “seven” (*šba‘*)—Jesus concedes that a brother who commits wrong-doing may be forgiven if he is prayed for seven to seventy times. In an act of one-upmanship that seeks to challenge and reverse this conception, Q 9:75–80 dogmatically re-articulates Matthew 18:21–22 by adapting it to the circumstances of Muḥammad’s community (that is, condemning hypocrites in the community who do not pay alms) and—most importantly—by insisting that “even if you ask their forgiveness seventy times, God will not forgive them.”

In the Qur’ān and the Aramaic Gospels mercy and forgiveness are the dimensions of the divine realm that characterize the clemency of God. What then of his wrath? To explore this dimension we turn to divine judgment and the apocalypse.

⁷⁷ See variant readings in Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 1:270–1.

⁷⁸ This is supported by the Greek text behind the NRSV of Matthew 18:21, and which states “church member.” Cf. also Q 83:1–5; *Ardā Virāf Nāmak* 27:4; 67:6; 80:5.

6 Divine Judgment and the Apocalypse

In relation to illustrating the divine realm, condemning the evils of the clergy and extolling the prophets and their righteous entourage, a shared understanding of divine judgment and the apocalypse constitutes one characteristic dimension of late antique prophetic tradition and, furthermore, forms another arena in which there is strong dialogue between the Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions. The Qur'ān—in large part inspired by the substance found in the book of Daniel, the Gospels (especially Matthew 24–25; Mark 13 and Luke 21), and the book of Revelation—consistently interweaves the teachings and ethics of prophetic tradition on one hand with apocalyptic imagery on the other.¹ And what mediates this relationship is the principle of universal justice which, in turn, is symbolized in the metaphor of divine judgment.²

The names of numerous Surahs make explicit reference to divine judgment and the apocalypse. Such names portray the congregation of people before judgment: Q 37 *al-ṣāffāt* (the arranged ones); Q 39 *al-zumar* (the multitudes); Q 59 *al-ḥaṣhr* (the assembly); and Q 70 *al-ma'ārij* (the ascensions) which depicts a heavenly rapture of sorts. The names of such Surahs also consist of cryptic epithets for the Day of Judgment: Q 56 *al-wāqī'ah* (the inevitable fate); Q 64 *al-taghābun* (the day of blame); Q 69 *al-hāqqah* (the undeniable day); Q 75 *al-qiyāmah* (the day of resurrection);³ Q 88 *al-ghāshiyah* (the enveloping day); and Q 101 *al-qāri'ah* (the day of rending).⁴ Finally, such names also mention the cataclysmic heavenly and earthly events of the Apocalypse: Q 81 *al-takwīr* (the rolling of the sun); Q 82 *al-infiṭār* (the tearing); Q 84 *al-inshiqāq* (the rupture); and Q 99 *al-zalzalah* (the quaking). Almost all of these Surahs come from what is traditionally classified as the Meccan or earlier period of revelation (except Q 56; 59; 64).⁵ The uniformity

1 Cf. Brady, “The book of Revelation and the Qur'an,” op. cit.; Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 15–17.

2 Isaac Hasson, *EQ*, “Last Judgment,” Dundes, *Fables of the Ancients?*, 26.

3 Although other glosses of Syriac *qyāmā* like “standing” or “covenant” seem applicable, it is clear from the verses of the Qur'ān itself that what is meant here is “resurrection.” See Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 1361–2.

4 Cf. CPA and Jewish Aramaic cognate in *CAL*, “*q-r-*’.” Cf. also Andrae, *Les origines de l'islam et le christianisme*, 72.

5 Cf. Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, 52–174's tripartite division of early Meccan, late Meccan and Medinan Surahs.

in apocalyptic content and literary style—let alone parallel morphological nomenclature (*al-wāqī'ah*, *al-hāqqah*, *al-ghāshiyah* and *al-qāri'ah* on the one hand and *al-infiṭār* and *al-inshiqāq* on the other)—demonstrate that these Surahs emerged from the same context and were addressed to the same audience. Furthermore, if it is true that these Surahs emerged from an earlier Meccan context (ca. 610–622)—wherein a large part of Muḥammad's audience and interlocutors may have included Hanifs or Christians (see Chapter 2)—this demonstrates that, like Jesus and John before him (Matthew 3–4; Mark 1; Luke 3), Muḥammad's most basic prophetic warning was to repent, give charity and turn to God before the horrors of the Day of Judgment should come to pass (Q 2:254; 14:31; 30:43; 39:54–55; 42:47; 71:1).

This chapter will analyze divine judgment and the apocalypse under four categories organized chronologically. They are: (1) the Apocalypse; (2) Final Judgment and Universal Justice; (3) Hell; and (4) Paradise.

The Apocalypse

The vividness of apocalyptic imagery in the Qur'ān, like its counterparts in Syriac Christian literature, aims to engage its audience and instill within them the fear of God.⁶ The apocalypse (See Greek *apokalypsos*, meaning “revelation”), Eschaton or end times, are technical terms describing the end of all existence in both time and space, as well as the tumultuous unraveling of a new one. Both the temporal and physical dimensions of this finite universe are encapsulated in Arabic *'ālam* (pl. *'ālamīn*),⁷ which was adopted from Aramaic *'ālmā* (pl. *'ālmīn*; see also Hebrew *'ōlām*),⁸ and which simultaneously means “age” and “world.” By the late antique period the apocalyptic terms for “worlds, ages” (Arabic *'ālamīn*) or “eternity” (Aramaic *'ālam 'ālmīn*)⁹ were informed by layers of Christian tribulationism, Jewish messianism, Zoroastrian dualism, and ancient Near Eastern astrology. The religious heritage of various civilizations came to possess the idea of the end of the age (for example, Greek *aeon*; Sanskrit *kalpa*; cf. also *Bahmān Yasht* 1:3; 2:24).

I am with You until the End

This universe will come to an end and, according to the Aramaic Gospel of Matthew, the angels (*malākē*) will harvest the good and weed out the evil “at the end of the age” (*b-šūlāmēh d-'ālmā*; Matthew 13:39–49; see also Matthew 24:3).¹⁰

6 Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 16–17; Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext*, 251–2.

7 For more on this point see Binyamin Abrahamov, *EQ*, “World.” See also Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 15.

8 *EP*, “‘Ālam.” See also Droge, *The Qur'ān*, 1.

9 Cf. Christian Arabic *abad al-ābād/al-ābidīn* (Diatessaron 9:36).

10 *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament*, 2A:62 preserves an alternate phrase for “the end of the age” in *šišūyēh d-'ālmā*.

Furthermore, the very end of Matthew's Gospel envisions Jesus's final heart-felt words to his community,

Go, therefore, recruit all the nations and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And teach them to keep all that I commanded (*w-alēfū ēnūn d-nēṭrūn/l-mēṭar*¹¹ *kūl mā d-paqēdtkūn*). And behold I am with you (*w-hā ēnā 'amkūn ēnā*), for all the days until the end of the world/age (*kūlhūn yawmātā 'damā l-šūlāmēh d-'ālmā*). Amen.

(Matthew 28:20; Diatessaron 55:5–7)

In addition, these two passages in Matthew—which likely inform *Apocalypse of Abraham* 58—are dogmatically re-articulated numerous times and in different ways throughout the Qur'ān. It states,

Do they wait except that the angels should come to them (*hal yanṣurūn illā an ta'tiyahum al-malā'ikah*), or that your Lord should come, or that some of your Lord's signs should come? The day when some of your Lord's signs come, no soul which did not earlier believe or earn goodness from its faith will benefit from believing in them [the signs]. Say, "wait! Indeed, We are waiting" (*intaṣirū innā muntaṣirūn*).

(Q 6:158)

Q 6:158's reference to the those who "wait" (*yanṣurūn*; cf. Q 2:210; 7:53; 16:33; 35:43; 43:66; 47:18) . . . for "the angels" (*al-malā'ikah*) plays on the subjunctive verb "to keep" (*nēṭrūn*; Matthew 28:20) and at the same time represents "the evil" ones whom the angels (*malākē*) weed out (Matthew 13:39–49). It follows that the Arabic verb *yanṣurūn*, "they wait" and the Aramaic verb *nēṭrūn*, "they keep," are both the imperfect masculine plural D stem of the same root, *n-ṣ-r*, of which the middle radical is spirantized in Arabic producing *n-ṣ-r*. Furthermore, the Arabic broken plural *malā'ikah* shares the same root *m-l-k* with the Aramaic plural *malakē*, meaning "angels, messengers."¹²

In addition, the sentiment of Jesus's parting words, "I am with you (*ēnā 'amkūn ēnā*) for all the days until the end of the world/age," is transformed according to the strict monotheistic vision espoused by Muḥammad into God's command, "wait! Indeed, We are waiting" (*intaṣirū innā muntaṣirūn*; see also Q 11:22)—which is the Arabic eighthformifita'al of the root *n-ṣ-r*—and is repeated almost verbatim elsewhere in the Qur'ān where it states, "wait, Indeed I am with you among those waiting" (*intaṣirū innī ma'akum min al-muntaṣirīn*; Q 7:71; 10:20, 102). This formula is also reversed into, "wait, Indeed they are waiting" (*intaṣir innahum muntaṣirūn*; Q 32:30). Furthermore, this formula, which is based on Jesus's warning to "[see,] watch and pray" (Matthew 24:41; 14:38; Luke 21:36; Diatessaron 42:34) and his parting words in Matthew's Gospel, is widened

11 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:454 records this Harklean reading.

12 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, 269–70.

commanding the faithful to do as God does and “work” (*i‘malū*; Q 11:93), “beware” (*irtaqibū*; Q 11:93; 44:59), and “lurk” (*tarabbaṣū*; Q 52:31; cf. in relation 26:15) until—the context implies—“the end of the world/age.”

Tasting Death

The apocalyptic overtones and imminent approach of God’s kingdom (Matthew 3:2; Mark 1:15; Q 7:182–85) mentioned in Chapter 5 will now be discussed. The imminence of God’s kingdom and the apocalypse itself are manifested in the idea that Jesus’s followers will not taste death, which develops in four stages: (1) the Aramaic text of the synoptic Gospels; (2) the Greek text of John’s Gospel; (3) Paul’s epistle to the Hebrews; and (4) the Qur’ān.

In Matthew 16:1–4 Jesus accuses the Pharisees and Sadducees of being an evil and adulterous generation because they ask him for a sign from heaven. This is followed later wherein Jesus calls out to the masses,

Whoever wishes to follow me should deny himself, carry his cross and follow me. For, whoever hopes to save himself (*naḥṣēh*) will lose it; and whoever loses himself (*naḥṣēh*) for my sake will find it. For, what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul (*naḥṣēh*) or what will a man give in place of his soul (*naḥṣēh*; cf. Q 6:12,20; 7:9; 11:21; 23:103; 39:15; 42:45)? For surely, the Son of Man (*bar anāšā*; see later) will come in the glory of his Father with his holy angels, and then he will reward each man according to his deeds (*hāydēyn nēfrū’ l-anāš anāš ayk ‘abādawhī*). Truly I say to you, there are people standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom (*amīn amēr ēnā lkūn d-īt anāšā d-qāymīn tnān d-lā nēt‘mūn mawtā ‘damā d-nēḥzūn la-brēh da-anāšā d-ātē b-malkūtēh*).

(Matthew 16:24–28; cf. Mark 9:1; Luke 9:23–27; Diatessaron 24:1; cf. Thomas 1, 19)¹³

It is clear that Jesus’s early community believed that the kingdom—the apocalypse itself—would come in their lifetime. In a passage found in the Greek text of John’s Gospel but not in the Syriac or CPA Gospels, this point is expressed differently and causes much dispute between Jesus and the Pharisees. It states,

The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is one who seeks it and he is the judge. Very truly, I tell you, whoever keeps my word will never see death.” The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and so did the prophets; yet you say, ‘Whoever keeps

13 Cf. in relation Jacob of Serugh, *Homiliae selectae*, 1:683–97 (On the Lord’s words, ‘what will it profit a person . . . ?’)

my word will never taste death.’ Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets also died. Who do you claim to be?” Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, he of whom you say, ‘He is our God,’ though you do not know Him.”

(John 8:48–55 NRSV: see also Matthew 21:43; Luke 3:8; Diatessaron 35:59–61; Hebrews 6:13–17; Chapter 3)

With the passage of time and the failure of the apocalypse to come about (for example, Thomas 51), the literal understanding of death found in the synoptic Gospels was on occasion replaced by a more nuanced, theological understanding. Death, thus, became the consequence of and metaphor for sin (Romans 1:32; 5:12; 6:16,23; Didache 5).¹⁴ So unlike the synoptic Gospels which argue that Jesus’s followers will live long enough to see his kingdom, John’s Gospel projects his understanding of death in absolute form, that is, they “will never see” or “taste death.” This revolutionary conception did not sit well with the Rabbinic authorities who accused Jesus—like Muḥammad after him—of being possessed by a demon.

The idea that Jesus’s followers would not taste death is elaborated upon in Paul’s epistle to the Hebrews, where it states,

We do, however, see Jesus who for a little while laying beneath the angels, because the suffering of his death, glory and honor crowned his head (*mētūl ḥašā d-mawtēh w-tēšbūhūtā w-īqārā sīm b-rīšēh hū*). So by the grace of God, instead of everyone he tasted death (*gēr b-ṭaybūtēh alāhā ḥlāf kūlnāš ṭ’ēm mawtā*).

(Hebrews 2:9)

Although written slightly earlier, Paul builds on the same theological assumptions made explicit in John 8:52. He argues that not only will Jesus’s followers never taste death—that is, sin—but that he (Jesus) will “taste death for (i.e. on behalf of) everyone.”

The Qur’ān refutes both the literal and theological understanding of death proposed in the Gospels and Pauline letters. It states,

Therefore, if they reject [lit. belie] you, so have messengers been rejected before you. They came with teachings, the Psalms and enlightening scripture. Every soul will taste death (*kull nafs dhā’iqah al-mawt*). And only on the Day of Resurrection will you be compensated with your wages (*wa innamā tuwaffawnā ujūrakum yawm al-qiyāmah*). So whoever is slid past hellfire and entered into paradise will have won. For the life of [this] world is not but satisfying [one’s] illusion.

(Q 3:184–5)

14 Cf. Aphrahat, “Demonstrations,” 1:393–4 (On Resurrection); Ephrem, “Des Heiligen Ephraem des syers Carmina Nisibena,” *CSCO* 240–1, 102–3, 1961, 75–7, 64–7 (On the Disputation between Death and Satan); Jacob of Serugh, *Homiliae selectae*, 6:808–31 (On the Ascension of Our Lord: line 235); 5:641–57 (On Death and Satan). See further E. P. Sanders, *ABD*, “Sin, Sinners (NT);” Norman R. Gully, *ABD*, “Death.”

Similarly we read elsewhere, “Every soul will taste death (*kull nafs dhā’iqah al-mawt*) and we test you with misfortune and fortune as a trial. And to us will you be returned (*wa ilaynā turja’ūn*)” (Q 21:35; cf. Q 17:75; 29:57).

Scholars have drawn the connection between these qur’ānic verses and the Gospels before them¹⁵ which may have been articulated in the Hanafite circles of Umayyah b. Abī al-Salt.¹⁶ Muḥammad’s strict monotheistic vision—let alone the possibility of his participation in such Hanafite circles—explain why Q 3:184–185 completely rejects the claim in the Greek text of John 8:52 that Christian believers are immortal—whether literally or theologically—and the claim found in Hebrews 2:9 that Jesus died on their behalf.

It also explains why Q 3:185 dogmatically re-articulates Matthew 18:27–8. The statement “Every soul will taste death” (*kull nafs dhā’iqah al-mawt*) is a vociferous rebuttal of the statement “there are people standing here who will not taste death” (*amīn āmēr ēnā lkūn d-īt anāšā d-qāymīn tnān d-lā nēt’mūn mawtā*). This is especially because the Arabic text, by employing the active participle *dhā’iqah*, lit. “is tasting,” instead of employing the imperfect mood or future tense, emphasizes that death is currently, unavoidably and hastily afflicting everyone. The Arabic text’s insistence that every “soul” (*nafs*) will taste death is a response to vocabulary found in the Aramaic text of Matthew 16:24–25, which calls every man to give “himself” (*nafšēh*) up to Jesus. Lastly, the verse “And only on the Day of Resurrection will you be compensated with your wages” (*wa innamā tuwaffawnā ujūrakum yawm al-qiyaamah*) recalls Matthew 16:27, “then [at the apocalypse] he [Jesus] will reward each man according to his deeds” (*hāydēyn nēfrū’ l-anāš anāš ayk ‘abādawhī*; cf. in relation Q 52:16; 66:7).

Like Matthew, furthermore, the qur’ānic verses take place in the context of condemning the Jews and the People of the Scripture for, among other things, asking for God’s signs (Q 21:37) and rejecting them (Q 3:183). And like the Greek text of John 8:48–55, the qur’ānic verses condemn those who question when the apocalypse will come and mock Muḥammad’s prophethood (Q 3:184; 21:38–41).

Family Betrayal

The apocalypse will not only bring about the destruction of the self or soul, but the nuclear family as well (Micah 7:6; Luke 12:53; Thomas 16; *Bahmān Yasht* 2:30). It was briefly mentioned at the start of this chapter that Jesus’s fiery apocalyptic warnings found throughout Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 are a significant contribution to the apocalyptic worldview of the Qur’ān. Part of this contribution is found in the following statements made by Jesus as he describes the horror of the apocalypse,

15 Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 451, 457; Rudolph, *Die Abhängigkeit des Qorans*, 14; Ahrens, “Christliches im Qoran,” 164.

16 Umayyah b. Abī al-Salt, *Umajja ibn Abi’s Salt*, 50, 107–8.

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be earthquakes in every place (*wa nēhwūn zaw'ē b-dūkā dūkā*); and there will be famines and unrest. These are the beginnings of sorrows . . . A brother, therefore, will betray [lit. hand in] his brother to death (*našlēm dēyn akhā l-akhūwhī l-mawtā*), and a father his son (*w-abā la-brēh*), and children will rise against their parents and murder them (*wa nqūmūn bnayā 'al abāhayhūn wa nmītūn ēnūn*). And you will be hated by all people for the sake of my name, but whoever on account of my name endures until the end will be saved . . . Woe, however, to the pregnant and to those who are nursing in those days (*wāy dēyn l-batnātā wa l-aylēn d-maynqān b-hānūn yawmātā*)! Pray, therefore, that your flight may not be in winter. For in those days there will be suffering, like there has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, nor will [ever] be.

(Mark 13:8, 12–13, 17–19; Luke 21:10–11, 16–19, 23–24;
cf. Matthew 24:7–8, 10, 19–20; Diatessaron 41:41–42)

The mention of the apocalypse in the same passage as “the pregnant and . . . those who are nursing in those days” is reflected generally in the sequence of ideas in Q 31:34, which are, “God has the knowledge of the hour, and he sends rain and knows what is in the wombs.” However, the different elements of this synoptic passage are re-articulated more succinctly in Q 22:1–2 as it states,

O you people, beware of your Lord! Indeed, the quaking of the hour is a tremendous thing (*inn zalzalat al-sā'ah shay' 'aẓīm*). On the day you see it, every nursing woman will forget about what she nurses (*tadhhal kull murđī'ah 'ammā 'arđa'at*), and every pregnant woman will deliver her burden (*wa tađa' kull dhāt ḥaml ḥamlahā*). And you will see the people drunk while they are not drunk, however, the torment of God is severe.

(Q 22:1–2)

Q 22:1–2 echoes the warning in Didache 16:1–3 that people should beware for their lives since they do not know when the hour of the apocalypse will come about. More importantly, both Mark 13:8, 12–13, 17–19 and Q 22:1–2 argue that the horrors of the apocalypse will cause the very fabric family relations to rupture—both *in utero* and among the immediate family.

At any rate Q 22:1–2 can be broken up into four components that re-articulate corresponding portions of Mark's text. The first is the warning, “O you people, beware of your Lord! Indeed, the quaking of the hour is a tremendous thing” (*inn zalzalat al-sā'ah shay' 'aẓīm*), which recalls “and there will be earthquakes in every place” (*wa nēhwūn zaw'ē b-dūkā dūkā*). The second is the statement, “on the day you see it, every nursing woman will forget about what she nurses” (*tadhhal kull murđī'ah 'ammā 'arđa'at*) which recalls—in edited fashion—that “a brother” will “betray his brother to death, and a father his son” and that “children will rise against their parents and murder them.” In relation to this, the third component re-articulating Mark is the statement, “and every pregnant woman will deliver her burden”

(*wa taḍa' kull dhāt ḥaml ḥamlahā*) which explains the warning “woe, however, to the pregnant and to those who are nursing in those days” (*wāy dēyn l-batnātā wa l-aylēn d-maynqān b-hānūn yawmātā*). The fourth and most subtle component is the statement, “and you will see the people drunk while they are not drunk, however, the torment of God is severe,” which may partially be inspired by Isaiah 24:20 but, nonetheless, encapsulates the chaos preserved in the statement, “for in those days there will be suffering, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation that God created until now, nor will [ever] be” (cf. in relation Q 5:115).

Finally, the total, mutual abandonment of both parents and children found in Mark and Luke is preserved elsewhere in Q 80 as it states,

The day when a person will abandon his brother (*yawm yafirr al-mar' min akhīh*); his mother and his father (*wa ummih wa abīh*); his spouse and his children (*wa ṣāḥibatih wa banīh*); for every person on that day will there be a self-interested concern.

(Q 80:34–7)

When the apocalypse comes, the instinct of self interest and survival will cause family members to abandon and betray one another. Among the greatest horrors of that day will be the shaking of the earth and tearing of the sky.

Apocalypse 1: Earth Shaken and Heaven Torn

Both the Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospels carry on the tradition of apocalyptic warning found throughout the Prophets of the Hebrew Bible and those of Zoroastrian Scripture, which depict the shaking of the earth and the tearing of the heavens (Job 26:6–13; Isaiah 24:10–23; Nahum 1:4–8; *Bahmān Yasht* 3:3). And as we have gleaned from the earlier discussion, earthquakes (*zaw'ē, zalzalah*) are a staple of the apocalyptic scene in both the Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions. Thus, Q 99 *al-zalzalah* (the quaking) reads,

When the earth quakes its [final] quake (*idhā¹⁷ zulzilat al-arḍ zilzālahā*); and the earth ejects its burdens;¹⁸ and mankind asks “what ails it?” On that day will it narrate its events. For your Lord has revealed to it. On that day will people issue forth separately to be shown their works. So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it; and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.

(Q 99:1–8)

The destruction wrought by the final earthquakes and its association with the balances of mankind's works is also depicted two Surahs later in Q 101 entitled *al-qāri'ah*, meaning “the rending,” which reads,

17 For more on the apocalyptic background surrounding *idhā*, see Neuwirth, “Structural, linguistic and literary features,” 104

18 Cf. in relation Ibn Qutaybah, *Tafsīr*, 22.

The rending (*al-qāri'ah*), what is the rending? And what can inform you what the rending is? The day when people will be like scattered moths. And when the mountains will be like plucked wool. As for he whose balances will be heavy, they will be in a pleasant life. And as for he whose balances will be light, his home [lit. mother, womb] will be a chasm (*hāwiyah*).¹⁹ And what can inform you what that is? A scorching fire!

(Q 101:1–11)

The word *al-qāri'ah* was understood by the Islamic exegetical tradition generally to connote the upheaval of the apocalypse.²⁰ It is typically translated, furthermore, as “the calamity” (Pickthall), “the day of noise and clamor” (Yusuf Ali), and other similar epithets. But the root *q-r-* ‘may be understood more accurately in its Aramaic context, “to rend, to tear in two,”²¹ which also corresponds to the apocalyptic devastation that takes place in Matthew’s Gospel as a result of Jesus’s death on the cross. For it states,

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two (*ēštrī la-trēyn*), from top to bottom. The earth quaked and the rocks were split (*w-ar'ā ēttzī'at wa kifē ēštarī*). The tombs were opened (*wa bayt qbūrē ētptahū*) and many bodies of saints who had fallen asleep were raised (*wa pagrē sagīyē d-qadīšē/zdīqē²² da-škībīn hwaw qāmū*).

(Matthew 27:51–2: cf. Luke 23:44–45; Diatessaron 52:8–10)²³

Lüling correctly relates this scene in Matthew to Q 101.²⁴ Furthermore, that “the tombs (*bayt qbūrē*) were opened” is reminiscent of Q 82:4 stating, “when the graves are overturned” (*idhā al-qubūr bu'thirat*), as well as Q 100:9–11 which states, “Does he not know that when whatever is in the graves are overturned (*idhā bu'thir mā fī al-qubūr*), and that which are in the hearts are retrieved, indeed their lord will be knowledgeable of them on that day” (Q 100:9–11).

Similarly, that the dead “bodies of saints . . . were raised” (*qāmū*) may well justify the philological Syriac or CPA origins of the prevalent Qur'ānic term for “resurrection” (*qiyāmah*).²⁵ Another point concerns the “scorching fire” that is a “chasm” (*hāwiyah*) of Q 101:9–11, which is none other than the “great chasm” (*hawtā rabtā*) of Luke 16:26’s scene in hell (see later discussion).²⁶ Finally, it is

19 It is interesting to consider the possibility that this verse makes use of the Syriac/Aramaic word-play between *a-m-m*, “to hold in a womb,” and *h-w-y*, “to create”. Cf. in relation Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 52, 334–5.

20 For example, Ibn Qutaybah, *Tafsīr gharīb al-qur'ān*, 537.

21 CAL, “*q-r-*”; Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 194–5.

22 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:443 records this Sinaitic reading.

23 Matthew 27:51–52; cf. Luke 23:45 only states, “While the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two.” Cf. further Biqā’i, *Naẓm*, 3:127.

24 Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 194–6.

25 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, 244; Isaas Hasson, *EQ*, “Last Judgment.”

26 *Ibid.*, 285–6 never makes this point.

not insignificant that Neuwirth's chronology includes Q 99–101, which share a common apocalyptic discourse with the Aramaic Gospels according to our study, in the same sub-group.²⁷

Going back to the shaking of the earth and tearing of the heavens, the apocalyptic imagery of terrestrial, maritime, and celestial chaos found in the Aramaic Gospels provided much inspiration for the introductory verses of several Meccan Surahs, some of which are discussed by Andrae.²⁸ Let us consider the Gospel verses first and then their Qur'ānic counterparts. Continuing the narration of Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 discussed earlier, like any good prophet Jesus warns his followers,

Immediately, in those days (*b-hānūn . . . yawmātā*), after that suffering (*bātar ūlṣānā haw*), the sun will be darkened (*šēmšā nēḥṣak*; cf. also Luke 23:44–45), and the moon will not give its light (*wa sahrā lā nētēl nūrēh/zahrēh/zahrā dīleh²⁹*), and the stars will fall from heaven (*wa kawkbē nēplūn mēn šmayā*), and the powers of heaven will be shaken (*wa ḥayalwātā da-šmayā nēttzī'ūn*).

(Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24–25)

Luke's Gospel adds,

And there will be signs in the sun, the moon, the stars, and on the earth (*wa nēḥwyān ātwātā b-šēmšā wa b-sahrā wa b-kawkbē wa b-ar'ā*), suffering among nations and confusion from the roaring of the sound of the sea (*ūlṣānā d-'ammē wa pūšāk ḏayā mēn tawhtā d-qālā d-yamā*). The quaking that casts the life out of people from fear of what is about to come upon the earth (*wa zaw'ē d-mapēq nēfšātā da-bnaynāšā mēn dēḥltā d-mēdēm da-'tīd l-mētā*), and the power of heaven will be shaken (*wa nēttzī'ūn ḥaylē da-šmayā*).

(Luke 21:25–26; Diatessaron 42:19–22)

Before discussing several Qur'ānic passages that are in strong dialogue with these synoptic passages, we first mention Matthew-Mark's narrative style beginning with "in those days" (*b-hānūn . . . yawmātā*) which may account for the flourishing of the 'nomenclature of apocalyptic days' in the Qur'ān.³⁰

Also of significance is the syntax and vocabulary of Luke 21:25, which begins "And there will be signs in the sun, the moon, the stars, and on the earth" (*wa nēḥwyān ātwātā b-šēmšā wa b-sahrā wa b-kawkbē wa b-ar'ā*). This statement is dogmatically re-articulated nearly two dozen times in the Qur'ān. It states,

27 Neuwirth, *Der Koran. Band 1*, 160–84.

28 Andrae, *Les origines de l'islam et le christianisme*, 72–3.

29 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 3:199; 4:373 records this Harklean reading.

30 Cf. discussion of *yawm al-qiyāmah*, *yawm al-dīn*; *yawm al-ḥaṣṣ*, *al-yawm al-ākhir* in Andrae, *Les origines de l'islam et le christianisme*, 71. See in relation John 6; 11:24; 12:48; Aphrahat, "Demonstrations," 1:931–4 (On Death and the Last Days); cf. also *ibid.*, 19, 24; Q 36:34–41. Cf. further Jacob of Serugh, *Homiliae selectae*, 6:720–74 (On the Nativity I:1130–45).

There is in the creation of the heavens and the earth (*inn^a fī khalq al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ*) and the alternation of night and day and the ships that sail in the sea . . . signs for a people who reason (*la-āyāt li-qawm ya‘qilūn*).

(Q 2:164: cf. also 10:6)

This verse preserves three syntactic components from Luke. The first is the opening “there is” which reproduces “there will be.” The second syntactic component is the phrase “the creation of the heavens and the earth” (*khalq al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ*) which summarizes the list “in the sun, the moon, the stars, and on the earth” (*b-šemsā wa b-sahrā wa b-kawkbē wa b-ar‘ā*), where the qur’ānic “creation of the heavens” is comprised of Luke’s trio: the sun, moon, and stars. The third and last syntactic component is equating these celestial and terrestrial objects with “signs,” where the Arabic plural noun *āyāt* is ultimately derived from the Aramaic *ātwātā*.³¹ We may infer, therefore, that Luke 24:25 in some part inspired the articulation of the qur’ānic formula, “Therein is/are sign(s)” (*inn^a fī dhālik^a la-āyah/āt*; Q 6:99; 13:4; 16:12; 45:13).³² This is certainly true for Q 16:12 which also reflects the content of Luke 24:25, stating,

And he has put under your control night, day, the sun, the moon and the stars (*al-layl wa al-nahār wa al-shams wa al-qamar wa al-nujūm*) controlled by His command. Therein are signs for a people who reason (*inn^a fī dhālik^a la-āyahāt li-qawm ya‘qilūn*).

(Q 16:12)

Likewise, Q 12:105 of Ibn Mas‘ūd’s codex, which states “and the heavens and earth are two great signs” (*āyatān ‘aẓīmatān*), is also in dialogue with Luke 24:25.³³

In contrast to God’s creation is the apocalypse, which may be considered the “reverse process of creation.”³⁴ In this vein, let us return in more detail to the contents of Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24–25 and Luke 21:25–26 in order to understand their impact on the introductory verses of several Meccan Surahs. To make matters simple, the language and imagery of either Matthew-Mark or Luke’s passages have been reduced to the following nine contents:

- 1 there is suffering;
- 2 the sun, moon and stars are mentioned;
- 3 the sun darkens;
- 4 the moon’s light fails;
- 5 the stars fall;

31 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 109.

32 This is also supported by the interpretation of Q 21:32 found in Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 471.

33 Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān*, 50. For more on the “signs implied in nature” cf. Neuwirth, “Structural, linguistic and literary features,” 105.

34 Jane I. Smith, *EQ*, “Eschatology.”

- 6 the sea roars;
 7 people die out of fear;
 8 the earth quakes; and
 9 the heavens shake.

These nine contents were dogmatically re-articulated to fit the exigencies of the early Muslim community, Muḥammad's vision of strict monotheism, and the rhymed prose of his prophetic speech.³⁵ What this means more specifically is that these apocalyptic scenes were translated, elaborated upon, or re-organized from their earlier Aramaic form to fit a late antique sectarian Arabian context. And although such apocalyptic scenes are found throughout the Qur'ān, three characteristics place these Surahs in a class of their own: (a) the apocalyptic scenes in question are concentrated in the Meccan Surahs Q 51 through Q 86; Q 99 and Q 101;³⁶ (b) these scenes occur at the very start of the Surah; (c) and they are in dialogue with Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24–25 and Luke 21:25–26.

It is suitable to begin with the opening verses of Q 81, which Thyen correctly relates to the apocalyptic imagery of Mark 13.³⁷ It states,

When the sun is burnt out (*idhā al-shams kuwwirat*);³⁸ and when the stars fade (*wa idhā al-nujūm inkadarat*); and when the mountains are liquified; and when the camels are neglected; and when the beasts are assembled; and when the seas are boiled (*wa idhā al-biḥār sujġirat*); and when souls are coupled; and when the sacrificed girl is asked for what sin has she been killed; and when the scroll are unraveled; and when heaven is abraded (*wa idhā al-samā' kushiġat*); and when Hell [burns] wildly; a soul will know what it has prepared.

(Q 81:1–14: cf. 19:88–91)³⁹

“When the sun is burnt out” (*idhā al-shams kuwwirat*) then—as Matthew-Mark states—“the sun will be darkened (*šēmšā nēḥšak*; content 3).” Mark's darkening of the sun and his mention of the stars (contents 3 and 5) were in part the inspiration for the statement “when the stars fade” (*wa idhā al-nujūm inkadarat*). And the statement “when heaven is abraded” (*wa idhā al-samā' kushiġat*) recalls content 9 of the three synoptic passages when the “the powers of heaven (*ḥayalwātā*

35 Cf. in relation Neuwirth, *Studien zur Komposition der mekkanischen Suren*, 67–76, 99–115.

36 See *ibid.*, 21–37 for an in depth study of the rhymes employed in these Surahs.

37 Thyen, *Bibel und Koran*, 198–99, 238–9.

38 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 612. In relation to this, Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 707; Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 3:455 interprets *k-w-r* as the extinguishing of the sun's light. See further Ibn Qutaybah, *Tafsīr*, 382.

39 Cf. also Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 707–8; Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-qur'ān*, 3:239–41. The exegetical perspectives on this passage—and those concerning the apocalyptic verses which open many of the Meccan Surahs—are usually superficial, disconnected from any cohesive narrative and redundant (cf. for example Tafsirs on Q 79; 81). It is clear that the Exegetes were sufficiently cut off from the scriptural impulses that gave rise to such qur'ānic verses and had frequent recourse, rather, to vague and repetitive references concerning “angels” or “stars” without any context.

da-šmayā) will be shaken (*nētzī'ūn*).” Likewise, the opening verses of Q 75 portray the joining of sun and moon (in an eclipse?) in the following apocalyptic scene,

Indeed, I swear⁴⁰ by the Day of Resurrection. And indeed, I swear by the self-blaming soul. Does mankind think that We will not gather his bones? To the contrary, We are able to refashion his [very] fingers. However, mankind would rather reject openly. They ask about the timing of the Day of Resurrection. So when eyesight is dazed, and the moon is eclipsed (*wa khasaf al-qamar*), and the sun and moon are joined (*wa jumi' al-shams wa al-qamar*), mankind will say on that day “where is [my] escape?” (*yaqūl al-insān yawm^a 'idhⁱⁿ ayn al-mafar*).

(Q 75:1–11)

Farrā' claims concerning the “the moon is eclipsed; and the sun and moon are joined” (*khasaf al-qamar wa jumi' al-shams wa al-qamar*), precisely what Matthew-Mark's passage states, namely that “the moon will not give its light” (*wa sahrā lā nētēl nūrēh*; content 4 and 2).⁴¹ And from the fear depicted in Luke's passage of this same episode, Q 75 recalls that mankind will say “where is [my] escape?” (*yaqūl al-insān yawm^a 'idhⁱⁿ ayn al-mafar*; content 7).

Similarly, the opening verses of Q 70, which in some sense “follow” those of Q 75 in Neuwirth's chronology,⁴² address the destruction of the heavens and the long span of time it takes for angels to ascend through them. It states,

An inquirer asked about a fateful torment (*sa'al sā'il bi-'adhāb wāqi'*), which for the rebellious ones cannot be repelled, from the God of ascensions. The angels and the (Holy?) spirit ascend upon it in a day whose measure is 50 thousand years. So endure amiably. They see it far away. And We see it nearby. The day when heaven will be like molten iron (*yawm takūn al-samā' ka al-muhl*); and the mountains will be like wool. And no friend will ask about his friend.

(Q 70:1–10)

The “fateful torment” (*'adhāb wāqi'*) is reminiscent of the suffering spoken of in the synoptic passages (content 1). So too does the “the day when heaven will be like molten iron” (*yawm takūn al-samā' ka al-muhl*) describe the smoldering state of heaven once its powers have been shaken (content 9). The opening verses of Q 84 argue that the heavens and the earth obey God's command by annihilating themselves, stating,

When heaven is ruptured (*idhā al-samā' inshaqqat*), and harkens to its Lord and it must. And when the earth is stretched out and ejects what is inside of it and becomes empty (*wa idhā al-arḍ muddat wa alqat mā fihā wa takhallat*), and harkens to its Lord and it must.

(Q 84:1–5)

40 See also Kropp's emendation in Chapter 3.

41 Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-qur'ān*, 3:209.

42 Neuwirth, *Der Koran. Band 1*, esp. 427.

Parallel to the statement “when heaven is ruptured” (*idhā al-samā’ inshaqqat*)—which is a re-formulation of the shaking of heaven’s powers (content 9)—is the statement “and when the earth is stretched out and ejects what is inside of it and becomes empty” (*wa idhā al-arḍ muddat wa alqat mā fihā wa takhallat*) which is a more detailed account of “what is about to come upon the earth” (*mēdēm da-‘tīd l-mētā*; Luke 21:26; content 8). So too is Q 56:1–6 an elaboration upon this verse, as it describes shaking of the earth, stating,

When fate (*al-wāqi‘ah*) comes to pass. About its occurrence will there be no deceit. Lowering and raising [people?]. When the earth shakes violently (*idhā rujjat al-arḍ rajjan*); and the mountains are obliterated, such that it will become strewn dust.

(Q 56:1–6)⁴³

The inevitable fate (*al-wāqi‘ah*) represents “what is about to come upon the earth” (*mēdēm da-‘tīd l-mētā*), where Arabic *wāqi‘* and Aramaic *mētā* are parallel verbal constructs meaning, “occurring, coming, arriving.”⁴⁴ That fate, moreover, will occur “when the earth shakes violently” (*idhā rujjat al-arḍ rajjan*; content 8) and when other forces of destruction come upon the world.

In addition, the opening verses of Q 82 address the destruction of the heavenly, celestial and maritime realms, stating,

When heaven is cleaved (*idhā al-samā’ infaṭarat*); and when the stars fall (*wa idhā al-kawākib intatharat*);⁴⁵ and when the seas overflow (*wa idhā al-bihār fujjirat*)⁴⁶; and when the graves are turned over; a soul will know what it has accomplished and neglected.

(Q 82:1–5)

The statement “when heaven is cleaved (*idhā al-samā’ infaṭarat*) recalls the shaking of heaven’s powers in the synoptic passages (content 9). The statement “and when the stars fall” (*wa idhā al-kawākib intatharat*) in large part reproduces “and the stars will fall from heaven (*wa kawkbē nēplūn mēn šmayā*; Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:25; content 5). Furthermore, unlike the more common Arabic word for “stars” (*nujūm*; sg. *najm*, *nijmah*; see earlier), this verse employs the word *kawākib* (sg. *kawkab*) from the quadrilateral (Arabic fa‘lal) root *k-w-k-b*,⁴⁷ which is an adaptation of *kawkbē* (sg. *kawkbā*) used in Mark and throughout the Aramaic

43 Cf. *ibid.*, 3:121.

44 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘arab*, 6:4895; Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 110–11.

45 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 957. Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 3:458 correctly cites the splitting of the heavens, the falling of the stars and—most importantly—the descent of the Lord and the angels (*nuzūl al-rabb . . . wa al-malā’ikah*), which echoes the portrayal of the Son of Man at the apocalypse in the Gospels.

46 See in relation Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 43.

47 The Sabbaic cognate in Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 80 means “star” as well.

Gospels, and is ultimately derived from the reduplicated root (Syriac palpel) of the root *k-b-b*. Furthermore, “the roaring of the sound of the sea” (*tawhtā d-qālā d-yamā*; Luke 21:25) will result in the overflow of the sea (*wa idhā al-biḥār fujjirat*; content 6). Similarly, the opening verses of Q 52 state,

By the mountain (*wa al-ṭūr*),⁴⁸ and a written scripture, and the unraveled pages, and the aged house, and the raised vault, and the boiling sea (*wa al-baḥr al-masjūr*), the torment of your Lord will surely come to pass (*innā ‘adhāb rabik la-wāqī’*). It has no [averting] adversary. The day when heaven will heave violently (*yawm tamūr al-samā’ mawran*), and the mountains will completely liquefy.

(Q 52:1–10)

The “boiling sea” (*al-baḥr al-masjūr*) is another result of the “the roaring of the sound of the sea” as it churns from shore to shore and swells up (content 6). “The torment of your Lord” (*‘adhāb rabik*) approximates the suffering (*ūlṣānā*) portrayed in the synoptic passages (content 1). And finally, “the day when heaven will heave violently” (*yawm tamūr al-samā’ mawran*) recalls the shaking of heaven’s powers in the synoptic passages (content 9).

Apocalypse 2: Heaven Attacks Earth

In the Qur’ān and the Aramaic Gospels the shaking of the earth and the tearing of the heavens occur in the wake of a celestial army’s attack upon the earth. The celestial army is composed of 3 parts: the Rear Guard, Vanguard and Central Command. This subject is discussed in a series of cryptic introductory verses characteristic of the Qur’ān’s prophetic speech, namely those of Q 79, 51, 77 and 100 (in that order). Thus, the opening verses of Q 79 state,

By the intruders that run out (*wa al-nazi’āt gharqan*).⁴⁹ By the energized [ones] that animate (*wa al-nāshiḥāt nashṭan*). By the drifters that float (*wa al-sābiḥāt sabḥan*); and the foremost [ranks] that depart (*fa al-sābiqāt sabqan*); and the leaders that command (*fa al-mudabbirāt amran*). The day when the trembling will quake (*yawm tarjuf al-rājifah*); followed by the aftershock. On that day will hearts be horrified (*qulūb yawmā ‘idhān wājifah*); their vision will be restrained.

(Q 79:1–9: cf. Q 88:2)⁵⁰

By their cryptic nature, the first five verses—a series of cognate accusatives (*maf’ūl muṭlaq*)—have been interpreted only in the most general sense to

48 Neuwirth, *Der Koran. Band 1*, 688 translates this as “Beim Berg Sinai.” See further Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān*, 206–7.

49 Cf. CAL, “n-s-’.”

50 See also translation in Neuwirth, *Der Koran. Band 1*, 395–6.

connote the movement of the stars and the shaking of the earth.⁵¹ Munther Younes, however, employs Lüling’s method of modifying the diacritics of the Arabic text and argues that these verses portray “women performing good deeds.”⁵² Younes’ reconstructed reading is only possible if taken as an isolated pericope. However, Q 79:1–9 cannot be read in isolation but rather alongside all the apocalyptic verses at the start of the Meccan Surahs. Furthermore, our analysis of Q 79:1–9 has the benefit of deciphering problematic words and phrases through comparison with apocalyptic passages in the Aramaic Gospel Traditions—which is both more conservative and consistent than making changes to the text (see Chapter 1). Thus, it is likely that the scene is describing a celestial army marching against earth.⁵³ This army leaves the utmost heights of heaven, and is organized into the “rear guard” (“drifters” = *al-sābiḥāt*), “vanguard” (“foremost ranks” = *al-sābiqāt*) and “central command” (*al-mudabbirāt*). It should be noted, however, that the cryptic nature of these verses is made lucid thanks to the Qur’ān’s dialogue with both Hebrew Scripture and the Aramaic Gospels Traditions. An explanation of the three units of this army follows:

- i) Rear Guard, that is, “drifters” (*al-sābiḥāt*) are heavy and slow moving rain clouds;
- ii) Vanguard, that is, “foremost ranks” (*sābiqāt*) are angels—perhaps the Ophanim (Daniel 7:9; Revelation 11:16) or “watchers” (*ḥaras shadīd*; Genesis 6:4; Daniel 4:13–14; Jude 1:6; 1 Enoch 7) embodied astrologically as “shooting stars” (*shuhub*; Q 72:8)—taking commands directly from the qur’ānic God or Biblical Son of Man;
- iii) Central Command or commanding unit which is God—though originally the Son of Man (Daniel 7:13–14; Matthew 24:30–31; Mark 13:26–27; Luke 21:27; Q 2:210; 25:25–26; see later discussion).⁵⁴

At any rate, the first strike of the celestial army against earth is “the day when the trembling will quake” (*yawm tarjuf al-rājifah*), which is the army’s first strike. This is “followed by the aftershock,” which is its second strike. It follows, therefore, that out of sheer horror “on that day will hearts be horrified (*qulūb yawm^a’idh^m wājifah*.)” Taken together, the detailed—though cryptic—description of the earth’s quaking and the fear of mankind before its destruction recall “the quaking that casts the life out of people from fear of what is about to come upon the earth” (*wa zaw’ē d-mapēq nēfšātā da-bnaynāšā mēn dēhltā d-mēdēm da-’tīd*

51 For example, Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 701–2; Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 3:445 simply attribute the first three verses to the movement of stars (*al-nujūm*) without any further clarification.

52 Munther Younes, “Angels, Stars, Death, the Soul, Horses, Bows—or Women? The Opening Verses of Qur’ān 79,” in *ibid.* (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Quran*, New York: Routledge Press, 2011, 265–78.

53 Cf. in relation Jacob of Serugh, *Homiliae selectae*, 6:808–31 (On the Ascension of Our Lord: line 420).

54 Cf. in relation Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 498.

l-mātē; Luke 21:26; contents 8 and 7). It may even be argued that the apocalyptic threat to the internal human locus, Aramaic *nēšātā*, that is, “souls, spirits,” is preserved in the Arabic word *qulūb*, that is, “hearts.”⁵⁵

Sharing in this dialogue is Q 51:1–9, which states,

By the knights that charge (*wa al-dhāriyāt dharwan*);⁵⁶ and the wagons that are loaded (*fa al-ḥāmilāt wiqran*); and the projectiles that fly (*fa al-jāriyāt⁵⁷ yusran⁵⁸*); and the diviners that foretell (*fa al-muqassimāt⁵⁹ amran*). Indeed what you are promised is true. And indeed judgment is fated (*wa inn al-dīn la-wāqī*‘). By the heavens that are muddled (*wa al-samā’ dhāt al-ḥubuk*),⁶⁰ [like] you are of different creeds, perverted by all who are perverted (*yu’fak ‘anh man ufik*).⁶¹

(Q 51:1–9)⁶²

This passage also consists of cognate accusatives and cryptic language that clearly portrays—only if read according to the Aramaic substratum underlying the words *dhāriyah*, *jāriyah*, *yusr*, *ḥubuk* and *ifk*—a celestial army marching against earth. A recapitulation of this army looks like the following:

- i) Vanguard, that is, the knights (*al-dhāriyāt*) are the watcher angels or shooting stars and strike first;
- ii) Rear Guard, that is, the wagons (*al-ḥāmilāt*) are the clouds loaded with precipitation and strike second with projectiles (*al-jāriyāt*) of—perhaps—rain or hail;
- iii) Central Command, that is, the diviners (*al-muqassimāt*) may represent the commanding unit in so far as this term refers to God in plural form, who is the only actor capable of foretelling the coming of the apocalypse and the invasion of His celestial army.

This celestial campaign against the earth—which results in the muddling (*ḥubuk*) of heaven and recalls the shaking of heaven’s powers (content 9)—reflects the muddled or sectarian state of affairs in the Qur’ān’s milieu, and which warrants a commensurate punishment for widespread doctrinal perversion (*ifk*).

The opening verses of Q 77 similarly allude to the celestial army’s attack against earth and the destruction of the heavens, stating,

55 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 5:3713.

56 Cf. Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 398.

57 *Ibid.*, 259.

58 Cf. Qumran Jewish Aramaic in *CAL*, “y-š-r.”

59 Cf. CPA usage in *CAL*, “q-s-m.”

60 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 406

61 Cf. Jewish Babylonian Aramaic usage in *CAL*, “a-p-k.”

62 Cf. Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 617; Farrā’, *Ma’ānī al-qur’ān*, 3:82.

By the messengers that inform (*wa al-mursalāt 'urfan*); and the storms that rage; by the unravelers that unravel (*wa al-nāshirāt nāshran*); and the saviors that save (*fa al-fāriqāt farqan*);⁶³ and the speakers that mention (*fa al-mulqiyāt dhikran*); [giving] pardon or warning. Indeed what you are promised will take place.⁶⁴ So when the stars are blocked (*fa idhā al-nujūm ṭumisat*); and when heaven is split (*wa idhā al-samā' furiyat*); and when the mountains are obliterated; and when the messengers are timed; for what day has it been set? For the Day of Distinction (*yawm al-faṣl*). And what will inform you what the Day of Distinction is?

(Q 77:1–14)⁶⁵

The statement “so when the stars are blocked” (*fa idhā al-nujūm ṭumisat*) is inspired by the mention of the stars and the darkening of the sun in Matthew-Mark’s passage (contents 3 and 5). “When heaven is split” (*wa idhā al-samā' furiyat*) recalls the shaking of the powers of heaven in the synoptic passages (content 9). On account of their female gender the “messengers” (*al-mursalāt*) are angels (cf. Q 37:149; 52:39; Zechariah 5:9). The interpretation of the “unravelers” (*al-nāshirāt*) and “speakers that mention” (*al-mulqiyāt dhikran*) is less clear and may refer to different kinds of angels. The reference to “saviors” (*fāriqāt*) may likely be a remnant of the “Son of Man” who leads the celestial army of angels as it assails the earth.⁶⁶

Finally, though the opening verses of Q 100 do not directly recall the content of the synoptic passages discussed earlier, they do portray the celestial army’s attack against earth, stating, “By the invaders that charge (*wa al-'ādiyāt⁶⁷ ḍabhan*); and the lords that fire (*fa al-mūriyāt⁶⁸ qadhan*); and the watchers that emerge (*fa al-mughīrāt⁶⁹ subhan*); thus awakening soaked clouds (*fa atharn^a bih naq'an*)” (Q 100:1–5).

Once again, only if read with respect to the Aramaic substratum underlying the words *'ādiyāt*, *mūriyāt*, *mughīrāt*—which clearly indicate different ranks among the angels in the celestial army—these cryptic verses are made clear. The “outsiders” (*'ādiyāt*) may well be horses upon which the “lords” (*al-mūriyāt*)⁷⁰ are riding and hurling fiery projectiles (arrows?; *qadh*), forming the cavalry and

63 The word *al-fāriqāt*, “the saviors,” is derived for Aramaic *pārūqā*, “savior.” See in relation Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an*, 228–9; Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 1250–2; It is clear that Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 691 has no idea what verses 2–4 mean, and so it quotes dubious traditions claiming that they reference the wind (*al-rīh*). Nor is Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 3:435 more informed as he interprets the word *fāriqāt* (f. pl.) as a reference to the Qur'an (masc.!).

64 Lüling, *A challenge to Islam for reformation*, 399 argues that this verse has a lost Christian substratum.

65 Cf. Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-qur'an*, 3:222–3.

66 Cf. in relation Donner, “Qur'ānic *furqān*,” 289.

67 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 1071.

68 Ibid., 832.

69 Ibid., 1098.

70 Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-qur'an*, 3:284.

being identified with the “knights” (*al-dhāriyāt*) of Q 51 and the “foremost ranks” (*al-sābiqāt*) of Q 79. We learn from this passage, furthermore, that the “soaked clouds” (*naq’*) are caused by the “watchers” (*al-mughīrāt*; see earlier discussion) and are identified with the “wagons” (*al-ḥāmilāt*) of Q 51 and “drifters” (*al-sābiḥāt*) of Q 79.

As a punishment for neglecting society’s orphans in Q 89:17–20 (see Chapter 3), the following verses paraphrase the destruction of the earth in (at least) two stages, by two ranks within the celestial army of angels, and the descent of the Son of Man—dogmatically re-articulated as “your Lord” (*rabbuk*; see later discussion)—among them. Q 89:21–22 states, “To the contrary, when the earth is crushed over and over again (*idhā dukkat al-arḍ dakkān dakkān*); and your Lord comes with the angels rank after rank (*wa jā’ rabukab wa al-malak ṣaffan ṣaffan*)” (Q 89:21–22).

The legions of heavenly horsemen, descending from the clouds, spewing fire, and destroying the Earth (originally Israel) is a vivid apocalyptic scene shared by the verses of the Qur’ān and the Aramaic Gospels. This scene should, moreover, be viewed as an extension of other Biblical parallels (Ezekiel 23:6; 26:7–10; Daniel 11:40; Habakkuk 1:6–10; Revelation 9:15–10:1).

Table 6.1 records the occurrence of parallel contents in the passages of Matthew-Mark, Luke and the introductory verses of Meccan Surahs cited earlier.

Apart from their dialogue with the Aramaic Gospels (namely Matthew-Mark and Luke in this case), a simple assessment of this table demonstrates that the apocalypse is most frequently associated with the tearing of the heavens in the introductory verses of these Meccan Surahs (see also Q 39:67; 21:104; 51:7; 85:1; 86:11, and so on). This may be the result of the strong dialogue between these verses and the verses of the Aramaic Gospels which portray the cataclysmic descent of the Son of Man upon the earth, along with his army of angels. Moreover, the destruction of the mountains—which might well be regarded as an extension of the earth’s quaking—the neglect of camels, regret for female infanticide and the moon’s eclipse are unique contributions of the Qur’ān’s Arabian milieu to late antique Near Eastern apocalyptic discourse.

Table 6.1 Apocalyptic Content

	<i>Matthew-Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>Qur’ān</i>
1 Suffering/Torment	✓	✓	Q 52; 70
2 Sun, Moon, Stars		✓	Q 75
3 Sun burnt out/darkened	✓		Q 77; 81
4 Moonlight fails/eclipsed	✓		Q 75
5 Stars Fall	✓		Q 75; 77; 81; 82
6 Seas roar/boil/overflow		✓	Q 52; 82
7 Fear		✓	Q 75; 79
8 Earth quakes		✓	Q 56; 79; 84
9 Heaven shaken/destroyed	✓	✓	Q 51; 52; 70; 77; 81; 82; 84

The special place of the moon in this Arabian milieu⁷¹ is demonstrated in the fearsome warning at the start of Q 54, “The hour has approached and the moon has ruptured (*iqtarabat al-sā‘ah wa inshaq al-qamar*). And if they see a sign they reject [it] and say ‘[this is] more witchcraft’ (Q 54:1–2).”

These verses are likely warnings Muḥammad uttered to his nascent Muslim community, much like Jesus did among his community centuries earlier. Thus, the opening verse “the hour has approached” (*iqtarabat al-sā‘ah*) dogmatically re-articulates the characteristic warning of the Gospels, “the kingdom of heaven has approached” (*qērbat malkūtā da-šmayā*; Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 10:7), where *iqtarabat* and *qērbat* both come from the root *q-r-b*, “to approach,”⁷² as well as “the kingdom of God has arrived” (*mḡāt malkūtā d-alāhā*; Mark 1:15).

To get a visual impression of our discussion surrounding how ‘Heaven attacks Earth,’ see Figure 6.1 for Edward von Steinle’s painting entitled “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.”



Figure 6.1 Heaven Attacks Earth

Source: “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse,” Edward von Steinle (d. 1866). (Courtesy of Art Renewal Center)

71 Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, 34, 40–2; Teixidor, *The Pantheon of Palmyra*, 35, 43–6, 68.

72 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘arab*, 5:3566; Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 1400–1; Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 106.

Apocalypse 3: God and the Angels Descend upon the Clouds

We have seen how mankind may ascend into the firmaments of heaven and how angels may descend as a celestial army through the clouds in order to assail the earth and punish mankind for their sectarian, doctrinal perversion. As the commander of this army, the “Son of Man” is a harbinger of the apocalypse, a heavenly agent who originates in the warnings of Psalms 80:17 and the Prophets of the Hebrew Bible (Ezekiel 24:25; Daniel 8:17; and so on) and lives on in the prophetic warnings of Jesus throughout the Gospels. After the shaking of heaven’s powers (see earlier discussion) the synoptic passages continue,

And then they will see the Son of Man when he comes in the clouds with great power and with glory (*wa hāydēyn nēḥzūnāyhī la-brēh d-anāšā kad ātē ba-nānē ‘am ḥaylā rabā wa ‘am šūbhā*). Then he will send his angels (*hāydēyn nšadar malākawhī*) and assemble his elect from the four winds from the beginning of the earth to the beginning of heaven.

(Mark 13:26–27: cf. Matthew 24:30–31; Luke 21:27; Diatessaron 42:22–23)

This passage is inspired by a vision of the prophet Daniel, which states,

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man (*‘am ‘anānēy šmayā ke-bar ēnāš ātēh*), and he came even to the Ancient of days, and he was brought near before Him. And there was given him dominion, glory, and a kingdom (*šāltān wa-yqār w-malkū*), that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

(Daniel 7:13–14 JPS)

The verses of the Qur’ān are in dialogue with the grand, cataclysmic descent of the Son of Man discussed in the Gospels and Daniel. Thus it states,

Do they wait but that God should come upon them in shadows of clouds with the angels (*hal yanzurūn illā an ya’tiyahum allāh fī zūlal min al-ghamām wa al-malā’ikah*). And [by then] the affair would be finished. And to God do affairs return.

(Q 2:210: cf. 6:158)

Most significant is the absence of the “Son of Man” (Syriac *brēh d-anāšā*; CPA *brēh d-gabrā*; Biblical Aramaic *bar ēnāš*; Christian Arabic *ibn al-bashar*), since it has been dogmatically re-articulated to fit Muḥammad’s vision of strict monotheism and replaced by “God” (*allāh*). In the case of Q 89:21–22 the Son of Man has been replaced with “your Lord” (*rabbuk*; see earlier discussion). As the Son of Man descends through the “clouds” (*nānē*)—or as his likeness does in Daniel through “clouds of heaven” (*‘anānēy šmayā*)—God descends in “shadows of the

clouds” (*ẓulal min al-ghamām*), where—furthermore—Arabic *gh-m-m* is philologically and phonetically related to Aramaic ‘-n-n.⁷³ That Q 2:210 is particularly responding to the Son of Man’s image in the Gospels—and not so much Daniel—is demonstrated by the role played by the angels (*malākawhī*; *al-malā’ikah*) in both passages. A similar qur’ānic verse states,

And on the day the heavens crack into [clusters of] clouds (*wa yawm yashshaqqaq al-samā’ bi al-ghamām*) as the angels are descended swiftly (*wa nuzzil al-malā’ikah tanzīlan*); on that day will sovereignty (*al-mulk*) truly (*al-ḥaqq^a*)⁷⁴ belong to the Merciful . . .

(Q 25:25–26)

Q 25:25, which mentions that “the angels are descended swiftly” (*wa nuzzil al-malā’ikah tanzīlan*) is a rephrasing of Mark 13:27, which states “then he will send his angels” (*hāydeyn nšadar malākawhī*), where both C-stem verbs *nazzal* and *shadar* are the standard verbs employed to describe the mission of prophets, messengers and angels sent by God.⁷⁵ God’s “sovereignty” (*al-mulk*; Q 25:26), however, is in dialogue with the alleged Son of Man’s “dominion, glory, and a kingdom” (*šāltān wa-yqār w-malkū*; Daniel 7:14).

One final point concerning the Son of Man’s descent amid the clouds leading an army of angels is that Matthew 24:31; Diatessaron 9:23 adds, “he will send his angels with a large trumpet (*šūpūrā/qarnā*)⁷⁶ and they will assemble the chosen ones . . .” The trumpet, a war instrument meant to encourage one’s own army and frighten that of the enemy,⁷⁷ is a metaphor for God’s wrath and the descent of heavenly legions upon a decayed earth. The sounding of the trumpet by the angels at the apocalypse is a motif taken up by the Prophets (Ezekial 7:14; Hosea 5:8, 8:1; Joel 2:1, 15; Amos 3:6; Zephaniah 1:16; Zechariah 9:14), preserved in Matthew’s Gospel (see earlier), elaborated upon in the Letters of Paul (1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; cf. also Revelations 1:10) and dogmatically re-articulated in the Qur’ān. Unlike 1 Thessalonians 4:16 wherein in the angels explicitly blow the trumpet, in the formula “when the trumpet is blown” (*wa/fa idhā nufikh fī al-šūr*; Q 18:99; 23:101; 36:51; 39:68; 50:20; 69:13; cf. further Didache 16:14–17) no one explicitly blows the trumpet—although the angels are implied.

73 This is assuming the allophones of the letter ‘ayn (that is, ‘ which corresponds to Arabic *gh*) are followed by nasals (palatal *n* or labial *m*). Cf. in relation the similar examples in Voigt, *Die infirmen Verbaltypen*, 82–3. Furthermore, the Christian Arabic of Diatessaron 42:19, 22 preserves the Aramaic substrate in the word ‘inān, “clouds.” The Sabbaic cognate ‘-m-m in Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 16–17 conveys the meaning of “rain.”

74 Reading *al-ḥaqq^a* instead of the standard ‘Uthmānic reading *al-ḥaqq^l* transforms the word into an adverb, which flows better, and puts the verse in dialogue with the formula “truly I say to you” (*āmūn ʿmar lkūn*; Matthew 17:20; Mark 11:23; and so on).

75 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘arab*, 4:4399; Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 1514.

76 For this reading see the Harklean version in Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:374 and *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament*, 2A:46.

77 Cf. H. G. Farmer, *EP*, “Būk.”

Opening of the Heavens

Elsewhere in the synoptic Gospels we read about Jesus's baptism in the Jordan river as it states,

Then when Jesus had been baptized, just as he arose from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened up for him (*ēṭptaḥū lēh šmayā*) and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and it came onto him.

(Matthew 3:16: cf. Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21; Diatessaron 4:36–38)

The opening of the heavens is a precursor to the next time the heavens are opened up for Jesus at his second coming, which is narrated in the Gospel of John, where Jesus tells his disciples, “Truly, truly, I say to you, after this you will see the heavens as they are open (*mēn hāšā tēḥzūn šmayā da-ptīhīn*) and the angels of God when they ascend and descend upon the son of man” (John 1:51; Diatessaron 5:20–21).

The wording of Jesus's baptism account in the synoptic Gospels and the apocalyptic context of John's verse which is itself a reformulation of Jacob's ladder from Hebrew Scripture (Genesis 28:12; see further Chapter 6), were coalesced and dogmatically re-articulated in the verses of the Qur'ān. Hence, it states,

Indeed, the Day of Distinction (*yawm al-faṣl*) has been appointed—the day when the trumpet will be blown and you come in waves, and [when] the heavens are opened up as doorways (*futiḥat al-samā' fa kānat abwāban*), and [when] the mountains are liquefied and become a gush.

(Q 78:17–20)

Lüling deduces that the apocalyptic passage of Q 78:18–19 is part of an “original” Christian strophe.⁷⁸ In relation to this passage, Neuwirth argues that the preceding “*āyā* cluster” of Q 78:6–17 is in dialogue with Psalms 104:1–23.⁷⁹ If indeed there is some strophic or literary precedent to the text, it may likely belong to a passage in Biblical scripture. However, in the case of Q 78:18–19 the passage in which it is in close dialogue is not the Psalms—as one might expect—but rather the Aramaic text of the Gospel of Matthew. More specifically, the phrase “the heavens are opened up” (*futiḥat al-samā'*) is virtually identical to “the heavens were opened up” (*ēṭptaḥū . . . šmayā*). Both phrases consist of the passive voice of the perfect *f/p-t-h* and the word “heaven” (*al-samā'*, *šmayā*).

Similarly amid passages condemning evil doers to hell, Q 7:40 states,

Those who reject Our signs and refuse them in arrogance, the doorways of heaven will not be opened up for them (*lā tufattaḥ lahum abwāb al-samā'*),

78 Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 419–20.

79 Angelika Neuwirth, “Qur'anic readings of the Psalms” in *ibid.* (eds.) *The Qur'ān in Context*, 740–45.

nor will they enter paradise until a camel goes through the eye of a needle (*wa lā yadkḥulūn al-jannah ḥattā yalij al-jamal fī samm al-khiyāṭ*). And thus do we reward the criminals.

(Q 7:40)

Classical exegetes and modern specialists have been aware of the dialogue between this passage and Hebrew Scripture (for example, Genesis 28:10–17; Malachi 3:10), as well as the Gospels.⁸⁰ The statement “the doorways of heaven will not be opened up for them” (*lā tufattaḥ lahum abwāb al-samāʾ*) is a dogmatic re-articulation of Jesus’s baptism scene, “suddenly the heavens were opened up for him” (*ēṭptaḥū lēh šmayāʾ*; Matthew 3:16). However, the syntax is kept intact and consists of:

Verb to open (*ēṭptaḥū*) or not to open (*lā tufattaḥ*) +
preposition *l* with pronominal suffix (*lēh*; *lahum*) +
the heavens (*šmayāʾ*) or its doorways (*abwāb al-samāʾ*).

Moreover, what affirms the relationship between Q 7:40 and the Aramaic Gospels is the statement “nor will they enter paradise until a camel goes through the eye of a needle” (*wa lā yadkḥulūn al-jannah ḥattā yalij al-jamal fī samm al-khiyāṭ*), which is a dogmatic re-articulation of Jesus’s warning against the rich, stating, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God (*dalīl/pašīq hū l-gamlā l-mēʾāl/d-nēʾbar ba-ḥrūrā da-mḥatā aw ʾatīrā d-nēʾul l-malkūtēh d-alāhā*)” (Matthew 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25; Diatessaron 29:2–3).⁸¹

Lastly, the rich men (*ʾatīrē*, sg. *ʾatīrā*)—who are condemned in the prophetic ethics of both Muḥammad and Jesus—are embodied in the opening of Q 7:40 as “those who reject Our signs and refuse them in arrogance.”

Knowledge of the Hour

In contrast to the Qurʾānic nomenclature of apocalyptic days (see earlier) in which the heavens are cracked, the earth is shaken and people are raised, the “hour” designates the very moment the apocalypse begins. The hour is part of the hidden repertoire of God’s knowledge (*al-ghayb*) and is known to Him alone (Q 2:30; 6:50, 59; 11:31; 27:65; 53:35). Concerning the hour, it states,

People ask you about the hour (*yasʾaluk al-nās ʾan al-sāʾah*), say indeed the knowledge concerning it is with God (*qul innamā ʾilmuhā ʾind allāh*). And how would you know that perhaps the hour may be near.

(Q 33:63; see also Q 31:34; 41:47; 43:61, 85; 51:12)

80 Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 337; Geiger, *Was hat Mohammed*, 69; Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 103, 453; Rudolph, *Die Abhängigkeit des Qorans*, 15; Ahrens, “Christliches im Qoran,” 164; Thyen 220–1; Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 110; R. G. Khoury, *EQ*, “Camel.”

81 See variant readings in Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:287. See further Asad, *The Message of the Quran*, 304.

This verse is a dogmatic re-articulation of the following verse in the Gospels, “However, about that day and the hour no one knows (*‘al yawmā dēyn haw w-‘al šā‘tā hāy anāš lā yāda‘*), not even the angels of heaven (*āplā malākē da-šmayā*),⁸² but only the Father (*elā ābā ba-lhūd*)” (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32; cf. also Luke 12:46; Diatessaron 42:33–34).

Samir notes the theological relationship between Q 33:63 to its antecedent in the Gospels.⁸³ More specifically, this verse contains the formula found elsewhere, “they ask you about [X] Say indeed [Y]” (*yas‘alūnak ‘an . . . qul innamā . . .*; Q 2:215) which matches: (A) Jesus’s words in Thomas 52, “if they say to you . . . say to them;” (B) the rhetorical style of Jesus’s speech throughout the Gospels, “truly I say to you” (*amīn ēmar lak [ūn]*; see Chapter 1); and—more broadly—(C) the didactic style of the Jewish *haggadah*.⁸⁴ It follows, therefore, that the use of *dēyn* in Aramaic, meaning “but, however,” is preserved in Arabic *innamā*, “indeed, verily.”⁸⁵ However, concerning the “hour” (*al-sā‘ah*; *šā‘tā*) the inclusion of “people” (*al-nās*) in Q 33:63 reflects the fact stated in the Gospel passage, namely that “no one knows” (*anāš lā yāda‘*). Furthermore, in keeping with the vision of strict monotheism espoused by Muḥammad, the “Father” (*ābā*) has been transformed to the impersonal “God” (*allāh*). One final point is that the Gospel passage reveals that the angels too lack the knowledge of the hour, which is an idea reflected elsewhere in the Qur’ān (Q 2:30–31).

Final Judgment and Universal Justice

We have seen that the cataclysmic events of the apocalypse mark the beginning of a new age, a divine world predicated on universal justice. This prevalent belief among late antique prophetic traditions is a hallmark of the Gospels (especially Matthew 25) and the Qur’ān. The universal justice that was lacking on earth is finally manifested in God’s judgment of mankind on the final judgment. Based on their past works and deeds on earth He will enter them accordingly into paradise or hellfire. For mankind, therefore, participation in this hereafter—either as a dweller of paradise or hellfire—depends on their performance on the Day of Judgment.

The Day of Judgment: yawm al-dīn and yawma d-dīnā

The “Day of Judgment” (Hebrew, *yom ha-dīn*) is alluded to in Malachi 3:1–5 but is otherwise a term that is more pervasive in Rabbinic literature.⁸⁶ Of the four Gospels, the Day of Judgment factors only into Matthew. From its appearance in Matthew’s Gospel, the Day of Judgment (Aramaic, *yawmā d-dīnā*; Matthew 10:15; 11:22, 24; 12:26) appears in later New Testament letters (2 Peter 2:9; 3:7; 1

82 The NRSV adds “nor the Son,” though this is not apparent in the Syriac versions.

83 Samir, “The theological Christian influence on the Qur’an,” 158, 162 n. 29.

84 Katsh, *Judaism in Islam*, 28.

85 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 1:160.

86 For example, Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:202.

John 4:7; cf. also Romans 2:5; Jude 1:6). The Day of Judgment as a symbol of the justice promised by scripture played an important role in the liturgical and homiletic works of Syriac speaking churches.⁸⁷ The Day of Judgment also circulated as a doctrine in the Qur'ān's milieu (Arabic, *yawm al-dīn*; Q 1:4; 15:35; 26:28; 37:20; 38:78; 51:12; 56:56; 70:26; 74:46; 82:15–18; 83:11).⁸⁸

The uses of the word *dīn*, in and of itself, in the Qur'ān are rather diverse. Therefore, the phrase *yawm al-dīn* has been interpreted differently. Some exegetes believed it to mean, “the day of reward (*jazā'*).”⁸⁹ Later scholars like Gaudefroy-Demombynes define the phrase as “the day when God gives a direction to each human being.”⁹⁰ Some claim that the diverse Qur'ānic uses of the word *dīn* are a result of merging two similar late antique religious terms: Hebrew/Aramaic *dīn*, “judgment,” and Pahlavi *dēn*, “religion.”⁹¹ Still others have added the contribution of the Arabic word *dayn*, “debt,” to these derivations.⁹² That being said, the Qur'ānic *yawm al-dīn* was, on the whole, adopted from the Aramaic sphere. It was, more specifically, in strong dialogue with the Aramaic Gospel of Matthew.⁹³ Lüling sums up the Day of Judgment's function, for both Matthew and the Qur'ān, as a day of promise, horrific punishment, and divine favor.⁹⁴

One last point concerns the fiery prophetic idiom of the Qur'ān as it constantly warns against the apocalypse and underscores the magnitude of divine judgment. In this respect its content resembles the Prophets of Hebrew Scripture more so than the Gospels, with the exception of key passages in Matthew. Apart from the intertextual dialogue between these scriptures and the Qur'ān, the emphasis on divine judgment is in line with Muḥammad's vision of strict monotheism and may further be informed by the sober, commercial exigencies of the context in which he lived. This phenomenon is what Hodgson calls the late-antique “mercantile impulse,” which was latent in urban Arabian trading communities and which promoted—above all—“justice and populism.”⁹⁵

Intercession or Abundance?

On account of mankind's imperfect nature, if it were not for God's leniency—his love, mercy and forgiveness—divine judgment would surely condemn everyone

87 Andrae, *Les origines de l'islam et le christianisme*, 68; Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 16. Cf. further Narsai, *Narsai Homiliae et carmina*, 2:154–5 (On the Mysteries of the Church and on Baptism).

88 See in relation Khouri, “Selected ethical themes in the Qur'ān and the Gospel of Matthew,” 41–3.

89 Cited in numerous exegetical works including Ibn Qutaybah, *Tafsīr gharīb al-qur'ān*, 38.

90 Quoted in L. Gardet, *EF*, “Dīn;” I. Hasson, *EQ*, “Last Judgment.”

91 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, 132–3; P. Brödeur, *EQ*, “Religion.” Cf. the tenth-century Pahlavi text known as the *Dēnkard*.

92 L. Gardet, *EF*, “Dīn.” Furthermore, one of the meanings conveyed by Sabbaic *d-y-n* in Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 37 is “loyalty, submission.”

93 Mingana, *Syriac Influence on the Style of the Kur'ān*, 85.

94 Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 201, 262, 323.

95 Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 1:117, 130.

to hell. In both the Qur'ān and the Gospels, it is only on account of the grace of God that mankind is spared the torment of hellfire and granted the gift of eternal paradise (Mark 16:16; John 1:14–17; 3:18; Q 36:44; 16:61; 35:45). God's grace factors most significantly into the theology of Paul's letters which argue that mankind can only be shielded from condemnation on the Day of Judgment through the blood sacrifice made by Jesus Christ (Romans 3:25; 5:21; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 15:22; Ephesians 2:13; see Chapter 3).

The different and perhaps opposing roles ascribed to the Messiah come together on the Day of Judgment. As Christ—that is, the Messiah—Jesus is both to judge (Romans 2:16; 2 Timothy 4:1) as well as to intercede on behalf of mankind (Isaiah 53:12; see also 2 Timothy 4:1). These diametrically opposed functions to be served by the Messiah are the product of a Christian worldview—wherein Jesus is God and judge—superimposed over a Jewish worldview—wherein the Messiah isto redeem mankind.⁹⁶ As a result of these competing worldviews, the tension between God judging sinners on the one hand, and the possibility of an agent intervening on their behalf on the other, is also found throughout the verses of the Qur'ān.

The Qur'ān, with its emphasis on universal justice, is highly ambivalent about such a compromising notion as intercession.⁹⁷ And while some have translated the Arabic term *shafā'ah* as “intercession,” it is more precisely aligned with the Syriac term found in the Gospels and Pauline letters, *šēf'ā*, “abundance”—that is, the outpouring of either (1) mercy, which comes from God or (2) charitable works, which comes from people.⁹⁸ Consequently, there is a spectrum of qur'ānic verses that deal with “abundance” (*shafā'ah*) on the Day of Judgment.⁹⁹ One class of these verses explains that absolutely no abundance will be accepted on the Day of Judgment (Q 2:48, 123, 254; 7:53; 40:18) which reflects the uncompromising emphasis on universal justice at the very core of the qur'ānic worldview.

Another class of verses implies that abundance may come from human agents. There are verses that state that no abundance will be accepted on the Day of Judgment except from those to whom God has given “permission” (*idhn*; Q 2:255; 10:3; 20:109; 34:23), angels with whom He is “pleased” (*ridā*; Q 21:28; 53:26), with whom He has made a “covenant” (*'ahd*; Q 19:87) or with those who have “testified to the truth” (*shahid bi al-ḥaqq*; Q 43:86), which all imply the success of possible intercessors (cf. *Ardā Virāf Nāmak* 15:18).¹⁰⁰ These verses are in dialogue with Jesus's advice to his community, encouraging them to be charitable (see Chapter 3) and show “abundant” (*mšapa'tā*) generosity in order that such

96 Sanhedrin 98a. See further James D. G. Dunn, *ABD*, “Christology.”

97 For more on the intercession of holy men, including martyrs, see Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, 67–70, 95, 156, 228, 256, 268.

98 The Qur'ān makes use of the Aramaic form *š-p-*’, “to pour, abound” found in Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 1590–1. This word is a cognate of Arabic form *sh-b-*’, “to satiate”. Cf. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'arab*, 4:2186–7; 5:2289–90.

99 Valerie J. Hoffman, *EQ*, “Intercession.”

100 Andrae, *Les origines de l'islam et le christianisme*, 79 traces the origins of intercession by angels on the Day of Judgment to Coptic and Syrian Christians and quotes Origen as evidence.

abundance return to them (Luke 6:38; see also Matthew 26:7; Mark 14:3; Diatessaron 10:14; Q 4:85). The implication of this relationship is that God will consent to righteous or saintly human beings whose abundance—that is, outpouring of charitable works—may save themselves or others on the Day of Judgment (evident by contrast with Q 7:53; cf. Q 2:48, 123).

A final class of verses nullifies the abundance of all intercessory agents, except God Himself. So some verses explain the futility of abundance coming from other gods (*ālīhah*; Q 36:23), as well as from “givers of abundance” (*shafā’at al-shāfi’īn*; Q 74:48; see later discussion)—which is a refutation of arguments in Paul’s letters where the Holy Spirit “pours out” (*mšapa’/špīkā*;¹⁰¹ Romans 5:5) love abundantly and performs “intercession” (*mšalyā*; Romans 8:26–27; 1 Timothy 1:2) on mankind’s behalf.¹⁰² These verses are also a refutation of Paul’s vision of the Christ-God who “abundantly poured out” (*ašpa’*) his grace (Ephesians 1:6–7). Distancing itself from the Trinitarian dimensions of the Holy Spirit and Christ, which diametrically oppose Muḥammad’s vision of strict monotheism, while retaining the appealing sentiments of love and grace, the Qur’ān states, “Say to God belongs all abundance (*qul li allāh al-shafā’ah jamī’an*). To Him belong the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. Then to Him will you return” (Q 39:44; see also Q 6:51; 32:4; Romans 9:23).

One final point in the discussion of abundance and the Day of Judgment begins in the Gospels. It states concerning the evil clergy (see Chapter 4), “[You] progeny of vipers how can you speak good things while you are evil? For the mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart (*tawtāray lēbā*)” (Matthew 12:34; Luke 6:45; cf. Diatessaron 4:16–17; Thomas 45).

Matthew adds, “As for he who has [charitable works], more will be given to him and it will increase/about (*nētyatar/nēttawsap*). And for he who does not have, even that which he has will be taken away” (Matthew 13:12; 25:29).

Like “he who has [charitable works], more will be given to him and it will abound (*nētyatar*)” the Qur’ān teaches that “for those who have done good is good and its increase/bounty” (*ziyādah*; Q 10:26; see further John 10:10). Moreover, on the Day of Judgment the fate of the evil clergy who in the Gospels speak evil, whose hearts are devoid of abundance, and who will have what little charitable works they possess snatched away, will be the following,

Do they await except its meaning? On the day its meaning arrives, those who forgot it long ago will say, “indeed the messengers of our Lord came with the truth. So will we have any givers of abundance who will give abundantly on our behalf (*hal lanā min shufa’ā’ fa yashfa’ū lanā*), or may we be returned [to earth] so that we may do differently than we used to do?” Alas, they have lost themselves and their illusions have left them astray.

(Q 7:53; see also 6:70; 26:100–102)

101 *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament*, 2B:57.

102 A remnant of the Holy Spirit’s grace may be preserved in Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān*, 49 where Ibn Mas’ūd’s codex records the word *rawḥi* instead of *faḍl* in Q 12:87.

Whereas the givers of abundance, aside from God Himself, are not afforded any guaranteed authority in the Qur'ān, later Hadith reports portray Muḥammad as the indisputable giver of abundance (*shafā'ah*) in the hereafter. In this vein, Muḥammad's basin (*ḥawḍ*), mentioned in Bukhārī 2:21:286; 3:40:555; Muslim 2:479 may be inspired by the blood of the covenant (Matthew 26:28–29) and the “bubbling spring” which Jesus measures out in Thomas 13 (cf. further John 7:37; Diatessaron 21:12; 35:1–2).¹⁰³

Judgment: Angels, Those of the Right and Left Hands, Eternity, and Angelic Glorification

The culmination of the apocalypse and the onset of judgment are addressed in passing both in the books of the Prophets of Hebrew Scripture (for example, Malachi 4:1–3) and the Gospels. The judgment scene that takes place in the latter part of Matthew 25, in particular, typifies the importance of universal justice which Andrae maintains was a critical doctrine of the early Syriac Church and, subsequently, the Qur'ān's milieu.¹⁰⁴ Concerning the multitudes to be judged before God, Matthew 25 portrays a vivid scene. It states,

Then, when the Son of Man (*brēh d-anāšā*) comes in his glory (*b-šūbhēh*), and all his holy angels (*kūlhūn malakawhī qadišē*) with him, then he will sit upon the throne of his glory (*trānāws d-šūbhēh*). All the nations (*'ammē*) will be gathered (*nētkanšūn*) before him, and he will separate them one from another (*wa nparēš ēnūn ḥad mēn ḥad*) as a shepherd who separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left (*wa nqīm 'ērbē mēn yamīnēh wa gdayā mēn sēmālēh*). Then the king (*malkā*) will say to those who are at his right hand, “Come (*taw*), you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom (*iratū malkūtā*) which has been prepared for you from the beginnings of the world. For I hungered and you gave me to eat; I thirsted and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you accepted me; I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and came to me.” Then the sincere will answer him, “our Lord, when did we see that you were hungry and fed you or that you were thirsty and gave you to drink? And when did we see you were a stranger and accepted you, or that you were naked clothed you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?” And the king will answer and say to them, “Truly I say to you, in as much as you did [it] to one of the least of my brothers, you did it to me.” Then he will further say to those who are at his left hand, “Go from me (*zēlū lkūn mēnī*) [you] cursed ones (*līṭē*) into eternal hellfire (*nūrā da-l-'ālam*) which is prepared for the adversary and

103 Cf. the imagery of Christ's fountain in Ephrem, “Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrerers Paschahymen: de azymis, de crucifixione, de resurrectione,” *CSCO* 248–9, 108–9, 1964, 78–82, 63–5 (On the Paradoxes of the Incarnation).

104 Andrae, *Les origines de l'islam et le christianisme*, 105–6.

his angels (*hāy da-mṭāybā l-ākēlqaršā wa l-malakawhī*). For I hungered and you did not give me to eat; and I thirsted and you did not give me to drink; and I was a stranger and you did not accept me; and I was naked and you did not clothe me; and I was sick and I was in prison and you did not visit me.” Then they will also answer and say, “our Lord (*māran*), when did we see you hungry (*kapnā*) or thirsty (*ṣahyā*) or a stranger (*aksnāyā*) or naked (*‘artēlāyā*) or sick (*krīhā/mḥaylā*) or in prison (*bēyt asīrē/naturātā*), and did not serve you?” Then he will answer and say to them, “Truly I say to you (*amīn amēr ēnā lkūn*), in as much as you did not to one of these least, so too did you not do to me.” And these will go into eternal torment (*tašniqā da-l-‘ālmā*), but the sincere into eternal life (*ḥayē da-l-‘ālmā*).

(Matthew 25:31–46; Diatessaron 43:43–58; Didascalia 19:1: cf. historical context of Jubilees 23:14–29)¹⁰⁵

It has been recognized that this important Matthean passage was a significant contributor to the sectarian dialogue of the Qur’ān’s milieu, as evident from its numerous echoes throughout the Qur’ān’s vivid eschatological imagery.¹⁰⁶ The passage opens “when the Son of Man (*brēh d-anāšā*) comes in his glory (*b-šūbhēh*), and all his holy angels (*kūlhūn malakawhī qadīšē*) with him, then he will sit upon the throne of his glory (*trānāws d-šūbhēh*)” (Matthew 25:31). In keeping with the vision of strict monotheism, the Qur’ān rejects the identification of “the Son of Man” (*brēh d-anāšā*)—who presumably represents Jesus during his second coming—with “the king” (*malkā*)—an epithet for God (Numbers 23:21; Psalms 5:2; 10:16; 24:7–10; 29:10; and so on)—but rather reserves this title for God alone. God, in turn, is “the King of the Day of Judgment” (*malik yawm al-dīn*; Q 1:4; see further Chapter 3) and his throne (*kursī*) extends from the heavens to the earth (Q 2:255; see further Chapter 5). In addition, Q 69:17 has Matthew 25:31 in mind as it states “the angels (*al-malak*) will be at its ends [that is, the end of the heavens], and on that day eight [angels] will bear above them the throne of your Lord (*‘arsh rabik*)” (Q 69:17; see further Chapter 5).

Matthew adds, “All the nations will be gathered (*nētkanšūn*) before him, and he will separate them one from another (*wa nparēš ēnūn ḥad mēn ḥad*)” (Matthew 25:32). Similarly, the Qur’ān states, “God will judge between you (*yahkum baynakum*) on the Day of Resurrection [concerning that which you disputed]” (Q 4:141; 22:69; 60:10; cf. Q 2:113; 16:124; 22:56); “on the Day of Resurrection he will separate you (*yafšil baynakum*; Q 60:3; cf. Q 22:17; 32:25); as well as “We will have gathered them (*hasharnāhum*) and not left out from them anyone (*fa lam nughādir minhum aḥadan*)” (Q 18:47; see also Q 17:71). The statement, “we will

105 See Harklean variants in Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:396. Thyen, *Bibel und Koran*, 197 relates this passage to Q 3:54.

106 Rudolph, *Die Abhängigkeit des Qorans* 15, 17; Andrae, *Les origines de l’islam et le christianisme*, 75; R. Bell, *A Commentary on the Qur’ān*, ed. C.E. Bosworth and M.E.J. Richardson, Manchester: University of Manchester, 1991, 2:539; R. Paret, “Sure 107,” in R. Paret (ed.), *Der Koran*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1975, 192–6.

not have left out from them anyone” re-imagines the judging of the multitudes “one from another” (*ḥad mēn ḥad*) where Arabic *aḥad* is equivalent to Aramaic *ḥad* (emph. *ḥdā*)—wherein the prothetic *alif* is absent—that is, “one, anyone.”¹⁰⁷ In fact the entire scene from Matthew is elaborated upon by Aphrahat, which in turn is echoed by Q 18:48–49.¹⁰⁸

Scholars have identified the scene where Jesus “will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left” (*nqīm ‘ērbē mēn yamīnēh wa gdayā mēn sēmālēh*; Matthew 25:33) as the inspiration behind “those of the right hand” (*aṣḥāb al-yamīn/al-maymanah*) and “those of the left hand” (*aṣḥāb al-shimāl/al-mash’amah*) found throughout the imagery of Q 56:1–56, 81–96 and Q 90:18.¹⁰⁹ It follows, of course, that the duality of Aramaic *yamīn* and *sēmāl* are philologically preserved in Arabic *yamīn* and *shimāl*.¹¹⁰ Moreover, the gist of the statement “come (*taw*), you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom (*īratū malkūtā*) which has been prepared for you from the beginnings of the world (Matthew 25:34)” is preserved in the command, “enter paradise” (*udkhul/ū al-jannah*; Q 16:32; 36:26; 43:70), where the Arabic *udkhul/ū*, “enter” and Aramaic *taw*, “come,” are parallel imperatives uttered by God on the Day of Judgment (see also Chapter 5).

Likewise, scholars have recognized the relationship between “eternal hellfire which is prepared for the adversary and his angels” (*nūrā da-l-‘ālamhāy damṭāyibā l-ākēlqarṣā wa l-malakawhī*; Matthew 25:41) and “hellfire (*al-nār*) whose fuel is people and stone—prepared for the rebellious ones” (*u’iddat li al-kāfirīn*; Q 2:24).¹¹¹ In relation to this point, the conception of “eternal hellfire” (*nūrā da-l-‘ālam*; Matthew 25:34), “eternal torment” (*tašnīqā da-l-‘ālmā*; Matthew 25:46), “eternal judgment” (*dīnā da-l-‘ālmā*; Mark 3:29), “eternal life” (*ḥayē da-l-‘ālmā*; Matthew 25:46; cf. *Ardā Virāf Nāmak* 10:1) and “eternal shelters” (*mṭalayhūn da-l-‘ālam*; Luke 16:9) prevalent throughout the Gospels, Acts and Romans, is reflected in the fate of those judged who will reside “forever” (*khālid [īn] fihā [abadan]*) in the torment of hellfire or the excellence of paradise (Q 2:162; 4:14; 98:8; and so on).

God’s command to the evil doers bound for eternal hellfire, “Go from me (*zēlū lkūn mēnī*) [you] cursed ones (*liṭē*)” (Matthew 25:41), coupled with the context of Satan’s curse from Rabbinic literature,¹¹² is dogmatically re-articulated into

107 Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 413.

108 Aphrahat, “Demonstrations,” 1:397–400 (On Resurrection).

109 Rudolph, *Die Abhängigkeit des Qorans*, 17; Horovitz, “Das Koranische Paradies,” in idem (ed.) *Der Koran*, 62–63; Ahrens, “Christliches im Qoran,” 55, 165; Thyen, *Bibel und Koran*, 240–43; Neuwirth, *Der Koran. Band 1*, 628. Cf. In relation Q 23:1–11, 58–59; 70:27–33; Aphrahat, “Demonstrations,” 1: 239–54, 265–70 (On Monks). Especially significant is the emphasis of these passages on preserving celibacy or virginity, to which the Qur’anic verses append the permissibility of having sexual relations with spouses and slaves.

110 Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘arab*, 6:4967–68; Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 576, 1020.

111 Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 49; Rudolph, *Die Abhängigkeit des Qorans*, 15, 17; Bell, *A Commentary on the Qur’an*, 2:539; Paret (1975), 192–196; Thyen, *Bibel und Koran*, 240–243.

112 Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:54–55. See further Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 688.

God's command against Satan when he refuses to bow to Adam and opposes God over his creation mankind, to which God replies, "He [God] said, 'depart from it for you are banished (*ukhruj minhā fa-innak rajīm*), and indeed My curse is upon you until the Day of Judgment' (*wa inn 'alayk la'natī ilā yawm al-dīn*)" (Q 38:77–78).

The syntax of "depart from it" (*ukhruj minhā*) is virtually the same as "go from me" (*zēlū lkūn mēnī*). So too has the following adjective *rajīm*, that is, "banished, cursed,"¹¹³ and the statement "indeed My curse is upon you until the Day of Judgment" (*inn 'alayk la'natī ilā yawm al-dīn*) been inspired by the "cursed ones" (*liṭē*). Moreover, it has been discussed in Chapter 3 how the formula "truly I say to you" (*amīn amēr ēnā lkūn*), which is characteristic of Jesus's rhetorical style in the Gospels, is echoed in the qur'ānic formula "say, indeed" (*qul innamā*; Q 10:20; 13:36; 21:45; and so on). However, its utterance by Jesus—who is God and judge—on the Day of Judgment (Matthew 25:45) and immediately preceding the entrance of the evil doers into hellfire (Matthew 25:46) is dogmatically re-articulated by God's words to the now accursed Satan, "He [that is, God] said, 'truly, truly I say (*al-ḥaqq^a wa al-ḥaqq^a aqūl*) [that] I will surely fill Gehenna with you [that is, Satan, the adversary] and those who follow you among them, all of them'" (Q 38:76–85).¹¹⁴

In this context, "truly I say" (*al-ḥaqq aqūl*) is a calque for "truly I say to you" (*amīn amēr ēnā lkūn*) which is found throughout the Gospels. This passage also makes clear that although hellfire is prepared for the "rebellious ones" (*al-kāfirūn*) in Q 2:24, it is just as well prepared for "the adversary [Satan] and his angels (*ākēlqarṣā wa l-malakawhī*)" (Matthew 25:41).

However, the dramatic judgment scene concluding Q 39 serves as a dogmatic re-articulation of Matthew 25:31–46 like no other qur'ānic passage. It states,

And they did not honor God [the extent of] His true honor. For all the earth is in His grasp and the heavens are rolled up in His right hand (cf. Thomas 111). Glorified is He over that which they ascribe. And the trumpet was blown so whoever was in the heavens and earth was struck down, except for those whom God willed. Then it was blown again so they arose watching. And the earth shone with the light of its Lord, the book was put in place and the prophets and martyrs were brought. And they were judged equitably between them (*wa qudiy baynahum bi al-ḥaqq*) and they will not be prejudiced. Then every soul was compensated for what it had done, and He is most knowledgable of what they do. And those that rebelled were led into Gehenna in multitudes (*zumarran*) until they came upon it, when its gates opened and its keeper said to them, "did not messengers come from among you narrating to you the signs of your Lord and warning you of this meeting day of yours? (cf. Q 6:130; 16:28)" They

113 Cf. Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext*, 64; Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 116.

114 Cf. the angels, the creation of man and the fall of Satan in Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:38–9, 44–5.

said, “indeed!” However, the sentence of torment was fated for the rebels. It will be said, “enter the gates of Gehenna to stay in forever” (*udkhulū abwāb jahannam khālidīn fihā*). Such is the miserable¹¹⁵ destiny of the arrogant. Then those conscious of their Lord were led to paradise in multitudes until they came upon it and its gates opened and its keeper said “peace be upon you. You are blessed so enter it forever (*ṭibtum fa-udkhulūhā khālidīn*)” (cf. 16:32). And they said “glory be to God who has fulfilled to us his promise and bestowed [lit. inherited] upon us the earth (*awrathanā al-arḍ*) that we may bask in paradise as we will.” So excellent is the wage of the workers. And you will see the angels encircling the throne glorifying the praises of their Lord (*wa tarā al-malā’ikah ḥāffīn min ḥawl al-‘arsh*). And they were judged equitably between (*wa qudiy baynahum bi al-ḥaqq*) them and it will be said, “glory belongs to God, Lord of the worlds (*al-ḥamd li allāh rabb al-‘ālamīn*).

(Q 39:67–75)

This judgment scene retains the fundamental components—albeit re-arranged—from Matthew’s judgment scene: the culmination of the apocalypse, God’s judgment of those at His right and left hands, the entrance of multitudes into paradise or hellfire and the angels glorifying God while encircling His throne. The “nations” (*‘ammē*) of Matthew’s passage are equivalent to the “multitudes” (*zumar*) of Q 39, after which the Surah is named.

At any rate, the absence of God’s active role in the judgment scene of Q 39 is a result of both qur’ānic style and—more importantly—removing or replacing that of Jesus once he has unequivocally taken his place as God, judge and king¹¹⁶ which—of course—conflicts with the Qur’ān’s vision of strict monotheism. As a result, all the major verbs which denote the acts of judgment—placing the book, judging between the multitudes, compensating the souls, leading the multitudes into Gehenna or paradise, opening the gates—are in the passive. So, the statement “and they were judged equitably between them” (*wa qudiy baynahum bi al-ḥaqq*; Q 39:69, 75) is a dogmatic re-articulation of “he [Jesus] will separate them one from another” (*wa nparēš ēnūn ḥad mēn ḥad*; Matthew 25:32), where the subject—Jesus the God, judge and king—is removed and the verb for judgment is in the passive *qudiy*, that is, “it was judged.” Likewise, “it will be said”—in the passive—“enter the gates of Gehenna to stay in forever” (*udkhulū abwāb jahannam khālidīn fihā*; Q 39:72) is a quote inspired by Jesus’s command on the Day of Judgment, “go from me (*zēlū lkūn mēnī*) [you] cursed ones (*lītē*) into eternal hellfire (*nūrā da-l-‘ālam*)” (Matthew 25:41). In a similar fashion, the statement “you are blessed so enter it forever (*ṭibtum fa-udkhulūhā khālidīn*; Q 39:73)—which is made by the keeper of paradise (an angel?) but not God—is inspired by Jesus’s command “Come (*taw*), you who are blessed by my Father” (Matthew

115 Cf. Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān*, 256, 270 citing *bīs*, “miserable,” in Q 7:165 of Talḥah b. Muṣarrāf and ‘Ikrimah’s codex, as well as Aramaic *bīš*, “evil, bad.”

116 See further Richard H. Heirs, *ABD*, “Day of Judgment;” Jarl Fossum, *ABD*, “Son of God.”

25:34). In relation to this, the workers of good who enter paradise glorify God who “bestowed [lit. inherited] upon us the earth (*awrathanā al-arḍ*)” (Q 39:74) are those to whom Jesus personally commands, “inherit the kingdom” (*īratū malkūtā*; Matthew 25:34), where the Arabic G-stem perfect verb *awrath* and Aramaic G-stem imperative verb *īrat* come from the root *y-r-t* (see further Chapter 5). The equation of the earth in this context with divine kingdom is supported by Farrā’s assertion that it refers to paradise (*al-jannah*).¹¹⁷

Finally, the statement “and you will see the angels encircling the throne glorifying the praises of their Lord” (*wa tarā al-malā’ikah ḥāffīn min ḥawl al-‘arsh*; Q 39:75), which corresponds to the angels accompanying the Son of Man as he sits upon the throne (Matthew 25:31), coupled with “it will be said, ‘glory belongs to God, Lord of the worlds’” (*al-ḥamd li allāh rabb al-‘ālamīn*; Q 39:76), is a dogmatic re-articulation of the manger scene in Luke 2:13–14, which states,

And immediately there appeared with the angel many hosts of heaven glorifying God (*ēthzīw ‘am malakā ḥayalwātā sagīyē da-šmayā*) saying, “glory to God (*šūbhā l-alāhā*) in the heights and on earth. Peace and good hope to mankind.”

(Luke 2:13–14)

Going back to the judgment scenes of Q 39:67–75 and that of Matthew 25:31–46, the principal difference between the two is the content of the dialogue between mankind and God. Whereas the multitude of people in Q 39:71 are asked—presumably by God—“did not messengers come from among you narrating to you the signs of your Lord and warning you of this meeting day of yours?,” the verbal exchange in Matthew 25 holds mankind accountable for the welfare of the poor and downtrodden members of society, which is for the Qur’ān a conversation that takes place in Hell.

Hell

Hell is a place of eternal torment in both the Qur’ān and the Aramaic Gospels. It goes by various appellations including “hellfire” (*al-nār*; *nūrā*), “Gehenna” (*jahannum*; *gīhanā*) and “torment” (*‘adhāb*; *tašnīqā*).¹¹⁸ Those condemned to its fiery pits for an eternity are Satan, his squadron of angels (Matthew 25:41) or spirits (Q 26:95; *Apocalypse of Abraham* 14; *Ardā Virāf Nāmak* 53:4; 54; 100:1) and the multitudes of evil folk who, among other sins they might have committed, do not provide for the poor and downtrodden members of society.

Sins

Those condemned to Hell confess their sins to those enjoying paradise in Q 74:43–47, stating,

117 Farrā, *Ma’ānī al-qur’ān*, 2:425. See further Duane F. Watson, *ABD*, “Death, Second.”

118 See further Rosalind W. Gwynne, *EQ*, “Hell and Hellfire.”

We were not from those who prayed; nor did we feed the poor (*wa lam nak^u nuṭ'im al-miskīn*); and we used to indulge with the mainstream (*wa kunnā nakhūḍ ma' al-khā'iḍīn*); and we used to disbelieve in the Day of Judgment, until certainty came upon us.

(Q 74:43–47: cf. also Q 67:6–11)

So evil are those condemned and so grave is their crime that not even the mercy given on their behalf by the “givers of abundance” (*shafā'at al-shāfi'in*; probably the Holy Spirit of Romans 5:5; 8:26–27; 1 Timothy 1:2 or Christ God of Ephesians 1:6–7) will be of benefit to them (Q 74:48; see earlier discussion). At any rate, the syntax and content of Q 74:43–47 serve as a dogmatic re-articulation of Matthew 25:42–43 (see earlier discussion), wherein God incriminates those condemned to Hell, stating,

For I hungered and you did not give me to eat; and I thirsted and you did not give me to drink; and I was a stranger and you did not accept me; and I was naked and you did not clothe me; and I was sick and I was in prison and you did not visit me.

(Matthew 25:42–43)

The formula of divine incrimination from Matthew, “I [X] and you did not [Y],” is transformed by Q 74¹¹⁹ into a formula of self confession, “we were/did not do [X].” Furthermore, the verse “nor did we feed the poor” (*wa lam nak^u nuṭ'im al-miskīn*; 74:44) summarizes the offenses of not providing for those who “hungered,” “thirsted,” “were a stranger,” “were naked,” “were sick and . . . in prison” found in Matthew 25:42–43. Moreover, the confession of those in hell that “we used to indulge with the mainstream” (*kunnā nakhūḍ ma' al-khā'iḍīn*; Q 74:45) is parallel to their words in Q 26:99, “and no one misguided us except the criminals” (*wa mā aḍallanā illā al-mujrimūn*), and—most importantly—recalls Jesus’s condemnation of the Pharisees as “blind guides” in Matthew 23:16 (see Chapter 3). This may further be in dialogue with the “conformity” of those who “bestow no gifts and alms” in *Bahmān Yasht* 2:44, the miserly dwellers of hell in *Ardā Virāf Nāmak* 31:5; 67; 89 and the nations who did not do justice to the poor, oppressed, widows and orphans throughout the Prophets (for example, Hosea 5:11–12; Amos 8:4–14; Isaiah 5:1–30; Micah 3:9–12; Jeremiah 5:1–9; Ezekial 7:2–27).

The dialogue between Q 74:43–47 and Matthew 25:42–43 demonstrates once again the esteemed place of the alienated, oppressed, and disenfranchised members of society in whom Jesus and Muḥammad saw righteousness and who influenced the very core of their teachings and ethics, and that to neglect them would be to offend God Himself and suffer eternal punishment (see further Chapter 3). Such is universal justice in action. The sequential enumeration of sins, in fact, and

119 Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, 1:161–2 records the names of the authorities who believe that the opening verses of Q 74 constituted the first revelation.

the context of this verbal exchange on the Day of Judgment or in Hell is expanded upon in the centuries of the later Islamic period (see Table 1) to the Hadith corpus, namely a “divine Hadith report” (*ḥadīth qudsī*) found in Muslim 32:6232.

Asking for Water from behind the Barrier

Once in hell, those condemned to a scorching torment on account of neglecting the poor and downtrodden members of society will become parched and ask for a drink of water. And so Luke narrates a story that a gluttonous, rich man died at the same time that a poor man named Lazarus died in hunger (Luke 16:19–21). Then it states,

This happened and that poor man died and the angels carried him to the bosom of Abraham. In addition, the rich man died also and was buried. And while he was tormented in Sheol (*wa kad mēššanaq ba-šyūl*), he raised his eyes from afar and saw Abraham and Lazarus in his bosom. So he called out in a loud voice (*wa qrā b-qālā rāmā*) and said, “my father Abraham, have mercy on me (*ētraḥam ‘lay*) and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and moisten my tongue (*w-šadar l-lā ‘āzar d-nēšbū‘ rīš sēb ‘ēh b-mayā wa nratēb lī lēšānī*). For behold I am tormented in this flame (*d-hā mēššanaq ēnā b-šalhēbitā hādē*).” Abraham said to him, “my son, remember that you received your fortune in your life and Lazarus his misfortune. But now behold he is comfortable here and you are tormented. Besides all these things, a great chasm is placed between us and you (*hawtā rabtā sīmā baynayn wa-lkūn*). So those who wish to cross from here towards you cannot [do so]; nor can anyone over there cross over to us.” He said to him, “then I beseech you my father to send him to my father’s house (*da-tšadrīwhī l-bēyt ābī*). For I have five brothers. Let him go testify to them so that they do not also come to this place of torment (*nīzal nsahēd ēnūn d-lā āp hēnūn nītūn l-dūktā hādē d-tašnīqā*).” Abraham said to him, “they have Moses and the prophets. They should listen to them.” However, he said to him, “no my father Abraham, if a man from the dead goes to them they will repent.” Abraham said to him, “if they do not listen to Moses and the prophets (*ēn l-mūšē wa l-nbīyē lā šām ‘īn*), so too if a man from the dead rises they will not believe him (*āp lā ēn ēnāš mēn mītē nqūm mhaymnīn lēh*).”

(Luke 16:22–31; Diatessaron 29:17–26)

This passage is expounded upon by Jacob of Serugh.¹²⁰ More generally, the dialogue that takes place between the dwellers of hell and paradise is echoed in *Ardā Virāf Nāmak* 68 and portions of it are dogmatically re-articulated throughout various passages in the Qur’ān. The rich man tormented in Sheol—similar to the multitudes condemned to hell in Matthew 25:31–46—who pleads with Abraham in

120 Jacob of Serugh, *Homiliae Selectae*, 1:364–423 (On the Rich Man and Lazarus).

paradise, represents the motif of those in hell who argue with various interlocutors, which is a scene that reverberates throughout the Qur'ān. One example reads,

They [human dwellers of hell] said while quarreling [with the squadrons of Satan (*junūd iblīs*) cf. Q 26:94]¹²¹ in it [hellfire], “by God, we were in clear error when we equated you with the lord of the world, and no one led us astray except the criminal ones. So we do not have givers of abundance (*shafi'ūn*), nor a close friend. If only we had a second chance that we may be among the believers.”

(Q 26:96–102: cf. also 67:6–11)

At any rate, that Abraham is granted a paternal or even intercessory role in the afterlife may be attributed to the belief that he was the “friend of God” (Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23; Q 4:125) and that he was endowed with divine powers to protect and intercede for sinners in this world and the next (*Apocalypse of Abraham* 5, 10; *Testament of Abraham* 20).¹²²

More significantly, Luke 16:22–31 may be divided into four main points of dialogue with the Qur'ān which deal with: (1) asking for water; (2) the chasm or barrier; (3) returning to earth; and (4) listening to the prophets. Concerning the first of these, the rich man “called out in a loud voice” (*qrā b-qālā rāmā*) to Abraham and begs him, “send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and moisten my tongue” (*w-šadar l-lā'āzar d-nēšbū' rīš sēb'ēh b-mayā wa nratēb lī lēšānī*; Luke 16:24). Abraham refuses the rich man's petition.

The rich “called out in a loud voice” (*wa qrā b-qālā rāmā*) to Abraham in heaven and said, “my father Abraham, have mercy on me (*ētraḥam 'lay*)”—about which cf. Q 7:23—and then he requests him, stating, “send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and moisten my tongue” (*šadar l-lā'āzar d-nēšbū' rīš sēb'ēh b-mayā wa nratēb lī lēšānī*; Luke 16:24). This scene is dogmatically re-articulated in Q 7:50 which, in keeping with the vision of strict monotheism espoused by Muḥammad, removes the divine-like Abraham and states,

And the people of hellfire called out (*nādā*) to the people of paradise, “pour upon us some water or from that which God has supplied you (*afīdū 'alaynā min al-mā' aw mimnā razaqaqum allāh*).” They said, “God has forbidden it upon the rebellious ones.”

(Q 7:50)

The verbal clauses “he called out” of Q 7:50 (*nādā*) and Luke 16:24 (*qrā*) are parallel, as are the requests to “pour upon us some water” and send Lazarus to “dip the tip of his finger in water and moisten my tongue.” In addition, like the case of the rich man in Luke's passage, the petition of those in hell is refused.

121 For more on *iblīs* see Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, 47–8.

122 Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:202.

The second point of dialogue concerning Luke 16:22–31 comes from Abraham, who residing in heaven tells the rich man in hell, “a great chasm is placed between us and you (that is, between paradise and hell)” (*hawtā rabtā sīmā baynayn wal-kūn*; Luke 16:26). The “great chasm” (*hawtā rabtā*) of this verse figures into the Qur’ān twice: once as the “chasm” (*hāwiyah*; also Diatessaron 29:18; cf. *Ardā Virāf Nāmak* 54) of Q 101:9–11 (see earlier discussion); and elsewhere as the “barrier” (*barzakh*) between paradise and hell in Q 23:100.¹²³

The third point of dialogue relates to the rich man’s petition to Abraham that he “send him [Lazarus] to my father’s house (*da-tšadrīwhī l-bēyt ābī*) ... to testify to them so that they do not also come to this place of torment (*nīzal nsahēd ēnūn d-lā āp hēnūn nūūn l-dūktā hādē d-tašnīqā*)” (Luke 16:28). This verse is generally in dialogue with many from the Qur’ān that illustrate the motif of dead or tormented evil folk asking to come back to life on earth for a second chance at living life (Q 2: 167; 23:99; 26:102; 39:58; and so on).

Finally, Abraham’s condition concerning the five brothers who might be destined for hell, that “if they do not listen to Moses and the prophets (*ēn l-mūšē wa l-nbīyē lā šām ‘īn*), so too if a man from the dead rises they will not believe him (*āp lā ēn ēnāš mēn mītē nqūm mhaymnīn lēh*; Luke 16:31)” is dogmatically re-articulated in several qur’ānic verses that evoke the Aramaic active participle *šām ‘īn*, “they are hearing/will hear” when discussing those who do and do not listen (*sama’*). In one of these verses, the dwellers of hell cry out, “if we would have listened (*nasma’*) or reasoned (*na’qil*) [that is, to Moses or the prophets] we would not have been among those of the flame” (Q 67:10; cf. 25:44). Also part of this dialogue is God’s advice, “and do not be like those who said we have heard (*sami’ nā*) [i.e. listened to Moses and the prophets] while they do not hear (*lā yasma’ ūn*)” (Q 8:21), and conversely references to the “hearing folk” (*qawm yasma’ ūn*; Q 10:67; 16:65; 30:23). Concerning Abraham’s mention of “Moses and the prophets,” numerous verses narrate the stories and lessons of Moses (e.g. Q 20:9–135; 28:3–88),¹²⁴ as well as demonstrate that the dwellers of hell failed to obey the warnings of the prophets (Q 6:130; 39:71; etc). But Luke 16:31 is in strongest dialogue with Q 6:36, which states, “indeed they who accept are those who listen (*al-ladhīn yasma’ ūn*), and God sends the dead (*wa al-mawtā yab’athuhum allāh*), where the juxtaposition of “those who listen” and “God sends the dead” has in mind the words of Abraham in Luke’s passage.

Paradise

Paradise is the dwelling place of the messengers, prophets, their righteous entourage—including martyrs—and the poor and downtrodden members of society who were tormented on earth by the abuses of the wealthy classes—including the

123 Cf. in relation Mona M. Zaki, *EQ*, “Barzakh.”

124 For more on the importance of Moses as the symbol of leadership see Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, 125–36.

clergy—and the hardships of lifelong misfortune and poverty. In the Qur’ān and Aramaic Gospels, among other things, paradise is associated with the garden (*al-jannah*; cf. *firdaws*, Old Persian *pairidaēza*)¹²⁵ and the heavens (*al-samā’*; *šmayā*). Among the many luxuries made available to the fortunate dwellers of this garden are fields that bear all kinds of fruit (*fākihah*, *pīrē*; cf. discussion on imagery of the bridal chamber of Syriac literature in Chapter 1) and vineyards that produce fine wine (*khamr*; Q 47:15; Matthew 26:29; Diatessaron 45:16). However, as the Gospel of Thomas and the Hadith corpus teach, these luxuries are not like their earthly counterparts, but rather like that which “no eye has seen, no ear has heard and heart has fathomed” (see Thomas 17; Bukhārī 60:300, 302; Muslim 40:6780–2).¹²⁶

Shining Faces

The dwellers of paradise will be known by the shining of their faces on the Day of Judgment. The Qur’ān describes this time as “the day when faces become white and faces become black” (*yawm tabyaḍḍ wujūh wa taswadd wujūh*). Those with blackened faces are tossed into the torment of hellfire. “As for those whose faces are white (*al-ladhīn ibyaḍḍat wujūhuhum*), they will dwell in the mercy of God forever” (Q 3:106–7).¹²⁷ Similarly, elsewhere it states that on that day, “their faces will shine before them and at their right hand” (*nūruhum yas’ā bayn aydīhim wa bi aymānihim*; Q 57:12; 66:8; cf. 57:19). And finally, thrice employing the Qur’ānic formula “on that day will faces be [X],” it states about the dwellers of paradise that, “on that day will faces be splendid” (*wujūh yawm^a’idhⁱⁿ nāḍīrah*; Q 75:22), as it states that their faces will be “bright” (*musfirah*; Q 80:38) and “joyous” (*nā’imah*; Q 88:8).¹²⁸

The language and imagery which vividly illustrate the shining faces of those fortunate enough to dwell in heaven is not really discussed in Hebrew Scripture (see, however, Daniel 7:9 and cf. Revelation 1:14), but comes rather from the appearance of Jesus in the Gospels. At the transfiguration, as Jesus is about to have a vision of Moses and Elias before his disciples, the author of Matthew likens him to Moses in Exodus 4:6 as it states, “And Jesus was transformed before them. And his face shone like the sun (*nhar paršūpēh ayk šēmšā*), and his clothing, furthermore, became white like light/snow (*hwarū ayk nūhrā/talgā*)”¹²⁹ (Matthew 17:2; cf. Mark 9:3; Luke 9:29; Diatessaron 24:4).

And so, this “light” (*nūhrā*) of Jesus’s face as he meets the ancient prophets Moses and Elias, is the same “light” (*nūr*) which will illuminate the face of those who dwell in paradise in Q 57:12, 19; 66:8 and it is, furthermore, a motif in

125 D. B. Macdonald, *EQ*, “Firdaws.”

126 For more cf. Leah Kinberg, *EQ*, “Paradise.”

127 Neuwirth, “Structural, linguistic and literary features,” 104–5 relates such juxtaposition, as found in Q 101:6–9 in particular, to the diptycha of Christian iconography.

128 See in relation Beeston, *Dictionnaire sabéen*, 90.

129 Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:249 records this Harklean reading; cf. further Jacob of Serugh, *Homiliae selectae*, 3:347–75 (On the Transfiguration: line 180–205).

dialogue the track of the sun and moon in *Ardā Virāf Nāmak* 8:4; 9:1; 15:18 as well as many epithets describing their splendid, bright, and joyous faces (Q 75:22; 80:38; 88:8).

The white faces of Q 3:106–7, similarly, are in dialogue with Jesus’s appearance in the final chapter of Matthew. Once Jesus has been crucified and buried, Mary the mother Jesus and Mary Magdalene go to visit his tomb after the Sabbath. Then it states,

And behold there was a great earthquake, and an angel from the Lord descended from heaven, approached and rolled away the stone from the entrance and sat upon it. Then his appearance was like lightening (*barqā*) and his clothes were white like snow (*lbūšēh ḥēwār hwā ayk talgā*).

(Matthew 28:2–3; Diatessaron 52:48–51)

Thus, the phrase “those whose faces are white” (Q 3:107) is in dialogue with Jesus’s appearance at the transfiguration which was “like lightening” and his clothes which were “white like snow”—a motif for perfection and purity from sin (Exodus 4:6; Psalms 51:7; Isaiah 1:18; see in relation Q 20:22; 27:12; 28:32).

Seated on Thrones

The Gospels explain that on the Day of Judgment, Jesus, who is indirectly but clearly identified with the “Son of Man” (Matthew 25:31) and the “Son of the Most High” (Luke 1:32), will sit upon the throne of the kingdom of Jacob (cf. the archangel Vohumān; *Ardā Virāf Nāmak* 11:1).¹³⁰ Then Jesus will state,

Truly I say to you that you who have come to follow me, in the new world when the Son of Man sits upon the throne of his glory (*trānāws/kūrsiyā*¹³¹ *d-šūbhēh*), you will also sit upon twelve seats (*trē’sar kūrsawān*). And you will judge the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left [their] houses, brothers, sisters, father, wife, children or fields for the sake of my name will receive one hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. Many, however, who are first (*qadmāyē*) will be last (*akhrāyē*) and the last first.

(Matthew 19:28–30; Mark 9:35; cf. Thomas 55; *Ardā Virāf Nāmak* 9:1; 14:14,19; 15:9, 16; *Bahmān Yasht* 3:39; cf. in relation Q 80:34–7)

In a similar vein, in Luke’s Gospel Jesus states,

The king of the gentiles are their lords, and the authorities over them are called doers of good. However, you must not be such, but rather whoever is great (*rab*) among you must be like the least (*z’ūrā*), and whoever is the head

130 See in relation Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 2:231, 272.

131 See variant readings in Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4:289.

(*rīšā*) should be a servant (*mšamšānā*). For who is greater [in social status], he who reclines (*haw da-smīk*) or he who serves (*da-mšamēš*)? Is it not he who reclines? However, I am among you as someone who serves. You, however, have remained with me through my trials. And I assure you as my Father has assured me a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at the banquet of my kingdom, sit upon thrones (*tētbūn* 'al *kūrsawātā*) and judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

(Luke 22:25–31; Diatessaron 29:7; see also Psalms 122:5; *Bahmān Yasht* 2:13)

These two passages demonstrate that the fundamental duality of injustice in this world, which favors the reclining master and disadvantages the wretched servant, will be reversed in the “new world.” The quintessence of universal justice is, therefore, the empowerment of the poor and downtrodden members of society and—complimentary to that—the impoverishment of the wealthy political and religious authorities in the hereafter.¹³² This quintessence is encapsulated in the statement, “the first will be last and the last first” (Matthew 19:30; 20:16; Mark 9:35; 10:31; Luke 13:30; cf. Thomas 4), which may—at some level—inform the language of the Qur’ān where it describes the challenges of Muḥammad’s early community to mobilize itself. Such descriptions include criticism against the stinginess and cowardice of the “hypocrites” (*al-munāfiqūn*) who fear that by returning to “the city” that “indeed the mightiest (*al-’a’azz*) will come out of it as the feeblest (*al-adhall*)” (Q 63:8; cf. in relation Q 3:26). They also include God’s favoring “those who struggle” (*al-mujāhidūn*) over “those who recline” (*al-qā’idūn*; Q 4:95; 9:86; cf. in relation Q 5:24; 9:46).¹³³

However, most important of all is the relationship between the duality of injustice and the enthronement of those who “followed” or “remained” with Jesus throughout his many trials upon lesser thrones or “seats” (*kūrsawātā*), which is dogmatically re-articulated throughout the verse of the Qur’ān, especially Q 83. It follows, therefore, that the “king of the gentiles,” the “authorities,” those who are “great” on earth, the “head” and “he who reclines” (Luke 22:25–31) are equivalent to “those who were criminal” (*al-ladhīn ajramū*; Q 83:29; cf. in relation Q 36:59) and the “rebellious ones” (*al-kuffār*; Q 83:34). In contradistinction to them are the “least,” the “servant” and the one “who serves,” (Luke 22:25–31) who correspond to those who believe (*al-ladhīn āmanū*; Q 83:29, 34). It continues,

Those who were criminal (*al-ladhīn ajramū*) used to laugh at those who believe (*al-ladhīn āmanū*). And when they passed them by they would wink

132 Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 17.

133 Khouri, “Selected ethical themes in the Qur’ān and the Gospel of Matthew,” 161–2. This relationship is not to be confused with Q 57:3 which identifies two of God’s divine attributes (see Chapter 5) stating, “He is the first (*al-awwal*) and the last (*al-ākhir*),” and which furthermore is in dialogue with God’s statement “I am the alpha (*alap*) and omega (*taw*)” found in Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13.

[mockingly] . . . But today those who believe (*al-ladhīn āmanū*) will laugh at the rebellious ones (*al-kuffār*), resting upon seats (*‘alā al-arā’ik muttaki’ūn*). Have the rebellious ones been rewarded for what they used to do?

(Q 83:29–36)¹³⁴

Like these dwellers of paradise who are assured a kingdom by Jesus, in which they “may eat and drink at the banquet” and “sit upon thrones” (Luke 22:31), the Qur’ān elaborates on this scene by stating, “those who believe and perform righteous works” will be adorned with bracelets, gold, green silk and velvet clothes, and they will be “resting there upon seats” (*muttaki’ūn fīhā ‘alā al-arā’ik*; Q 18:31). “They and their spouses”—whom they have reclaimed after having abandoned them in the context of Matthew 19:29 for the sake of Jesus’s name—“will be under fans resting upon seats (*‘alā al-arā’ik muttaki’ūn*),” enjoying the fruit of the garden and whatever else they desire (Q 36:55–57; cf. Thomas 22). Finally, Q 76:12–27 adds,

And He rewarded them on account of what they endured with gardens and silk. Resting there upon seats (*muttaki’ūn fīhā ‘alā al-arā’ik*), they do not see there [the heat of] sun nor cold . . . And a vessel made of silver and cups made of crystal will be passed around them . . . And they will be given there to drink a cup whose flavor is ginger.

(Q 76:12–27)

Their resting upon seats and drinking from the vessels and cups are very much in the spirit of Jesus’s promise to his loyal followers that they “may eat and drink at the banquet of my kingdom” and “sit upon thrones” (Luke 22: 31).

It is this final destination reclining upon thrones in paradise before the very face of God which was promised to the prophets and their righteous entourage on account of their piety, poverty, and persecution. The clergy on the other hand were doomed on account of their greed, hypocrisy, killing the prophets, and persecuting their righteous entourage to an eternity in hellfire. In this dichotomy the universal justice at the heart of the apocalyptic discourse shared in the Qur’ān and the Aramaic Gospels is fully realized.

134 See in relation Neuwirth, *Der Koran. Band 1*, 492.

7 Data Analysis and Conclusion

This study began by discussing the different dimensions of the Qur'ānic discourse, the sources with which it is in dialogue and the different scholarly approaches to framing this dialogue. Concerning its dialogue with the Aramaic Gospel Traditions, this study has argued that “dogmatic re-articulation” was the fundamental literary strategy on the part of the Qur'ān to promote a vision of “strict monotheism” to a sectarian Arabian audience (Chapter 1). After illustrating “prophetic tradition” as the historical framework behind religious movements in the late antique Near East (Chapter 2), this study undertook a comparative, literary analysis of the Qur'ān's Arabic text and the Aramaic text of the Gospels under four categories that are salient to both scriptural traditions. These categories led to a discussion about the prophets and their righteous entourage (Chapter 3), the evils of the clergy (Chapter 4), the divine realm (Chapter 5) and divine judgment and the apocalypse (Chapter 6). This final chapter lays out the results of our comparative, literary analysis as well as ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative’ conclusions concerning them.

Results

This section includes observations on the typology of literary relationships between the Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospels, and on the distribution of these relationships between both scriptures. Reflecting upon the relationships we have drawn in terms of a typology provides the ‘qualitative dimension’ of our conclusion. The ‘quantitative dimension’ of our conclusion stems from our discussion on the distribution of data. First we turn our attention to the constructed typology.

Typology

It is imperative to note that this typology only takes into account the ‘main verses’ that form the backbone of the dialogue between both scriptures, and not the many ‘related verses’ referenced alongside. Likewise, it is necessary to note that due to the different levels (syntactic, rhetorical, philological, phonetic, and so on) at which texts simultaneous function, there exists some degree of unavoidable overlapping in this typology. At any rate, the complete “typology” is available in Appendix B. A summary of the results from this typology follows.

There are three general typological categories for the relationships we have drawn between the Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospels. These are relationships related through syntax and/or philology—that is (1) whole passages, (2) clauses or phrases, and (3) short phrases that share multiple relationships. The next category is that of (4) lexical items related through philology or translation—that is, words that are either derived from the same root or calques. The final category is that of (5) phonetically or rhetorically related items—that is, rhyme and repetition within a chapter or Surah. An outline of the typology and total number of relationships (not verses cited—which is far greater) follows.

It is clear that the great majority of relationships drawn between the Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions occur at the macro-textual level, that is, between whole passages, clauses/phrases and short phrases. The percentages of these sub-categories add up to 71 percent (33+26+10+2) of all relationships. The number of relationships that occur at the micro-textual, lexical or atomistic level, that is, between words derived from the same root or calques, makes up 27 percent (15+12) of all relationships.

Concerning the results of the typology, the contribution of phonetic and rhetorical relationships appears comparatively miniscule. However, it would be misleading and deceptive to accept this statistic at face value without qualifying the sheer importance of both phonetic quality—especially rhyme and rhetoric—especially the use of repetition—to the Qur'ān's dogmatic re-articulation of the Aramaic Gospels.¹ Repetition in scripture was a standard literary practice made popular by Hebrew Scripture, parts of New Testament and then the Qur'ān. That being said, the multiple repetitions of the curse formula against the “scribes and hypocrites” in Matthew 23 and its parallel against the “disbelievers” (*al-mukadhdhibūn*) in Q 77 is a literary rarity—or even novelty—shared (uniquely?) between the Qur'ān and Aramaic text of Matthew's Gospel. Therefore, while this rhyme constitutes

Table 7.1 Typology and Relationships

	<i>Relationships</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1 Cognate Passages	36	33
2 Cognate Clauses/Phrases	29	26
3 Cognate Short Phrases		
Nominal/Possessive/Partitive Constructs	11	10
Verbal Couplets	2	2
4 Lexica		
Shared Roots	17	15
Calques	13	12
5 Phonetic And Rhetorical Relationships		
Rhyme	1	1
Internal Repetition	1	1
Total Relationships (Not Verses)	110	100

1 For more on repetition in the Qur'ān see Dalia Abo Haggag, “Repetition: A Key to Qur'ānic Style, Structure and Meaning,” Ph.D diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2010.

only one type of relationship, its repetition puts all of Q 77 in dialogue with Matthew 23; Luke 11:44 and gives that Surah the second highest frequency of verses (50) in our table of raw data (see Figure 7.2; Appendix C).

Rhyme was just as important. It was the vehicle of Arabian prophetic speech and often of Syriac homiletic exhortation, both of which embody the rhetorical dimension of the Qur'ān's dogmatic re-articulation of the Aramaic Gospel Traditions.² The question—if it has ever been asked before—as to whether the actual rhyme morphemes (*fawāṣil*; *qawāfi*) employed in a given Surah are intentional or arbitrary may not be answered decisively here, although some progress may be made in this vein. Put differently, could the rhyme morphemes employed in the Aramaic verses of the Gospels—notably a passage as significant as the Beautitudes (Matthew 5:3–16; Luke 11:2–4) with which the Qur'ān was in close dialogue (for example, Q 13:29)—have helped influence the choice of rhyme morphemes employed in a particular Surah? After all the rhyme morphemes employed in the Beautitudes—let alone the vast sea of Syriac Christian mystical hymns (*madrāṣē*) that sprouted after it—are *ā* and *ūn*, which mirror the most common Qur'ānic rhyme morphemes *an/ā* (e.g. Q 17–20; 25) and the *ūn/īn* (for example, Q 21; 23; 26). I would argue that the Qur'ān used rhyme just as much as other literary strategies to propagate a vision of strict monotheism to an audience of Christians in an Arabian context—among other sectarian players—who were steeped in Syriac Christian literature. It would be interesting to see what further research on this subject may yield.

That the vast majority of relationships between the Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospels occur at the macro-textual level only proves how intimately the texts are in dialogue. In other words the Qur'ān confesses a keen awareness of the terminology, sentence structure, and thesis of coherent literary units (chapters and passages) within the Aramaic Gospels themselves. This has been most evident in the dialogue between the large passages of our literary analysis. These cases include, but are not limited to: the close yet careful reformulation of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13; cf. Luke 11:2–4) into the *fātiḥah* (Q 1:1–7); the summarization of the apocalyptic imagery found in Matthew 24; Mark 13, and Luke 21 and its reformulation multiple times as the introductory verses of the Meccan Surahs, Q 51 through Q 86, Q 99 and Q 101; the summarization of the conversation between Abraham in paradise and the rich man in hell (Luke 16:22–31) and its reformulation in Q 7:50; the close narrative structure shared in Matthew 25's portrayal of the Day of Judgment and that of Q 39:67–75; and the multiple repetitions of the curse in Matthew 23 and its parallel in Q 77 (see earlier discussion).

The macro-textual level at which the Qur'ān and Aramaic Gospels intimately converse also consist of cognate clauses or phrases, and various kinds of short phrases. Among these is the institution dubbed “socio-military struggle” (*jihād*)

2 Cf. in relation Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 15–19, 187; Stewart, “Saj' in the Qur'an,” 103; Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext*, 253. Cf. further the examples of repetition provided in Conolly in Narsai, *The Liturgical Homilies*, xvii–xviii. For more on how rhyme operates within the Qur'ān see Neuwirth, *Der Koran als Text der Spätantike*, 685–722.

“in the way of God” (*fī sabīl allāh*; Q 49:15; 61:11; and so on), which this study argues is a welfare system serving the downtrodden men, women (especially widows), and orphans of Muḥammad’s early Muslim community (Q 4:75), and whose articulation was inspired at some level by “the house of offerings of God” (*bayt qūrbānē d-alāhā*; Luke 21:4). This welfare system demonstrates that Muḥammad showed the greatest concern for families shattered by the untimely death of the head of the household—perhaps as a result of military raids—leaving behind widows and orphans to fend for themselves. Conversely, the Qur’ān condemns the predation of male guardians that would exploit the wealth of such defenseless widows and orphans in association with the wealthy, uncharitable, and greedy clergy (for example, Q 9:31, 34), which in turn is inspired by the condemnation of the Pharisees in the Aramaic Gospels (for example, Matthew 10:9; 23:16–29). One of the greatest transgressions committed by the Pharisees—namely “devour[ing] the households of widows” (*āklīn bātē d-armaltē*; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47)—closely matches that of predatory guardians among the early Muslim community—namely “devour[ing] the wealth of orphans” (*ya’kulūn amwāl al-yatāmā*; Q 4:10; cf. Q 9:31, 34). It has been argued that it is precisely for the social welfare of widows and the protection of orphans’ inheritance that polygamy was instituted by Q 4:2–3, 10.

Data Distribution

Data for the distribution was calculated by tallying all the ‘main verses’ cited (see Appendix A) and recording the raw data in a table (see Appendix C). The distribution was then represented in two different ways: column graphs for the Qur’ān (see Figure 7.1) and each of the four Aramaic Gospels (see Figure 7.2); as well as individual and aggregate area of intersection circles (see Figure 7.3). The individual circles represent the intersection of the Qur’ān text with that of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John individually; the aggregate area of intersection circle represents its intersection with the Aramaic Gospels as a whole.

The results of the tally yield that in this study Matthew demonstrates a 20 percent dialogue with the Qur’ān, the greatest percentage out of the four Gospels. The next greatest percentage is that of Mark with 12 percent, followed by Luke at 10 percent and finally John with an exceptionally smaller 2 percent. The results also yield that in this study 11 percent of the Qur’ān is in dialogue with the entirety of the Aramaic Gospel Traditions. Conversely, 12 percent of the Gospels are in dialogue with the whole Qur’ān. These percentages are based solely on the syntactic, philological, phonetic, and rhetorical relationships we have drawn among the ‘main verses.’ Had the data derived from a potentially unlimited pool of generally ‘related verses’—or parallels—been included, these percentages would have become arbitrarily—and uncontrollably—high. Consequently, these ‘percentages of dialogue’ are translated graphically into ‘areas of intersections’ (see Figure 7.3).

Relationships with the Aramaic Gospels occur throughout the Qur’ān text, among both of the so called Meccan and Medinan Surahs. Taking this fact and the problematic nature of this dichotomy into consideration, it is best to read the data

while considering the Qur'ān as a flat text.³ In other words, while some Surahs or passages indicate that they were first articulated by Muḥammad to his early Muslim community as they endured a variety of challenges (including a migration),⁴ the process of collection, editing, internal (re-)ordering, and canonization of the 'Uthmānic codex in the decades that followed (within 632–714 CE) gave precedence to textual coherence rather than narrative coherence.⁵ Furthermore, various syntactic, philological, phonetic, and rhetorical data occur identically in both Meccan and Medinan Surahs, making this division somewhat unhelpful for statistical purposes. The most meaningful divisions in the text are those of the Surahs themselves. That being said, two Surahs exhibit an exorbitantly high frequency of relationships, namely Q 56, whose frequency is 73 verses, and Q 77 whose frequency is 50 verses. This is understandable given that the entirety of Q 56:1–56 is in close dialogue with the apocalyptic imagery of Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24–25; Luke 21:25–26, and the judgment scene of Matthew 25. Similarly, the language and rhetoric employed in Q 77:1–50 are similarly in dialogue with those of Matthew 23; Luke 11:44.

There are, furthermore, large and small clusters of Surahs in which data is concentrated. The mark of a large cluster is the presence of at least ten adjacent Surahs whose average frequency of the verses is approximately ten. Small clusters may demonstrate the presence of less adjacent Surahs and/or a lower frequency. The first large cluster includes the first dozen or so Surahs. The descending frequency of their verses—starting with Q 2's 34 to Q 10's 10 or Q 12's 4—is likely influenced by the steep decline in Surah size beginning with Q2 onward. The next large cluster of data is found in Q 16–26. The final large cluster of data occurs in Q 74–84, which make up for a good number of relationships shared by the apocalyptic verses that occur at the start of many later (Meccan?) Surahs and their apocalyptic antecedents in Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24–25; Luke 21:25–26. Small clusters of Surahs in which data is concentrated include Q 33–43; Q 51–52; Q 67–70; Q 99–101. Other features worth noting are the virtual absence of data between Q 85–97—save Q 88–90's modest 2.7 average frequency—and again between Q 102–11—save for Q 107's sizeable frequency of eight verses.

3 This is not to deny Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 11's case that there existed earlier layers in the text. Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies*, 43–4 similarly differentiates the composite nature of the urtext and the uniform nature of the canonized text.

4 Robinson, "The rise of Islam," 191.

5 The textual coherence to which I am referring includes for example: the fronting of the Qur'ān's unique Surah entitled *al-fātihah*, "the opening," to serve as a liturgical introduction to the book; the generally descending order of Surahs from largest to smallest; the clustering of Surahs with *muqatta'āt* (*alif-lām-mīm*; *hā-mīm*; and so on); and the placing of the three Surahs (Q 112–14) at the end of the text to serve as protective charms. Cf. also Sadeghi, "The Codex of a Companion," 413 which explains that Muḥammad dictated the revelations and the scribes wrote them down. It continues to explain that while Muḥammad was by and large responsible for the internal contents of the Surahs (including verse division and distribution), he was not responsible for the ordering of the Surahs. Cf. further Claude Gilliot, "Reconsidering the authorship of the Qur'ān: is the Qur'ān partly the fruit of a progressive and collective work?" in Gabriel Reynolds (ed.), *The Qur'ān in its Historical Context*, London; New York: Routledge, 2008.

Relationships with the Qur’ān occur throughout the Aramaic Gospels as well. However, given the narrative structure and smaller size of each Gospel, the pattern of distribution is more easily apparent. The frequency of verses in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) generally increases from the first to the third to last chapter. This means that the greatest concentration of data occurs in clusters of chapters whose average frequency of verses is about 20, and which occur in final chapters of the Synoptics. These chapters are Matthew 23–26; Mark 12–14; and Luke 16, 18, 21–22, whose discourse on the evils of the clergy, the apocalypse and divine judgment were in close dialogue with the Qur’ān (for example, Q 7:50; 9:31, 34; 39:67–75). Also worthy of note is the exceptionally high frequency of Matthew 5, whose diverse content was in close dialogue with several Surahs. Given its different nature from that of the Synoptic Gospels, whatever little data is found in John’s Gospel is spread throughout the text somewhat randomly. Despite its quantitatively small contribution, John’s Gospel makes strong remarks concerning both light (John 9:5) and word (John 1:1, 14), to which the Qur’ān later responded (especially Q 24:35–36).

Observations, Conclusions, and Prospects

By now the claims put forth at the introduction of this study have been proven. We may indeed, therefore, conclude that the Qur’ān is in close dialogue with the text and context of the Gospels through their transmission in the Syriac and Christian Palestinian dialects of Aramaic. We may also conclude that this dialogue was mediated through the literary and hermeneutical strategy dubbed “dogmatic re-articulation.” So on the one hand the Qur’ān does not demonstrate a superficial awareness of the Gospel texts. On the other hand, the theory that its text—or *urtext*—originated either as a purely Syriac lectionary (without respect to the multiplicity of non-Syriac or non-Christian religious impulses that clearly

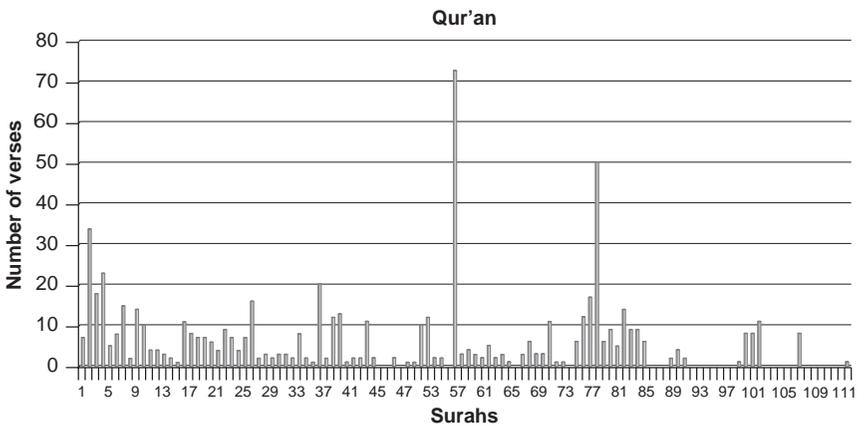


Figure 7.1 Distribution of Qur’ānic Data

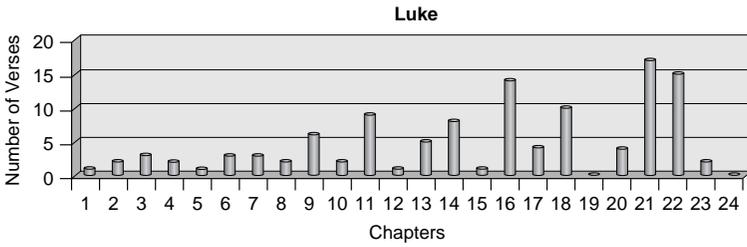
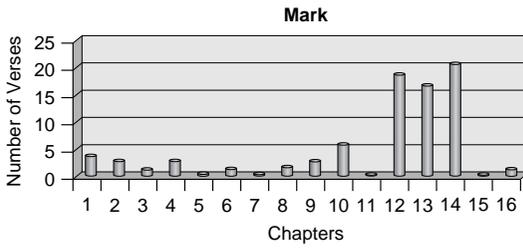
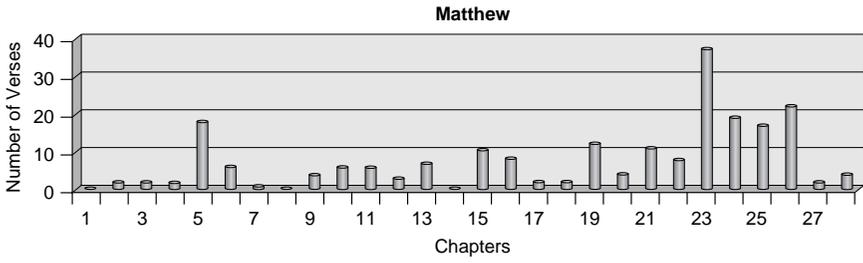


Figure 7.2 Distribution of Aramaic Gospel Data

had an impact on the articulation of the Qur'ān) or, alternately, as a Christian scripture for the Arabs—is not supported by the evidence of this study.⁶ In addition, by virtue of the fact that the majority of literary relationships drawn come from intersections between the New Testament Peshitta and 'Uthmānic codex, the dominance of Matthean verses incorporated into the Qur'ān may be attributed to the primacy of ethics, prayer, and apocalypticism⁷—among other themes—in the Qur'ān's milieu, rather than simplistic theories concerning heretical influences (see Chapter 1).⁸

The evidence adduced in this study makes it clear that the Qur'ān was being articulated to a sophisticated audience familiar, first and foremost, with the discourse of Judeo-Christian prophetic tradition (see Chapter 2). The Aramaic Gospel Traditions are only part of this larger intertextual dialogue, which encompassed numerous textual traditions from the Bible, especially the books of Psalms, Isaiah, Acts, Romans, Revelations, and related Aramaic traditions of Rabbinical commentary and Christian homiletic. The familiarity of the Qur'ān with the events in the Acts of the Apostles, the doctrines of Paul's epistle to the Romans and the apocalyptic imagery of the book of Revelations confirms a broader conception of *al-injīl* beyond just the Gospel Traditions to include the New Testament as a whole.⁹ In any case, given the Arabic superstructure of the Qur'ān text, its freedom from the sectarian tampering among subsequent Muslim generations (ca. 656–)¹⁰ and the dating of its earliest manuscripts to the (first half of?) the seventh century, it would behoove us to reconsider older assumptions concerning the Arabian context of the Qur'ān's milieu, rather than re-situate this context to a wholly different time and a different geographical center (see Chapter 1).

However, “adjustments” to the Qur'ān's time and place are a necessary result of continued research. In this regard, we may concede a slightly more prolonged period of Qur'ānic articulation and transcription, as well as the inclusion of Jerusalem (for example, Q 17:1) and its surroundings along with Bakkah (Mecca?; Q 3:96) and Yathrib (Q 33:13) among the matrix of cities central to the text.¹¹

6 Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 1–10; Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies*, 45; Luxenberg, *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran*, 79–81.

7 Andrae, *Les origines de l'islam et le christianisme*, 91–2; Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity*, 191; Donner, “The historical context,” 35.

8 The dominance of wisdom from Matthew in the late antique period (180–632) and Qur'anic period (610–714) of the Near East continued into the early Islamic period (714–845; see Table 1, Chapter 1). Cf. in relation David Cook, “Evidence for intercultural contact: Early Muslim translations of the Gospel of Matthew,” Lecture delivered to the Byzantine Studies Workshop, University of Chicago, January 23, 2001.

9 Brady, “The Book of Revelation and the Qur'an,” 216–25 believes the latter of these is the *injīl*, which can—at best—only be partially true given the Qur'an's conception of *al-injīl* as a parallel corpus to that of Hebrew Scripture (for example, Q 3:3; 5:66). Cf. further James Richie, “Are the Old and New Testaments the same as the Tawrat and Injīl referred to in the Qur'ān?,” *BCIS* 4, 1981.

10 Donner, *Narratives*, 60–1. Cf. also Sadeghi, “The Codex of a Companion,” 414.

11 Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 104.

Modern scholarship has put emphasis on the cosmopolitan, sedentary, and urban nature of the Qur'ān's milieu, which is true. However, this milieu was just as informed by the verdant, desert, and maritime environs its audience traversed between cities. To put this differently, Muḥammad and his community of believers experienced expulsion, fear, and hunger, after which they were rewarded with a (new) "secure sanctuary" (*ḥaram āmin*) and many fruits (Q 24: 53–57; 28:57; 106)—just like Abraham and his people (see Chapter 1). They received "mercy after hardship," fleeing upon land and sea (Q 10:21–23; cf. Q 17:70)—just like Noah and his family, and not unlike Jonah in the belly of the fish. Whether such connections can help explain the respective Hanafite pre-history of Islam in the Qur'ān or the identity of the people identified by the shark totem (*quraysh*) in Q 106:1 remains to be seen. However, this too is an area which may benefit from further research.¹²

Moreover, the pagan cults of cities and towns in or near the Ḥijāz which are claimed to belong to the Qur'ān's milieu (Mecca, Yathrib, Ṭā'if, and so on) were—unlike the image portrayed in the *Sīrah*—probably in serious decline by the time of the prophet Muḥammad. Moreover, such cults were probably, not unlike their counterparts in Syrian and Mesopotamian cities (such as Harran, Hatra and Palmyra), syncretistic in nature.¹³ In this respect, however, the incorporation of icons depicting the prophet Abraham, Virgin Mary, and baby Jesus into the Ka'bah's pantheon—as portrayed in the *Sīrah*—is certainly plausible (see Chapter 1). Likewise, the Qur'ān's discourse with the daughters of Allāh (Manāt, Lāt, and 'Uzzā; Q 53:19–23; cf. 37:149–50; cf. further Q 12:40)—whose "names" (*asmā'*) likely represented one trend of monotheistic diversity in the Qur'ān's milieu in any case—or that of the Sirius constellation (*shu'rā'*; Q 53:49) is miniscule in comparison to the text's overarching sectarian discourse surrounding Christian dogma and Jewish law.¹⁴ Rival camps of Jewish, Christian, and Hanafite monotheists, therefore, seem to have constituted the standard form of religious praxis in the Qur'ān's milieu, and polytheistic pagan cults its exception.¹⁵

12 My insights in this regards are partly the result a lively discussion at the Qur'an Seminar held at the University of Notre Dame in April, 2013, between myself and Patricia Crone, to whom I owe thanks. For another perspective on this qur'ānic topography see Neuwirth, *Der Koran als Text der Spätantike*, 542–8.

13 Cf. Healey, *The Religion of the Nabataeans*, 14–15.

14 Cf. in relation Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam*, 130. The conception of the daughters of Allah as angels in *ibid.* 136–37, rather than the cult(s) attested in Arabian inscriptions or Ibn al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-aṣṅām*, 13–14, 16–19, is more in line with the verses of the Qur'ān and the angelology of Hebrew and Christian scripture with which it is in dialogue. If the claim that prior to his prophecy Muḥammad offered a sheep as a sacrifice to al-'Uzzā in Ibn al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-aṣṅām*, 19 is true, this need not undermine the monotheistic undertones of this act. For such sacrifices may have been offered to the daughters of Allāh probably in hopes of intercession—or abundance—and in order to come nearer to God (cf. *ibid.*; Q 39:3).

15 This thesis is best expressed by *ibid.*, 150; Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 59, and is also evident even in Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, 158–61. Cf. in relation Anton Baumstark, "Jüdischer und Christlicher Gebetsstypus im Koran," *DE* 16, 1927; "Zur Herkunft der monotheistischen Bekenntnisformel im Koran," *OC* 37, 1953.

Our literary analysis also seems to support the idea that some of the Christian groups of the Qur'ān's milieu were Jewish-Christians¹⁶—that is to say Jews who believed that Jesus was the Messiah. This idea is inferred from the fact that the Qur'ān associates (or identifies?) the potential male predators of an orphan's inheritance (Q 4:2, 10; Cf. Q 4:29; 2:188) with the greedy scribes and priests of Q 9:31, 34, who are modeled after the scribes and Pharisees of the Gospels (Matthew 10:9; 23:16–29; Luke 20:46–47; 21:1–4; Mark 12:38–44; cf. further Didascalia 17–18). Q 4:3 seeks to diffuse the predation of such men by calling upon them to marry widows (that is, mothers of orphans), which implies that the clergy with which the Qur'ān is at odds are not celibate like Christian priests, but rather could marry like Jewish rabbis. The Qur'ān's Jewish-Christian sympathies are also decipherable in Q 57:26–27's condemnation of the early Church clergy once Paul and his camp had all but nullified the need for Jewish Law (Acts 13:1; 15; 20:28).

The evidence adduced in this study makes it clear that circulating traditions from the Aramaic Christian sphere intersected with the Qur'ān's milieu early, on multiple occasions, and from different individual sources. These crucial observations are illustrated best in the opening verses of the so called 'Meccan Surahs,' including Q 51:1–9 which integrates terminology from Syriac, CPA, and Jewish Aramaic into the Arabic cognate accusative grammatical constructions (*maf'ūl mutlaq*) that are a hallmark of the cryptic prophetic speech employed in the Qur'ān (see Chapter 6). The integration of terminology from different Aramaic dialects—and not Syriac alone—into Arabian prophetic speech might reflect a more nuanced understanding of what Luxenberg calls *Mischprache*.¹⁷ The multiplicity of Aramaic substrata is diffused throughout the Qur'ān text (see Figures 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3) and confirms our claim in Chapter 1 that the process of dialogue between the Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions took place over centuries.¹⁸

As was the case in the Sasanian and Byzantine empires, the Arabian sphere produced several prophetic claimants during the late antique period (see Chapter 2). These religious actors were most likely bilingual, that is, conversant in both Arabic and Syriac/CPA.¹⁹ The Aramaic Gospels could have begun entering the Arabian sphere as early as 180 (by when the Peshitta was certainly complete) but by not later than the fifth century (from when the earliest extant CPA Gospel fragments date). Although this means that the raw materials for the Qur'ān's dogmatic

16 Cf. De Blois, "Nasrani and Hanif," 26.

17 Luxenberg, *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran*, 299.

18 Even Lüling, *A Challenge to Islam for Reformation*, 21, 339 posits that "the Christian ground layer" of the Qur'ān precedes Muḥammad by about 200 years (that is, ca. 370 CE) and as late as 500 CE.

19 Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, 8–9; Ernst A. Knauf, "Arabo-Aramaic and 'Arabiyya: From Ancient Arabic to Early Standard Arabic, 200 ce–600 ce" in *ibid.* (eds.), *The Qur'an in Context*, 200–4. Even after the Islamic conquests of the seventh century, Syriac Christian patriarchs continued to emerge from the Arabian sphere. These include the fathers of *bēt qatrāyē* (Qatar) like Isaac of Nineveh (d. ca. 700), and others like George (d. ca. 725) who served as bishop of the Arab tribes Ṭayy', 'Uqayl and Tanūkh.

re-articulation came centuries before the prophet Muḥammad, it is intriguing to consider the possibility that he too was bilingual. The occurrence of Qur'ānic lexica which are *both* philological cognates to lexica in the Aramaic Gospels as well as calques may be evidence that Muḥammad—who is assumed to be the original articulator of revelation—had a good grasp of (A) integrating ambient Aramaicisms into his Arabian prophetic speech, as well as (B) translating Aramaic terminology into Arabic. Such lexica include words like *maqālīd* and *mafātīh/īḥ* for *i/qlīdē*, meaning “keys;” *sirāj* and *miṣbāḥ* for *śrāgā*, meaning “lamp;” *nūr* and *ḍiyā'/ḍaw'* for *nūhrā*, meaning “light;” as well as *n-s-y* and *fitnah* for *nēsūnā*, meaning “temptation” (see in relation Appendix B). Another possibility is that the committee(s) put in charge of codifying the Qur'ān text was composed of scribes that knew Arabic as well as Aramaic. To this end, the claim in the Islamic literary sources that Muḥammad's scribe and the head of 'Uthmān's committee for the codification of his canonical text, Zayd b. Thābit, knew Aramaic may hold some truth (see Chapter 1). One may alternately argue that such lexical variety—or even redundancy—as is evident in the presence of loan words as well as calques in the Qur'ān text may merely be the result of literary style. Until more research is done a definite answer will be hard to come by.

Should the idea that the prophet Muḥammad, Zayd, or any subsequent scribal authority knew Aramaic dialect in addition to Arabic be true, then the fluency with which the Qur'ān intricately refutes Hebrew and Christian scripture and interweaves them with Rabbinic commentary and Christian homiletic becomes far less mysterious. As a leading figure among the Hanifs, Muhammad's disputations with Arabic speaking Christians in the Ḥijāz province, the city of Najrān, and possibly even among the tribes of Banū Tamīm or Ḥanīfah in East Arabia would have concerned their scripture—especially the Aramaic Gospel Traditions. It is less likely, given the dogmatic re-articulation of the Aramaic Gospels which resulted from sectarian disputations of the Arabian sphere, that Muḥammad grappled with the Aramaic Gospels directly as much as he did through the mediation of Syriac Christian wisdom circulating (orally?), like Aphrahat's *Demonstration on Monks*, Ephrem's *Hymn on Paradise*, Narsai's *Exposition of the Mysteries* and numerous other homiletic and hymnal works which—in some ways—serve as a near precedent to the very Surahs of the Qur'ān. In a similar vein, Muḥammad's renewal of Judeo-Christian prophetic tradition (*islām*; *mašlmānūtā*) among the Aramaean and Arabian *body politic* of Christians in the Qur'ān's milieu should not, therefore, be understood solely in concert with the political or ecumenical reforms of John of Ephesus or Babai the Great, but also the deep mystical and prophetic inclinations latent in the expositions on the Gospels by Jacob of Serugh.²⁰

Prophetic Tradition after the Qur'ān

It is, I would argue, amid the multiplicity of prophetic impulses which sprouted all over the late antique Near East, and especially those in the Arabian and Aramaic

20 See in relation Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext*, 245–52.

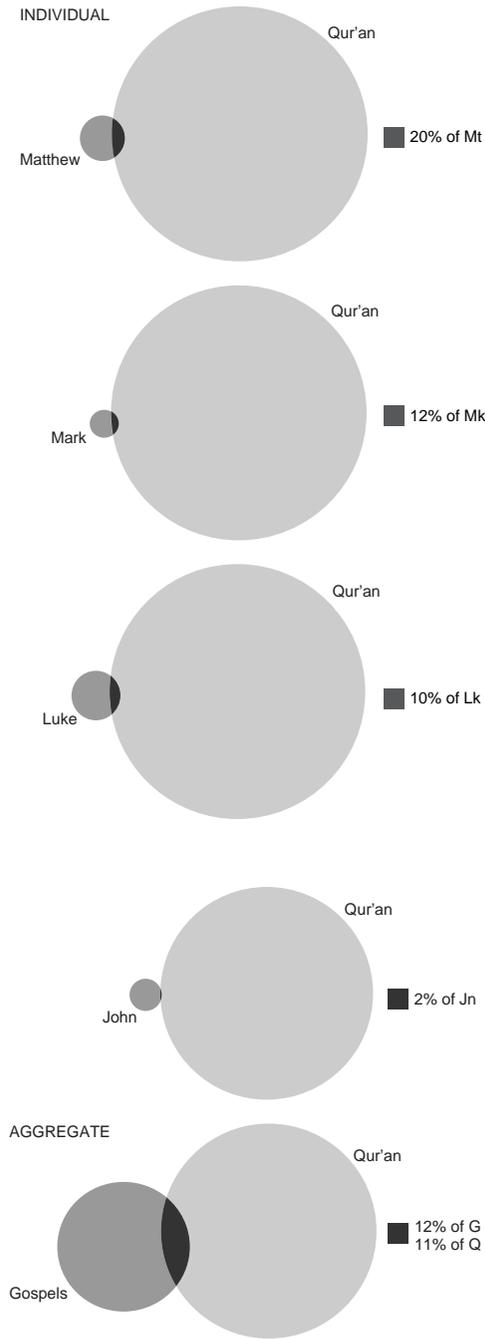


Figure 7.3 Individual and Aggregate Intersections

spheres, that the Qur'ān may be appreciated as both a collection of divine revelations as well as a product of religious cross-pollination. Therefore, it is not the finality of an individual prophetic tradition nor its written legacy—scripture—but rather the continuity of prophetic tradition and scripture that bestows upon us the broadest perspective from which to appreciate them both.²¹ The continuity of the prophetic traditions immediately preceding and following the Qur'ān are informed by (1) Jeffery's notion of the text as belonging to a genre of late antique Near Eastern "scripture,"²² (2) Sinai's awareness of the internal evolutionary "process" within the articulation of the text,²³ and (3) viewing the text like Abū Zayd as an evolving "discourse" with which to grapple—rather than a reified object (*shay'*) of classical exegetical interpretation.²⁴

It is no coincidence that the highly institutionalized nature of religion in the medieval and modern world (ca. ninth–twentieth centuries) gave rise to new prophetic traditions that were—in part—inspired by the impulse behind the wisdom of the Qur'ān. And so, the Qur'ān is in dialogue with both Islamic as well as extra-Islamic scriptures after it.²⁵ The process of cross-pollination between Judaism and Christianity on the one hand and Islam on the other did not end with the Qur'ān, but rather its teachings contributed to Islam's dialogue with later Midrashic debates and Christian disputations.²⁶

In addition, hard fought political unity and scholarly consensus among the Jamā'ī Muslims of the Abbasid Empire (750–1258) led to the canonization of Sunnī Hadith collections by six imams (*al-Ṣiḥāḥ al-sittah*; ninth–tenth century).²⁷ More diverse prophetic impulses, however, were born out of the highly organized institution of the clergy. The resonance of the seven Hindu sages (*ṛiṣis*), the thirteen judges (*ṣōpatīm*) of Hebrew Scripture, the apostles of the Syriac Christian Patriarchate (*šlīḥē*), and other ancient and late antique orders of holy men are

21 Finality here marks a personal choice by an individual or community to remain committed to a particular scripture(s) for dogmatic reasons. Cf. in relation to the "finality of prophethood [and] religion" in Bijlefeld, "A prophet and more than a prophet?," 4.

22 Jeffery, *Qur'ān as Scripture*, op. cit.

23 Nicolai Sinai, "The Qur'an as process" in *ibid.* (eds.), *The Qur'ān in Context*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2009.

24 Abū Zayd, *Mafhūm al-naṣṣ*, 336–7.

25 There is more nuance and intentionality behind the term "extra-Islamic," rather than non-Islamic. For the former implies that out of the rich prophetic tradition that is Islam and its scripture, the Qur'ān, newer prophetic traditions—beyond Islam itself—were forged.

26 For example, the renewed Midrashic debate surrounding the figure of Ishmael is discussed in Steven Daniel Sacks, *Midrash and Multiplicity: Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezar and the Renewal of Rabbinic Interpretive Culture*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009, 157–64. The Muslim–Christian debate of later centuries is also evident in the Kindī-Hāshimī preserved in Kindī, *Risālah*, op. cit., as well as Alphonse Mingana, "The Debate on the Christian Faith between Timothy I and Caliph Maḥdī in 781 A.D.," *BJRL* 12:2, 1928, 16–90. Furthermore, the Qur'ān may have indirectly contributed to the sentiment of "iconoclasm" which embroiled Melkite patriarchs like Leontius of Neapolis (d. ca. 650) and John of Damascus (d. ca. 749). Cf. Daniel J. Sahas, *EQ*, "Iconoclasm."

27 Cf. the *Ṣaḥā'ih* of Bukhārī and Muslim; the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd, al-Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah; as well as the *Jāmi'* of al-Tirmidhī.

felt in the institution of the Shī'ī Imamate (*imāmah*), whose genealogical structure and complex doctrinal focus proved to be fertile ground for the inspiration of yet further prophetic traditions in dialogue with the Qur'ān.²⁸ These extend beyond the teachings of Imāmī, Ismā'īlī, and Zaydī Shī'ism to the scripture known as *Kitāb al-ḥikmah* of the Druze—partly inspired by the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākīm bi Amr Allāh (d. 412/1021) and later compiled by 'Abd Allāh al-Tanūkhī (d. 885/1480)—the scripture of Bahā'ullāh (d. 1892) known as *Kitāb-ī-mustaṭāb-ī-īqān*,²⁹ and the lectures of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908). Similarly, the scripture of Sikhism—a prophetic tradition founded by Guru Nanak Dev Ji (d. 1539) which developed in dialogue with the teachings of both Islam and Hinduism—known as the *Guru Granth Sahib* is itself believed to be the last in line of ten prophetic figures known as Gurus.³⁰

The broadest appreciation of Qur'ān—which goes beyond the confines of classical exegetical literature (*Tafsīr*) and contributes *truly* original insights to the genre of Qur'ānic Sciences ('*Ulūm al-qur'ān*) is to perceive its dogmatic re-articulation of the scriptures coming from earlier prophetic traditions as well as its contribution to later prophetic traditions. It is to appreciate a complicated text whose inspiration from the divine realm and articulation onto the plane of human history make it one of the greatest manifestations of scripture, both in the world of late antiquity and in our world today. *Wa allāh" a'lam.*

28 The uses of the terms “apostle” (*šlīḥē*) in the Jewish and Christian literature of the late antique period and “leader” (*imām*) in the Qur'ān as well as early Islamic literature demonstrate a great deal of uniformity. Future research may illustrate how both terms make reference to a successor to the prophets, a member of the clergy, a prayer leader, and scripture. The uses of the term *gūrū* in Sikh history function in much the same way.

29 Cf. in relation Christopher George Buck, “Bahā'īs,” *EQ*.

30 It is intriguing to consider the order of Sikh Gurus as a kind of counter Imamate, especially since it altogether replaces the problematic function of an awaited apocalyptic savior—that is, the Mahdī—with the “finality” of scripture. The idea that a scripture can fulfill the role of religious leader is articulated in Q 11:17 and the function of the *Gēnzā Rbā*. In addition, the Qur'ān continues to share with other scriptures in the unending process of dialogue which produced modern traditions—both within and without Islam—whose ethos is either critical of the continued development of prophetic tradition (for example, adherents of the Qur'ānist/Qur'ān Only school, like Aḥmad Subḥī Mansūr; see Chapter 1) or antithetical to the prophetic impulse altogether (such as Deists). It can be argued that even Deists like Thomas Jefferson (d. 1826), whose outlook had no place for the idea of prophecy, were in dialogue with the Qur'ān. Not only was he exposed to the teachings of the Qur'ān but he is known for creating out of the Bible a “sayings of Jesus” text known as the *Jefferson Bible*.

Appendix A: Parallel Index of Verses and Subjects

Table A1.1 Index of Main Verses Cited

<i>Gospel Passage</i>	<i>Qur'ānic Passage</i>	<i>Related Passage from Bible or Hadith</i>	<i>Subject</i>
	Q 3:59	Romans 5:14, 21	Sin, Second Adam
Matthew 13:24, 31, 33; 21:33–41; Mark 12:1–11; Luke 13:6; 14:7; 15:3; 18:1, 9; 21:29	Q 14:24; 16:75–76, 112; 22:73; 36:13; 39:29; 43:57; 66:10–11		Speaking in Parables
Luke 3:8; Matthew 21:43	Q 14:37; 2:126	Genesis 21:18–21; Hebrews 6:13–17	Children of Abraham
Throughout	Q 5:78; 38:17	Psalms 10:3; 11:1; 37:30; 50:11; etc.	Jesus and David, Cursing
Matthew 22:32; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37	Q 2:136	Exodus 3:15–16; 1 Kings 18:36; 1 Chronicles 29:18; Acts 3:13	Genealogy, prophets, Ishmael
Matthew 7:15; 24:11, 24; Luke 6:26;		Acts 13:6; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1; Revelations 16:13; 19:20; 20:10; Bukhārī 2:23:459; 4:55:553; Muslim 1:323; etc.	False Messiah, Antichrist
Matthew 11:16, 19; 20:3; Mark 6:56; Luke 7:32, 34	Q 5:75; 25:7		Human Messenger, Glutton, Drunkard
Matthew 13:17	Q 4:69; 63:10		Righteous Entourage
Matthew 24:22–31; Mark 13:20–27; Luke 18:7–8	Q 3:179; 6:87; 7:203; 12:6; 16:121; 19:58; 20:122; 42:13; 68:48–50	Romans 8:33; Titus 1:1; 2 John 1:13; etc.	Elect
Matthew 5:3–16; Luke 11:2–4	Q 13:29	Psalms 2:12; 84:4; Isaiah 30:18; etc.	Beautitudes, Blessings
Matthew 5:3, 5	Q 4:75, 98, 127	James 2:5	Poor, Downtrodden

222 *Parallel Index of Verses and Subjects*

Table A1.1 Continued

<i>Gospel Passage</i>	<i>Qur'ānic Passage</i>	<i>Related Passage from Bible or Hadith</i>	<i>Subject</i>
Matthew 26:11; Mark 14:7; John 12:8	Q 2:177, 184, 215; 4:8, 36, 127; 5:95; 8:41; 17:26; 24:22; 30:38; 58:4; 59:7; 76:8		Poor
Matthew 19:21–22; Mark 10:21–22; Luke 18:22–23	Q 89:17–20; cf. Q 74:44; 107:3; 69:34		Rich, Greedy
Luke 14:13–14, 21	Q 2:110; 11:29, 51; 22:28; 26:109, 127; 34:47; etc.	Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 13:3	Charity, Wages
Matthew 11:5; Luke 4:18; 7:22	Q 2:115, 177; 4:36; 17:26; 24:22; 30:38; 76:8	Isaiah 61:1	Poor, Downtrodden
Matthew 5:9	Q 5:18; 9:30	Genesis 6:2–4; Romans 8:14, 19; Galatians 3:26	Servants vs. Sons of God
Matthew 24:14; 26:13; Mark 13:10, 14:9; 16:15; Luke 1:19, 2:10	Q 16:89, 102; 19:7 vs. Q 3:21; 4:138; 9:3; 84:24		Good News
Matthew 3:2; Mark 1:4–5, 15; Luke 3:3; 17:3–5	Q 20:82; 66:8	Nehemiah 4:5; Psalms 51:9; Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 18:23	Repentance, Forgiveness of Sins
John 11:55; 12:43	Q 4:49; 53:32	Acts 21:24, 26	Purity of the Self
Matthew 5:33–35; 23:20–22	Q 2:224–225; 5:89; 90:1	2 Chronicles 9:18; Isaiah 66:1; Acts 7:49	Swearing, Oath
Matthew 2:1–2	Q 17:107–9		Worship, 3 Wise kings
Matthew 9:8; 11:25; 28:17–19; Mark 2:12; Luke 2:20, etc.	Q 10:68; 12:108; 16:49; 23:91; 37:159; 52:43; 57:1; 59:1, 23; 61:1; 62:1; 64:1; 72:8	Ephesians 1:3	Glory, Authority
Matthew 6:9–13; Luke 11:2–4	Q 1:1–7; 2:286; 3:8, 16, 147, 193–4; 7:89; 10:85–86; 12:97; 23:28; 25:74; 26:169; 27:30; 28:21; 56:74, 96; 59:10; 60:5; 66:11; 69:52	1 Chronicles 16:35; 29:13; Psalm 44:8; Joel 2:26; etc.	Prayer; Lord's Prayer, al-Fatihah
Matthew 10:12–14	Q 24:61		Greeting
Matthew 5:17; 10:9; 12:7; 15:10–11; 19:4–7; 22:17–22; 23:16–29; Luke 14:1–4; etc.	Q 3:50, 93; 9:31, 34		Law, Clergy
Matthew 5:11–12	Q 3:169, 192–5; 4:75, 127; 25:31; 83:29–36		Persecution, Fighting
Luke 21:3	Q 49:15; 57:10; 61:11		Jihad, Charity, Taxation

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Table A1.1 Continued

<i>Gospel Passage</i>	<i>Qur'ānic Passage</i>	<i>Related Passage from Bible or Hadith</i>	<i>Subject</i>
Matthew 5:14–16; 12:34; 15:11–18 Mark 4:21; Luke 6:45; 8:16; 11:33; 13:35; John 8:1 (= 8:12 NRSV); 9:5 John 5:35–36	Q 24:35–36; 30:57; 61:6–8; 9:32	2 Samuel 7: 13, 26; 22:51	Light of the World; Houses of Worship; Obstructing the Light
John 1:1, 14 Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33; John 21:24–25	Q 25:61; 33:41–46; 71:16; 78:13 Q 3:45; 4:171 Q 18:108; 31:27	Job 6:15; 11:6	Lamp Word Words that do not Pass Away
Matthew 9:27; 15:22; 20: 30–1; Mark 10:47–8; Luke 18:13, 38–9	Q 7:23, 149, 155; 11:47; 23:109, 118		Praying for Mercy
Matthew 9:2, 5; Mark 2:5, 9; Luke 5:23 Matthew 18:21–22 Matthew 28:20	Q 7:161 Q 9:74–80; 63:6 Q 6:158; 7:71; 10:20, 102; 11:22, 93; 26:15; 44:59; 52:31	Joshua 24:19; 1 John 2:12	Forgiving Sins 70 Times With You until the End of the World/Age
Matthew 16:24–28; 21:43; Mark 9:1; Luke 3:8; 9:23–27; John 8:48–55 NRSV Matthew 24:7–8, 10, 19–20; Mark 13:8, 12–13, 17–19; Luke 21:10–11, 16–19, 23–24	Q 3:184–5; 16:24–25; 21:35; 29:57 Q 22:1–2; 31:34; 80:34–7	Hebrews 2:9; 6:13–17	Tasting Death Parents Betray Children
Matthew 27:51–2; Luke 23:44–45	Q 99:1–8; 101:1–11; 82:4; 100:9–11	Job 26:6–13; Isaiah 24:10–23; Nahum 1:4–8	Earthquake
Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; 24:29; Mark 1:15; 13:24–25; Luke 21:25–26	Q 2:164; 10:6; 16:2; 19:88–91; 51:1–9; 52:1–10; 54:1–2; 56:1– 56; 70:1–10; 75:1–11; 77:1–14; 79:1–9; 82:1–5; 81:1–14; 84:1– 5; 88:2; 89:21–22; 100:1–5	Genesis 6:4; Daniel 4:13–14; 7:9; Revela- tion 11:16	Apocalypse, Tearing of the Heavens, Shaking of the Earth
Matthew 3:16; 19:24; Mark 1:10; 10:25; Luke 3:21; 18:25; John 1:51	Q 7:40; 78:17–20	Genesis 28:10–17; Malachi 3:10	Opening of the Heavens; Passing through the Eye of a Needle

Matthew 24:30–31; Mark 13:26–27; Luke 21:27	Q 2:210; 6:158; 18:99; 23:101; 25:25–26; 36:51; 39:68; 50:20; 69:13; 89:21–22	Ezekiel 7:14; Hosea 5:8, 8:1; Joel 2:1, 15; Amos 3:6; Zephaniah 1:16; Zechariah 9:14; Daniel 7:13–14; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelations 1:10	God or the son of Man descend on Clouds; Angels Blow Trumpet
Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32; Luke 12:46	Q 33:63; 31:34; 41:47; 43:61, 85		Knowledge of the Hour
Matthew 10:15; 11:22, 24; 12:26	Q 1:4; 15:35; 26:28; 37:20; 38:78; 51:12; 56:56; 70:26; 74:46; 82:15–18; 83:11	Malachi 3:1–5; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:7; 1 John 4:7; Romans 2:5; Jude 1:6	Day of Judgment
Matthew 12:34; 13:12; 25:29; 26:7, 28–29; Mark 14:3; Luke 6:38, 45; John 10:10	Q 2:48, 255, 123, 254; 4:85; 6:51, 70; 7:53; 10:3, 26; 19:87; 20:109; 21:28; 32:4; 34:23; 36:23; 39:44; 40:18; 43:86; 53:26; 74:48	Romans 5:5; 8:26–27; 9:23; Ephesians 1:6–7; 1 Timothy 1:2; Bukhārī 2:21:286; 3:40:555; Muslim 2:479	Intercession, Abundance
Matthew 25:31–46; Mark 3:29; Luke 16:9	Q 2:24, 113, 161; 4:14, 141; 17:71; 18:47; 16:32, 124; 22:17, 56, 69; 32:25; 36:26; 38:76–85; 39:67–75; 43:70; 56:1–56, 81–96; 60:3, 10; 90:18; 98:8 Q 74:43–47		Judgment, Right Hand, Left Hand, Eternal Paradise or Hell
Matthew 25:42–43 Luke 16:19–31	Q 2:167; 7:23, 50; 8:21; 10:67; 16:65; 23:99–100; 25:44; 26:96–102; 30:23; 39:58; 67:6–11; 101:9–11	Muslim 32:6232	Sins of those in Hell Asking for Water in Hell, Barrier, Chasm
Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:3; Luke 9:29	Q 3:106–7; 20:22; 27:12; 28:32; 57:12, 19; 66:8; 75:22; 80:38; 88:8	Exodus 4:6; Psalms 51:7; Isaiah 1:18; Daniel 7:9; Revela- tion 1:14	Shining, White Faces
Matthew 19:28–30; 20:16; Mark 9:35; Luke 13:30; 22:25–31	Q 4:95; 5:24; 9:46, 86; 18:31; 36:55–57; 76:12–27; 83:29–36	Psalms 122:5	Seated on Thrones, Seats

Appendix B: Data Typology

Table A2.1 Data Typology

1 Cognate Passages

Aramaic Gospel Traditions	Qur'ān
<p>Assemble, therefore, fruits (<i>pīrē</i>) that will be worthy of grace (<i>ṭaybūtā</i>), and do not begin to say within yourselves, “we have Abraham as our father.” For I say to you that from these stones (<i>kīfē</i>) God [will], instead [of you], find children (<i>bnayā</i>) for Abraham (Luke 3:8; see further Matthew 21:43).</p>	<p>Our Lord (<i>rabbanā</i>), I have indeed settled some of my offspring (<i>min dhuriyyatī</i>) in a valley that is without vegetation (<i>wād ghayr dhī zar'</i>) near your sanctified home (<i>'ind baytik al-muḥarram</i>). Our Lord, may they establish prayer (<i>li yuqīmū al-ṣalāh</i>). So let the hearts of people (<i>af'idah min al-nās</i>) incline towards them, and grant them some fruits (<i>min al-thamarāt</i>) that they may show gratitude (<i>la'allahum yashkurūn</i>; Q 14:37; see also Q 2:126).</p>
<p>Indeed, you will always have the poor (<i>mēskīnē</i>) with you, but you will not always have me (Matthew 26:11; Mark 14:7; John 12:8)</p>	<p>As a substitute [to fasting] the feeding of a poor person (<i>fīdyaḥ ṭa'ām miskīn</i>; Q 2:184; cf. Q 5:95; 58:4)</p>
<p>If you hope to be perfect, go and sell what you have and give to the poor (<i>hab l-mēskīnē</i>; Matthew 19:21; cf. Mark 10:21; Luke 18:22)</p>	<p>Nor do you advocate feeding the poor (<i>la taḥuḍḍū 'alāṭa'ām al-miskīn</i>). (Q 89:17–20; cf. Q 74:44; 107:3; 69:34).</p>
<p>Call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind (<i>qarī l-mēskīnē wa sgīfē wa ḥgīsē wa smāyā</i>; Luke 14:13–14)</p>	<p>And feed the miserable poor (<i>aṭ'imū al-bā'is al-faqīr</i>; Q 22:28).</p>
<p>Indeed, your compensation will be at the resurrection of the sincere (<i>nēhwē gēr fūr'unāk ba-qyāmā da-zdīqē</i>; Luke 14: 21)</p>	<p>As for whatever charity (<i>min khayr</i>) you present for the sake of your souls, you will find it with God (<i>tajīdūh 'ind allāh</i>); indeed, God sees all what you do (Q 2:110).</p>
<p>The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me (<i>mšahni</i>) to give good news to the poor (<i>l-mēsbarū l-mēskīnē</i>). He has sent me (<i>šlahni</i>) to heal the broken hearted (<i>tabīray labē</i>) and to preach deliverance (<i>šūbqānā</i>) to the captives (<i>šēbyē</i>), to give sight</p>	<p>And they give food (<i>yuṭ'imūn al-ṭa'ām</i>), despite loving it (<i>'alā ḥubbih</i>), to the poor (<i>miskīman</i>), the orphan (<i>yatīman</i>) and the captive (<i>asīran</i>; Q 76:8)</p> <p>Worthiness (<i>al-birr</i>) is not directing your face towards the east nor the west, but rather righteousness is [for?] he who believes in God, the last day, the angels, the scriptures,</p>

(*ḥazyā*) to the blind (*‘awīrē*), and to liberate (*mēšrarū*) the bruised (*tabīray*; Luke 4:18; cf. further Matthew 11:5; Luke 7:22).

I was sent to speak to you, and to give you good news (*ēsabrāk*) about these [matters] (Luke 1:19)

And this gospel (*ḥādē sbartā/ bsūrā*) of the kingdom will be preached to all the world (*b-kūleh ‘ālmā*) as a testimony to all nations (*l-sāhdūtā d-kūlhūn ‘ammē/ kūlēh amrtā*); and then the end (*šūlāmā*) will come (Matthew 24:14; cf. in relation Matthew 26:13; Mark 13:10, 14:9; 16:15; Luke 2:10; Diatessaron 41:58).

Again, you have heard that it was said to the ancients, “you should not lie in your oath (*lā idagēl / tīmē šūqrā b-mawmātāk*), but carry out your oath to the Lord (*tšalēm dēyn l-māryā mawmātāk*).” But I say to you, “you should not swear at all (*lā tīmūn sāk*), neither by heaven because it is the throne of God, nor by the earth because it is the footstool beneath his feet (*wa lā b-ar‘ā d-kūbšā hī d-tḥēt rēgalūhī*), nor by Jerusalem because it is the city of the great king” (*āplā b-ūrīšlēm damdīntēh hī d-malkā rabā*; Matthew 5:33–35; cf. Matthew 23:20–22)

Therefore, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of king Herod, magi (*mgūšē/mgūšāyē*) from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘where is the king of the Jews who was born? For, we have seen his star (*kāwkbēh*) in

the prophets, and who gives wealth (*ātā al-māl*), despite loving it (*‘alā ḥubbih*), to members of [their] relatives (*dhawī al-qurbā*), the orphans (*al-yatāmā*), the poor (*al-masākīn*), the wanderer (*ibn al-sabīl*), the beggars (*al-sā’ilīn*), and for [the freeing of] captives (*fī al-riqāb*), and who establish prayer (*aqāmū al-ṣalāh*), give charity (*ātū al-zakāh*), fulfillers of their covenants (*al-mūfūm bi al-‘ahd*) when they make them, and the steadfast during times of hardship and harm . . . (Q 2:177; cf. further 2:215, 215; 4:8, 36, 127; 8:41; 17:26; 24:22; 30:38; 59:7).

“O Zacharias, indeed We give good news to you of a male son (*innā nubashshiruk bi ghulām*) . . .” (Q 19:7).

And on that day, We will send to each nation (*kull ummah*) a witness (*shahīd*) over them from themselves. And we brought you as a witness (*shahīdan*) over these [people]. And we descended the book upon you to distinguish between all things, and as a guide (*hudā*), mercy (*raḥmah*) and good news (*bushrā*) to the Muslims (Q 16:89; cf. Q 16:102).

And do not make God the goal for your oaths (*wa lā taj‘alū allāh ‘urḍah li aymānikum*) when you show worthiness, virtue and righteousness between people. And God is hearing, knowing. God does not hold you accountable for carelessness in your oaths (*lā yu‘ākhidhukum allāh bi al-laghw fī aymānikum*), but rather holds you accountable for what your hearts have earned (*wa lākin yu‘ākhidhukum bimā kasabat qulūbukum*). And God is forgiving, forbearing (Q 2:224–225). God does not hold you accountable for folly in your oaths (*lā yu‘ākhidhukum allāh bi al-laghw fī aymānikum*), but rather holds you accountable for what you have contracted [in your] oaths (*wa lākin yu‘ākhidhukum bimā ‘aqqadtum al-ayman*). [Otherwise, face] a penalty (*kaffārah*) of feeding ten poor people from whatever average [food] you feed your families, clothing them, or freeing a slave. As for whoever cannot find [poor people], then fast three days. Such is the penalty of your oath if you swear (*dhālik kaffārat aymānikum idhā ḥalaftum*); so keep your oaths (*wa ihfazū aymānakum*). Thus does God make clear to you his signs that you may show gratitude (Q 5:89). Say, ‘[whether] you believe in Him or do not believe, indeed those who were given knowledge (*al-ladhīn ūtū al-‘ilm*) before it [i.e. the Qur’ān]—if it were recited before them (*idhā tutlā ‘alayhim*)—would fall down to their chins in worship (*yakhirrūn li al-adhḡān sujjudan*).’ And

Table A2.1 Continued

*Aramaic Gospel Traditions**Qur'ān*

the east, and we have come to worship him' (*ēṭayn l-mēsgad lēh*; Matthew 2:1–2).

When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they glorified God (*šabaḥū/ mšabḥīn l-alāhā*), who had given such authority (*šūltānā*) to mankind (Matthew 9:8; see also Mark 2:12; Luke 2:20, etc.)

And when they saw him, they worshipped him (*sgēdū lēh*; see chapter 3). However, some of them doubted. And Jesus approached speaking with them, and said to them, "all authority in heaven and in earth was granted to me (*ēṭyahb kūl šūltān ba-shmayā wa b-ar'ā*), and as my Father has sent me, I send you" (Matthew 28:17–19; Diatessaron 55:3–5).

1. Our Father who is in Heaven (*abūn d-ba-šmayā*),
2. Sanctified is Your name (*nētqdaš šmāk*).
3. Your kingdom come (*tītē malkūtāk*)
4. Your will be done (*nēhwē šēbyānāk*)
5. As in Heaven so [too] on earth (*aykanā d-ba-šmayā āp b-ar'ā*).
6. Give us the bread that we need this day (*hab lan laḥmā d-sūnqānan yawmānā*).
7. And forgive us our debts (*wa šbūq lan ḥawbayn*)
8. Just as we have forgiven our debtors (*aykānā d-āp ḥnan šbaqn l-ḥayābayn*).
9. And do not enter us into temptation (*w lā ta'aln l-nēsyūnā*)
10. But deliver us from the evil one (*ēlā fašān mēn bīšā*);

Because to you belong the kingdom, the power and glory (*meṭūl d-dīlāk hī malkūtā w ḥaylā w tēšbūhtā*) forever and ever (*l-'ālam 'ālmīn*; Matthew 6:9–13; cf. Luke 11:2–4)

they would say 'indeed our Lord's promise (*wa'd rabbinā*) has been fulfilled.' And they would fall down to their chins, weeping, and they would increase in austerity (Q 17:107–9).

They said God has taken up a child (*qālū itta-khadh allāh waladan*), glorified is He (*subḥānah*)! He is the sovereign [lit. wealthy]; to Him belong that which is in the heavens and that which is in the earth (*lah mā fī al-samāwāt wa mā fī al-arḍ*).

Do you have any authority (or proof; *ṣulṭān*) concerning this? Do you say about God that which you do not know? (Q 10:68; cf. 2:16, 116; 4:171; 5:116; 19:35; 21:26; 23:91; 39:4; 72:3)

And to God worship all that is in the heavens and the earth among creatures and angels (*wa li allāh yasjud mā fī al-samāwāt wa mā fī al-arḍ min dābah wa al-malā'ikah*), and they are not arrogant (Q 16:49; see also Q 72:8).

1. In the name of God, the Merciful, the Benevolent (*b-ism allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*)
2. Glory belongs to God, Lord of the worlds (*al-ḥamd li al-allāh rabb al-'ālamīn*)
3. The Merciful, the Benevolent (*al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*)
4. King of the Day of Judgment (*malik yawm al-dīn*)
5. You do we serve (*īyyāk na'bud*)
6. And you do we ask for help (*wa īyyāk nasta'īn*)
7. Guide us to the straight path (*ihdīnā al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*)
8. The path of those whom You have favored (*ṣirāṭ al-ladhīn an'amī alayhim*)
9. Not those who incur anger (*ghayr al-maghḍ ūb 'alayhim*)
10. Nor the lost (*wa lā al-ḍāllīn*; Q 1:1–7)

- And forgive us our debts (*wa šbūq lan ḥawbayn*), just as we have forgiven our debtors (*aykānā d-āp ḥnan šbaqñ l-ḥayābayn*) Lord, forgive us (*rabb ighfir lanā*) and our brethren who preceded us in faith (*wa li ikhwāninā al-dhīnā sabaqūnā bi al-īmān*); and do not create in our hearts animosity (*ghill*) towards those who believe. Our Lord, you are the Compassionate, the Benevolent (Q 59:10).
- And do not enter us into temptation (*w lā ta'aln l-nēsyūnā*) Our Lord, do not hold us accountable if we are tempted or mistaken (*lā tu'ākhidhnā in nasīnā aw akḥṭa'nā*; Q 2:286)
- Our Lord, do not make us a trial for those who rebelled (*lā taj'alnā fitnah li al-ladhīnā kafarū*), and forgive us Lord. Indeed, you are the Mighty, the Wise (Q 60:5; cf. 10:85)
- Our Lord, do not make us a trial for the evil folk (*lā taj'alnā fitnah li al-qawm al-zālimīn*; Q 10:85)
- But deliver us from the evil one (*ēlā faṣān mēn bīšā*) And deliver us—by your mercy—from the rebellious folk (*wa najjinā bi raḥmatik min al-qawm al-kāfirīn*; Q 10:85–86; cf. 66:11)
- Our Lord, deliver me from the evil folk (*najjinī min al-qawm al-zālimīn*; Q 28:21; cf. Q 23:28; see also 7:89; 26:169)
- Listen and understand! It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles” (Matthew 15:10–11) All food was made lawful (*ḥillan*) to the children of Israel (*banū isrā'īl*), except that which Israel made unlawful (*ḥaram*) upon himself before Hebrew Scripture (lit. *al-tawrah*) was revealed. Say, “bring the Hebrew Scripture and narrate it, if you are truthful” (Q 3:93)
- Matthew 10:9; 23:16–29 To confirm that which was before [him] of the Hebrew Scripture and to make lawful some of that which was forbidden to [Israel] (Q 3:50) They [i.e. the Jews and Christians] have taken their scribes (*aḥbārahum*) and their priests (*ruhbānahum*) as lords (*arbāban*) above (*min dūn*) God, and the Messiah the son of Mary. And they were not commanded but to worship one God . . . O you who believe, indeed many of the scribes and priests devour the wealth of people falsely (*ya'kulūn amwāl al-nās bi al-bāṭil*) and obstruct [others] from the way of God (*yaṣuddūn 'an sabīl allāh*). And those who hoard gold and silver (*al-ladhīn yaknizūn al-dhahab wa al-fiqḍah*) and do not spend it in the way of God (*wa lā yunfiqūn fi sabīl allāh*), warn them of an agonizing torment (*fa bashshirrhūm bi 'adhāb alīm*; Q 9:31, 34)
- Throughout Cursed (*lu'in*) were those who rebelled from the children of Israel (*al-ladhīn kafarū min banī isrā'īl*) on the tongue of David and Jesus the son of Mary (*'alā lisān dāwūd wa 'isā ibn maryam*), because they disobeyed and continued to cause offense (Q 5:78).

Table A2.1 Continued

*Aramaic Gospel Traditions**Qur'ān*

Blessed are you when people dishonor you (*mḥasdīn lkūn*), persecute you (*rādfīn lkūn*), and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, for my sake (*mēṭūlātī*). So rejoice and be glad (*ḥdawū wa rwazū*), for your reward is great in heaven (*d-agrkūn sagī ba-šmāyā*); like this did they persecute the prophets before you (*hākanā . . . rdapū la-nbiyyē d-mēn qdāmaykūn*; Matthew 5:11–12)

Thus you testify against yourselves (*mashdīn / mawdīn antūn 'al nafškūn / kūl*) that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets (*da-bnayā antūn da-qṭalū la-nbiyyē*) . . . How can you escape the punishment of Gehenna (*aykanā tē'rqūn mēn dīnā da-gīhanā*; Matthew 23:31–33; cf. Luke 11:47–48; 13:34)?

For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing and they have shut their eyes (*ēt'bay lēh gēr lbēh d'ammē hānā wa b-idnayhūn yaqīrāyīt šam 'ū/ awqrū wa 'aynayhūn 'amšū*); so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn—and I would heal them (Matthew 13:15; cf. Luke 8:10)

And all of their deeds they do, so that they might be seen by people (*wa kūlhūn 'abdayhūn 'ābdīn d-nēḥazūn/ yēḥmūn la-bnay anāšā*). For, they widen their Tefillin, and lengthen the Tekhelet of their robes, and they love head rooms at festivities, and the head seats at the synagogues, and greetings in the market, and to be called by

So their Lord answered them, “I do not waste the works of any hard worker among you, neither male nor female, each of you is like the other. As for those who migrated (*hājarū*), were expelled out of their homes (*ukhrījū min diyārihim*), and were harmed in My way (*wa ūdhū fī sabīlī*)—who fought and were killed (*wa qātalū wa qutīlū*)—I will indeed blot out for them their sins (*la-ukaf-firanna 'anhum sayyi'ātīhim*) and I will indeed enter them into gardens underneath which rivers flow (*jannāt tajrī min taḥtīhā al-anhār*) as a reward from God (*thawāban min 'in allāh*).” And God possesses the best reward (Q 3:195)

As for those who reject the signs of God, and kill the prophets without just cause (*yaqṭulūn / yuqāṭilūn/qāṭilū/qatalū al-nabiyyīn bi ḡhayr ḥaqq*), and kill those who command equity, warn them of an agonizing torment (*fa bashshirrum bi 'adhāb alīm*; Q 3:21; cf. Q 3:181; 4:155).

Their killing the prophets without just cause (*wa qatlihim al-anbiyā' bi ḡhayr ḥaqq*; Q 4:155)

And their statement, “indeed we killed the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the messenger of God (*innā qatalnā al-masīḥ 'īsā ibn maryam rasūl allāh*).” However, they neither killed him nor crucified him but they were lead to think so (*wa mā qatalūh wa māšalabūh wa lākin shubbih lahum*; Q 4:156–57)

And We have condemned to hell many spirits (*al-jinn*) and humankind (*al-ins*). They have hearts by which they do not understand (*lahum qulūb lā yaḥqahūn bihā*). And they have eyes by which they do not see (*wa lahum a'yun lā yubṣirūn bihā*). And they have ears by which they do not hear (*wa lahum ādhān la yasma'ūn bihā*; Q 7:179)

As for those who do not believe, there is deafness in their ears and it is a blindness over them (*fī ādhānihim waqr wa-huwa 'alayhim 'amā*; Q 41:44).

They [i.e. the Jews and Christians] take their scribes (*ahbāruhūm*) and their priests (*ruhbanuhūm*) as lords above God (*arbāban min dūn allāh*), as well as the Messiah the son of Mary (*wa al-masīḥ ibn maryam*). Although they were not commanded but to worship one god . . . O you who believe, indeed many of the scribes and priests devour the wealth of people falsely

people, “my lord, my lord (*rabī rabī*).” However, do not be called “my lord.” For One is your Lord; and you are all brothers (Matthew 23:5–8; cf. Mark 12:38–39; Luke 20:46).

Those who devour the households of widows (*hānūn d-ākīn bātē d-armaltē*); for a show they prolong their prayers (*b-‘ēltā d-mūrķīn šlāthūn*). They will receive great punishment (*hānūn nēqblūn dnā yatīrā*; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47).

And Jesus looked at the rich people who were casting into the treasury their offerings (*‘tīrē aylēn d-rāmūn hwaw bayt gazā qūrbānayhūn*), and he also saw a certain poor widow who cast therein two small coins (*šmūnē trayn*). And he said, “truly, I say this to you, that this poor widow has cast in more than all of them. For all these have from their excess [of wealth] (*yatīr*) cast into the house of offerings of God (*bayt qūrbānē d-alāhā*). However, she has from her poverty cast in all that she possessed” (Luke 21:1–4; Mark 12:41–44).

The kingdom of God will be taken from you (*tēštqēl mēnkun malkūtā d-alāhā*) and given to a nation that will bear fruit (*wa tētyahb l-‘ammā da-‘bad pīrē*)” (Matthew 21:43).

You are the light of the world (*antūn ēnūn nūhrēh d-‘ālmā*). It is not possible to hide a city built on a mountain. They do not light a lamp (*šrāgā*) and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand (*mnārtā*), and it illuminates everything (*manhar l-kūl aylēn*) that is in the house. Like this, let your light shine (*nēnhar nūhrkūn*) before people that they may see your deeds (*‘bādaykūn*) and glorify (*nšabhūn*) your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:14–16; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16; 11:33).

(*la-ya’kulūn amwāl al-nās bi al-bāṭil*) and obstruct [others] from the way of God (*wa yašuddūn ‘an sabīl allāh*). And those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of God (*wa al-ladhīn yuknizūn al-dhahab wa al-fiḍḍah wa lā yunfiqūn fī sabīl allah*), warn them of an agonizing torment (*bashshirhum bi ‘adhāb alīm*; Q 9:31, 34).

And give the orphans their wealth (*wa ātū al-yatāmā amwālahum*), and do not exchange that which is good with that which it evil. And do not devour their wealth into your wealth (*wa lā ta’kulū amwālahum ilā amwālikum*). Indeed this would be a great debt/crime (*ḥūban*). So if you fear that you will not [measure] equitably/honestly (*tuqsiṭū*) between the orphans, then marry whatever is blessed/good for you (*tāb lakum*) among women [i.e. mothers of the orphans = widows], twice, thrice or four times. And if you fear that you will not balance (*ta’dilū*) [among widowed wives?], then one [will suffice] or that which your right hand possesses [i.e. a concubine]. That would be more obedient that you may not do injustice . . . Those who devour the wealth of orphans unjustly (*inn al-ladhīn ya’kulūn amwāl al-yatāmā ḡulman*) will indeed devour fire into their stomachs; and they will reach the flames. (Q 4:2–3, 10).

So whoever is stingy (*man yabkhal*) is, indeed, stingy against his own soul. And God is wealthy and you are poor. And if you turn away, He will substitute a nation other than you (*yastabdīl qawman ghayrakum*), and they will not be like you (*thumm^e lam yakīnū amthālakum*; Q 47:38). God is the light of the heavens and the earth (*allāh nūr al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ*). The likeness of His light (*mathal nūrih*) is like a niche (*mishkāh*) within which is a lamp (*mišbāh*). The lamp is within a glass. The glass is as though it were a brilliant constellation, kindled (*tūwqad*) by a blessed olive tree, [which lay] neither east nor west. Its oil illuminates (*taḍī*) without being touched by fire (*nār*), light upon light (*nūr ‘alā nūr*). God guides to His light whoever he wills, and God puts forth parables for people; and God is about all things knowing. (Q 24:35).

[The lamp shines] within buildings (*buyūt*) which God has allowed to be erected and in which His Name is commemorated. Therein He is glorified (*yusabbah*) mornings and evenings—by men who are not distracted by trade or selling from the remembrance of God, nor from establishing prayer or giving charity (Q 24:36).

He was a lamp that burned and illuminated (*srāgā hwā d-dālēq wa manhar*), and you wanted to boast for an hour in his light (*b-nūhrēh*). But I have a testimony (*sāhdūtā*) greater than John's (John 5:35–36).

Heaven and earth will pass away (*nē'brīn*) and my words will not pass away (*wa mēlay lā ne'brān*; Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33)

This is the disciple that testifies about all these [things], and that wrote them. And we know that his testimony is true. There are, therefore, also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, not the world I suppose could suffice for the books that would be written. (John 21:24–25)

Then Peter approached him [Jesus] and said, "my lord, how many times if my brother wrongs me should I forgive him (*kmā zabnīn ēn naskēl / nēhṭē bī āhī ēšbūq lēh*)? Up to seven times ('*damā la-šba' zabnīn*)?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you up to seven but up to seventy times seven-seven (*lā āmēr ēnā lāk 'damā la-šba' ēlā 'damā l-šab 'īn zabnīn šba' šba'*)" (Matthew 18:21–22)

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be earthquakes in every place (*wa nēhwūn zaw'ē b-dūkā dūkā*); and there will be famines and unrest. These are the beginnings of sorrows . . . A brother, therefore, will betray [lit. hand in] his brother to death (*našlēm dēyn akhā l-akhūwhī l-mawtā*), and a father his son (*w-abā la-brēh*), and

They want to extinguish the light of God (*nūr allāh*) with their mouths, yet God will fulfill his light (*nūrih*) even to the hatred of the rebellious ones (Q 61:8; cf. 9:32).

O you who believe, commemorate God in frequent remembrance. And glorify Him morning and night. He is the One who prays over you, and his angels, in order to take you out of dark places into light (*li yukhrijakum min al-zulumāt ilā al-nūr*). And he is to the believers benevolent . . . O you prophet [Muhammad], we have sent you as a witness (*shāhidan*), a giver of good news (*mubashshiran*) and a warner (*nadhīran*), and a missionary towards God with his permission (*wa dā'īyan ilā allāh bi idhnih*), and an illuminating lamp (*wa sirājan munīran*; Q 33:41–46).

Say, "if the sea (*al-baḥr*) were a pen (*midādan*) for the words of my Lord (*kalimāt rabbī*), then the sea would have finished before the words of my Lord would have finished (*la nafidh al-baḥr qabl an tanfadh kalimāt rabbī*). Even if we brought as much to supply it" (Q 18:109).

For if, indeed, on earth all the trees were pens (*aqlām*) and the sea supplied them [ink] (*wa al-baḥr yamudduh*), followed by seven more seas (*min ba'dih sab'at abḥur*), the words of God would not finish (*mā nafidhat kalimāt allāh*). Indeed, God is Mighty, Wise (Q 31:27; cf. Q 43:28).

[Whether] you ask their forgiveness or you do not ask their forgiveness (*istaghfir lahum aw lā tastaghfir lahum*)—even if you ask their forgiveness seventy times (*īn tastaghfir lahum sab'īn marrah*)—God will not forgive them (*fa lan yaghfir allāh lahum*; Q 9:79).

O you people, beware of your Lord! Indeed, the quaking of the hour is a tremendous thing (*inn zalzalat al-sā'ah shay' 'aẓīm*). On the day you see it, every nursing woman will forget about what she nurses (*tadhhal kull murḍi'ah 'ammā 'arḍa'at*), and every pregnant woman will deliver her burden (*wa taḍa' kull dhāt ḥaml ḥamlahā*). And you will see the people drunk while they are not drunk, however, the torment of God is severe (Q 22:1–2).

children will rise against their parents and murder them (*wa nqūmūn bnayā ‘al abāhayhūn wa nmītūn ēnūn*). And you will be hated by all people for the sake of my name, but whoever on account of my name endures until the end will be saved . . . Woe, however, to the pregnant and to those who are nursing in those days (*wāy dēyn l-batnātā wa l-aylēn d-maynqān b-hānūn yawmātā*)! Pray, therefore, that your flight may not be in winter. For in those days there will be suffering, like there has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, nor will [ever] be (Mark 13:8, 12–13, 17–19; Luke 21:10–11, 16–19, 23–24; cf. Matthew 24:7–8, 10, 19–20)

At that moment the curtain of the Temple was torn in two (*ēṣṭrī la-trēyn*), from top to bottom. The earth quaked and the rocks were split (*w-ar ‘ā ēttzī ‘at wa kifē ēṣṭarī*). The tombs were opened (*wa bayt qbūrē ēṭptahū*) and many bodies of saints who had fallen asleep were raised (*wa pagrē sagiyyē d-qadīšē/ zdīqē da-škībīn hwaw qāmū*; Matthew 27:51–52; cf. Luke 23:44–45).

Immediately, in those days (*b-hānūn . . . yawmātā*), after that suffering (*bātar ulṣānā haw*), the sun will be darkened (*šēmšā nēḥṣak*; cf. also Luke 23:44–45), and the moon will not give its light (*wa sahrā lā nētēl nūrēh / zahrēh / zahrā dīleh*), and the stars will fall from heaven (*wa kawkbē nēplūn mēn šmayā*), and the powers of

The day when a person will abandon his brother (*yawm yafīrr al-mar’ min akhīh*); his mother and his father (*wa ummīh wa abīh*); his spouse and his children (*wa sāḥibatīh wa banīh*); for every person on that day will there be a self-interested concern (Q 80:34–7).

When the earth quakes its [final] quake (*idhā zulzilat al-arḍ zilzalahā*); and the earth ejects its burdens; and humankind asks “what ails it?” On that day will it narrate its events. For your Lord has revealed to it. On that day will people issue forth separately to be shown their works. So whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it; and whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it (Q 99:1–8).

The rending (*al-qāri‘ah*), what is the rending? And what can inform you what the rending is? The day when people will be like scattered moths. And when the mountains will be like plucked wool. As for he whose balances will be heavy, they will be in a pleasant life. And as for he whose balances will be light, his home [lit. mother, womb] will be a chasm (*hāwīyah*). And what can inform you what that is? A scorching fire (Q 101:1–11)!

Does he not know that when whatever is in the graves are overturned (*idhā bu‘thir mā fī al-qubūr*), and that which are in the hearts are retrieved, indeed their lord will be knowledgeable of them on that day (Q 100:9–11).

There is in the creation of the heavens and the earth (*innī fī khalq al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ*) and the alternation of night and day and the ships that sail in the sea . . . signs for a people who reason (*la-āyāt li-qawm ya‘qilūn*; Q 2:164; cf. also 10:6).

And he has put under your control night, day, the sun, the moon and the stars (*al-layl wa al-nahār wa al-shams wa al-qamar wa al-nujūm*)

Table A2.1 Continued

<i>Aramaic Gospel Traditions</i>	<i>Qur'ān</i>
heaven will be shaken (<i>wa ḥayalwātā da-šmayā nēttzī'ūn</i> ; Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24–25).	controlled by His command. Therein are signs for a people who reason (<i>inn^a fī dhālik^a la-āyahāt li-qawm ya'qilūn</i> ; Q 16:12).
And there will be signs in the sun, the moon, the stars, and on the earth (<i>wa nēhwyān ātwātā b-šēmšā wa b-sahrā wa b-kawkbē wa b-ar'ā</i>), suffering among nations and confusion from the roaring of the sound of the sea (<i>ūlšānā d-'ammē wa pūšāk īdayā mēn tawhtā d-qālā d-yamā</i>). The quaking that casts the life out of people from fear of what is about to come upon the earth (<i>wa zaw'ē d-mapēq nēfšātā da-bnaynāšā mēn dēhltā d-mēdēm da-'tīd l-mētā</i>), and the power of heaven will be shaken (<i>wa nēttzī'ūn ḥaylē da-šmayā</i> ; Luke 21:25–26).	When the sun is burnt out (<i>idhā al-shams kuw-wirat</i>); and when the stars fade (<i>wa idhā al-nujūm inkadarat</i>); and when the mountains are liquefied; and when the camels are neglected; and when the beasts are assembled; and when the seas are boiled (<i>wa idhā al-bihār sujīrat</i>); and when souls are coupled; and when the sacrificed girl is asked for what sin has she been killed; and when the scroll are unraveled; and when heaven is abraded (<i>wa idhā al-samā' kushītat</i>); and when Hell [burns] wildly; a soul will know what it has prepared (Q 81:1–14; cf. 19:88–91).
	Indeed, I swear by the Day of Resurrection. And indeed, I swear by the self-blaming soul. Does humankind think that We will not gather his bones? To the contrary, We are able to refashion his [very] fingers. However, humankind would rather reject openly. They ask about the timing of the Day of Resurrection. So when eyesight is dazed, and the moon is eclipsed (<i>wa khasaf al-qamar</i>), and the sun and moon are joined (<i>wa jumi' al-shams wa al-qamar</i>), humankind will say on that day “where is [my] escape?” (<i>yaqūl al-insān yawm^a idh^m ayn al-mafar</i> ; Q 75:1–11). An inquirer asked about a fateful torment (<i>sa'al sā'il bi-'adhāb wāqī'</i>), which for the rebellious ones cannot be repelled, from the God of ascensions. The angels and the (Holy?) spirit ascend upon it in a day whose measure is 50 thousand years. So endure amiably. They see it far away. And We see it nearby. The day when heaven will be like molten iron (<i>yawm takūn al-samā' ka al-muhl</i>); and the mountains will be like wool. And no friend will ask about his friend (Q 70:1–10).
	When heaven is ruptured (<i>idhā al-samā' inshaqqat</i>), and harkens to its Lord and it must. And when the earth is stretched out and ejects what is inside of it and becomes empty (<i>wa idhā al-arḍ muddat wa alqat mā fīhā wa takhallat</i>), and harkens to its Lord and it must (Q 84:1–5).
	When fate (<i>al-wāqī'ah</i>) comes to pass. About its occurrence will there be no deceit. Lowering and raising [people?]. When the earth shakes violently (<i>idhā rujjat al-arḍ rajjan</i>); and the mountains are obliterated, such that it will become strewn dust (Q 56:1–6).

When heaven is cleaved (*idhā al-samā' infaṭarat*); and when the stars fall (*wa idhā al-kawākib intatharat*); and when the seas overflow (*wa idhā al-biḥār fujjirat*); and when the graves are turned over; a soul will know what it has accomplished and neglected (Q 82:1–5).

By the mountain (*wa al-ṭūr*), and a written scripture, and the unraveled pages, and the aged house, and the raised vault, and the boiling sea (*wa al-baḥr al-masjūr*), the torment of your Lord will surely come to pass (*innā 'adhāb rabik la-wāqī'*). It has no [averting] adversary. The day when heaven will heave violently (*yawm tamūr al-samā' mawran*), and the mountains will completely liquefy (Q 52:1–10).

By the intruders that run out. By the energized [ones] that animate. By the drifters that float (*wa al-sābihāt sabḥan*); and the foremost [ranks] that depart (*fa al-sābiqāt sabqan*); and the leaders that command (*fa al-mudabbirāt amran*). The day when the trembling will quake (*yawm tarjuf al-rājjifah*); followed by the aftershock. On that day will hearts be horrified (*qulūb yawmā' idhā wājjifah*); their vision will be restrained (Q 79:1–9; cf. Q 88:2).

By the knights that charge (*wa al-dhāriyāt dharwan*); and the wagons that are loaded (*fa al-ḥāmilāt wiqran*); and the projectiles that fly (*fa al-jāriyāt yusran*); and the diviners that foretell (*fa al-muqassimāt amran*). Indeed what you are promised is true. And indeed judgment is fated (*wa inn al-dīn la-wāqī'*). By the heavens that are muddled (*wa al-samā' dhāt al-ḥubuk*), [like] you are of different creeds, perverted by all who are perverted (*yu'fak 'anh man ufik*; Q 51:1–9).

By the messengers that inform (*wa al-mursalāt 'urfan*); and the storms that rage; by the unravelers that unravel (*wa al-nāshirāt nāshran*); and the saviors that save (*fa al-fāriqāt farqan*); and the speakers that mention (*fa al-mulqiyāt dhikran*); [giving] pardon or warning. Indeed what you are promised will take place. So when the stars are blocked (*fa idhā al-nujūm ṭumisat*); and when heaven is split (*wa idhā al-samā' furijat*); and when the mountains are obliterated; and when the messengers are timed; for what day has it been set? For the Day of Distinction (*yawm al-faṣl*). And what will inform you what the Day of Distinction is (Q 77:1–14)?

By the invaders that charge (*wa al-'ādiyāt ḍabḥan*); and the lords that fire (*fa al-mūriyāt qadḥan*); and the watchers that emerge (*fa al-mughīrāt subḥan*); thus rousing soaked clouds (*fa atharā' bih naq'an*; Q 100:1–5).

And then they will see the Son of Man when he comes in the clouds with great power and with glory (*wa hāydēyn nēhžūnāyhi la-brēh d-anāšā kad ātē ba-'nānē 'am ḥaylā rabā wa 'am šūbhā*). Then he will send his angels (*hāydēyn nšadar malākawhī*) and assemble his elect from the four winds from the beginning of the earth to the beginning of heaven (Mark 13:26–27; cf. Matthew 24:30–31; Luke 21:27)

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God (*dalīl / pašīq hū l-gamlā l-mē'al / d-nē'bar ba-ḥrūrā da-mḥatā aw 'atūrā d-nē'ūl l-malkūtēh d-alāhā*; Matthew 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25)

However, about that day and the hour no one knows (*'al yawmā dēyn haw w-'al šā'tā hāy anāš lā yāda*), not even the angels of heaven (*āplā malākē da-šmayā*), but only the Father (*elā ābā ba-lhūd*; Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32; cf. also Luke 12:46)

Then, when the Son of Man (*brēh d-anāšā*) comes in his glory (*b-šūbhēh*), and all his holy angels (*kūlhūn malakawhī qadīšē*) with him, then he will sit upon the throne of his glory (*trānāws d-šūbhēh*). All the nations will be gathered (*nētkanšūn*) before him, and he will separate them one from another (*wa nparēš ēnūn ḥad mēn ḥad*) as a shepherd who separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left (*wa nqīm 'ērbē mēn yamīnēh wa gdayā mēn sēmālēh*). Then the king (*malkā*) will say to those who are at his right hand, "Come (*taw*), you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom (*īratū malkūtā*) which has been prepared for you from the beginnings of the world. For I hungered and you gave me to eat; I thirsted and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger

Do they wait but that God should come upon them in shadows of clouds with the angels (*hal yanžurūn illā an ya'tiyahum allāh fī žulal min al-ghamām wa al-malā'ikah*). And [by then] the affair would be finished. And to God do affairs return (Q 2:210; cf. 6:158).

And on the day the heavens crack into [clusters of] clouds (*wa yawm yashshaqq al-samā' bi al-ghamām*) as the angels are descended swiftly (*wa nuzzil al-malā'ikah tanžīlan*); on that day will sovereignty (*al-mulk*) truly belong to the Merciful . . . (Q 25:25–26).

Nor will they enter paradise until a camel goes through the eye of a needle (*wa lā yadkhulūn al-jannah ḥattā yalij al-jamal fī samm al-khiyāṭ*; Q 7:40).

People ask you about the hour (*yas'aluk al-nās 'an al-sā'ah*), say indeed the knowledge concerning it is with God (*qul innamā 'ilmuhā 'ind allāh*). And how would you know that perhaps the hour may be near (Q 33:63; see also Q 31:34; 41:47; 43:61, 85; 51:12).

And they did not honor God [the extent of] His true honor. For all the earth is in His grasp and the heavens are rolled up in His right hand (cf. Thomas 111). Glorified is He over that which they ascribe. And the trumpet was blown so whoever was in the heavens and earth was struck down, except for those whom God willed. Then it was blown again so they arose watching. And the earth shone with the light of its Lord, the book was put in place and the prophets and martyrs were brought. And they were judged equitably between them (*wa qudiy baynahum bi al-ḥaqq*) and they will not be prejudiced. Then every soul was compensated for what it had done, and He is most knowledgeable of what they do. And those that rebelled were led into Gehenna in multitudes (*žumaran*) until they came upon it, when its gates opened and its keeper said to them, "did not messengers come from among you narrating to you the signs of your Lord and warning you of this meeting day of yours? (cf. Q 6:130; 16:28)" They said, "indeed!" However, the sentence of torment was fated for the rebels. It will be said,

and you accepted me; I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and came to me.” Then the sincere will answer him, “our Lord, when did we saw that you were hungry and fed you or that you were thirsty and gave you to drink? And when did we see you were a stranger and accepted you, or that you were naked clothed you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?” And the king will answer and say to them, “Truly I say to you, in as much as you did [it] to one of the least of my brothers, you did it to me.” Then he will further say to those who are at his left hand, “Go from me (*zēlū lkūn mēnī*) [you] cursed ones (*liṭē*) into eternal hellfire (*nūrā da-l-‘ālam*) which is prepared for the adversary and his angels (*hāy da-mṭāybā l-ākēlqarṣā wa l-malakawhī*). For I hungered and you did not give me to eat; and I thirsted and you did not give me to drink; and I was a stranger and you did not accept me; and I was naked and you did not clothe me; and I was sick and I was in prison and you did not visit me.” Then they will also answer and say, “our Lord (*māran*), when did we see you hungry (*kapnā*) or thirsty (*ṣahyā*) or a stranger (*aksnāyā*) or naked (*‘artēlāyā*) or sick (*krihā/ mhaylā*) or in prison (*bēyt asīrē/ naturātā*), and did not serve you?” Then he will answer and say to them, “Truly I say to you (*amīn āmēr ēnā lkūn*), in as much as you did not to one of these least, so too did you not do to me.” And these will go into eternal torment (*tašnīqā da-l-‘ālmā*), but the sincere into eternal life (*ḥayē da-l-‘ālmā*; Matthew 25:31–46)

For I hungered and you did not give me to eat; and I thirsted and you did not give me to drink; and I was a stranger and you did not accept me; and I was naked and you did not clothe me; and I was sick and I was in prison and you did not visit me (Matthew 25:42–43).

“enter the gates of Gehenna to stay in forever” (*udkhulū abwāb jahannam khālidīn fihā*). Such is the miserable destiny of the arrogant. Then those conscious of their Lord were led to paradise in multitudes until they came upon it and its gates opened and its keeper said “peace be upon you. You are blessed so enter it forever (*ṭibtum fa-udkhulūhā khālidīn*)” (cf. 16:32). And they said “glory be to God who has fulfilled to us his promise and bestowed [lit. inherited] upon us the earth (*awrathanā al-arḍ*) that we may bask in paradise as we will.” So excellent is the wage of the workers. And you will see the angels encircling the throne glorifying the praises of their Lord (*wa tarā al-malā’ikah ḥāffīn min ḥawl al-‘arsh*). And they were judged equitably between (*wa qudiy baynahum bi al-ḥaqq*) them and it will be said, “glory belongs to God, Lord of the worlds (*al-ḥamd li allāh rabb al-‘ālamīn*; Q 39:67–75).

We were not from those who prayed; nor did we feed the poor (*wa lam nak’ nuṭ ‘im al-miskīn*); and we used to indulge with the mainstream (*wa kunnā nakhūḍ ma’ al-khā’idīn*); and we used to disbelieve in the Day of Judgment, until certainty came upon us (Q 74:43–47).

Table A2.1 Continued

<i>Aramaic Gospel Traditions</i>	<i>Qur'ān</i>
<p>This happened and that poor man died and the angels carried him to the bosom of Abraham. In addition, the rich man died also and was buried. And while he was tormented in Sheol (<i>wa kad mēštanaq ba-šyūl</i>), he raised his eyes from afar and saw Abraham and Lazarus in his bosom. So he called out in a loud voice (<i>wa qrā b-qālā rāmā</i>) and said, “my father Abraham, have mercy on me (<i>ētraḥam ‘lay</i>) and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and moisten my tongue (<i>w-šadar l-lā‘azar d-nēšbū‘ rīš sēb‘ēh b-mayā wa nratēb lī lēšānī</i>). For behold I am tormented in this flame (<i>d-hā mēštanaq ēnā b-šalhēbītā hādē</i>).” Abraham said to him, “my son, remember that you received your fortune in your life and Lazarus his misfortune. But now behold he is comfortable here and you are tormented. Besides all these things, a great chasm is placed between us and you (<i>hawtā rabtā sīmā baynayn wal-kūn</i>). So those who wish to cross from here towards you cannot [do so]; nor can anyone over there cross over to us.” He said to him, “then I beseech you my father to send him to my father’s house (<i>da-tšadrīwhī l-bēyt ābī</i>). For I have five brothers. Let him go testify to them so that they do not also come to this place of torment (<i>nīzal nsahēd ēnūn d-lā āp hēnūn nītūn l-dūktā hādē d-tašnīqā</i>).” Abraham said to him, “they have Moses and the prophets. They should listen to them.” However, he said to him, “no my father Abraham, if a man from the dead goes to them they will repent.” Abraham said to him, “if they do not listen to Moses and the prophets (<i>ēn l-mūšē wa l-nbiyyē lā šām ‘īn</i>), so too if a man from the dead rises they will not believe him (<i>āp lā ēn ēnāš mēn mītē nqūm mhaymnīn lēh</i>)” (Luke 16:22–31)</p>	<p>And the people of hellfire called out (<i>nādā</i>) to the people of paradise, “pour upon us some water or from that which God has supplied you (<i>aftū ‘alaynā min al-mā’ aw mimmā razaqaqum allāh</i>).” They said, “God has forbidden it upon the rebellious ones” (Q 7:50).</p>
<p>Truly I say to you that you who have come to follow me, in the new world when the Son of Man sits upon the throne of his glory (<i>trānāws / kūrseyā d-šūbhēh</i>), you will also sit upon</p>	<p>[God favors] those who struggle (<i>al-mujāhidūn</i>) over those who recline (<i>al-qā‘idūn</i>; Q 4:95; 9:86; see in relation Q 5:24; 9:46)</p>

twelve seats (*trē'sar kūrsawān*). And you will judge the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left [their] houses, brothers, sisters, father, wife, children or fields for the sake of my name will receive one hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. Many, however, who are first (*qadmāyē*) will be last (*akhrāyē*) and the last first (Matthew 19:28–30; Mark 9:35)

The king of the gentiles are their lords, and the authorities over them are called doers of good. However, you must not be such, but rather whoever is great (*rab*) among you must be like the least (*z'ūrā*), and whoever is the head (*rīšā*) should be a servant (*mšamšānā*). For who is greater [in social status], he who reclines (*haw da-smīk*) or he who serves (*damšamēš*)? Is it not he who reclines? However, I am among you as someone who serves. You, however, have remained with me through my trials. And I assure you as my Father has assured me a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at the banquet of my kingdom, sit upon thrones (*rētbūn 'al kūrsawātā*) and judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:25–31)

Those who were criminal (*al-ladhīn ajramū*) used to laugh at those who believe (*al-ladhīn āmanū*). And when they passed them by they would wink [mockingly] . . . But today those who believe (*al-ladhīn āmanū*) will laugh at the rebellious ones (*al-kuffār*), resting upon seats (*'alā al-arā'ik muttaki'ūn*). Have the rebellious ones been rewarded for what they used to do? (Q 83:29–36)

They will be resting there upon seats (*muttaki'ūn fīhā 'alā al-arā'ik*; Q 18:31)

They will be under fans resting upon seats (*'alā al-arā'ik muttaki'ūn*; Q 36:55–57)

And He rewarded them on account of what they endured with gardens and silk. Resting there upon seats (*muttaki'ūn fīhā 'alā al-arā'ik*), they do not see there [the heat of] sun nor cold . . . And a vessel made of silver and cups made of crystal will be passed around them . . . And they will be given there to drink a cup whose flavor is ginger (Q 76:12–27).

2 Cognate Clauses/Phrases

Aramaic Gospel Traditions

And he spoke this parable (*w-ēmar matlā hānā*; Luke 13:6; 15:3)

And he spoke [to them], therefore, the parable of . . . (*w-ēmar l-hūn dēyn āp matlā d . . .*; Luke 18:1; 9; Luke 21:29)

Another parable he put forth unto them, saying . . . (*akhrānā matlā amtēl / awšēp / sām l-hūn w-ēmar . . .*; Matthew 13:24, 31, 33).

And he put forth [lit. said] the parable of . . . (*w-ēmar hwā matlā*; Luke 14:7)

Qur'ān

. . . Was put forth as an example/parable (*ḍurib mathal*)” (Q 43:57).

And he put forth [lit. struck] the parable of . . .” (*wa ḍarab lahum mathalan*; Q 36:13).

God put forth the parable of . . .” (*ḍarab allāh mathalan . . .*; Q 14:24; 16:75–76, 112; 39:29; 112; 66:10–11)

A parable was put forth (*ḍurib mathal*)” (Q 22:73).

Table A2.1 Continued

<i>Aramaic Gospel Traditions</i>	<i>Qur'ān</i>
Pure in heart (<i>dākin b-labhūn</i> ; Matthew 5:8) Who purify themselves (<i>yuzakkūn anfusahum</i> ; Q 4:49)
To purify themselves (<i>d-nēdkūn nafshūn</i> ; John 11:55)	
I exalt you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth (<i>mawdē enā lāk ābi mārā a-šmayā wa d-ar'ā</i> ; Matthew 11:25).	That which is in the heavens and the earth glorifies God" (<i>sabbah/yusabbiḥ lillāh ma fī al-samāwāt wa [mā fī] al-arḍ</i> ; Q 57:1; 59:1; 61:1; 62:1; 64:1)
They glorified God (<i>šabahū/ mšabhūn l-alāhā</i> ; Matthew 9:8; see also Mark 2:12; Luke 2:20, etc.)	Glorified is God, (<i>subḥān allāh</i> ; Q 12:108; 37:159; etc.)
Sanctified is Your name (<i>nēṭqdaš šmāk</i>)	So glorify in the name of your Lord, the Great One (<i>fa sabbih b-ism rabbik al-'aẓim</i> ; Q 56:74, 96; 69:52).
Your kingdom come (<i>tūē malkūtāk</i>)	Our Lord, bring us . . ." (<i>rabbānā [wa]ātinā</i> ; Q 3:194; 18:10; cf. Q 11:63; see further Q 9:75; 27:16)
Blessed are the poor in spirit (<i>tūbayhūn /tūbtānā tayhūn l . . .</i> Matthew 5:3–16; cf. Luke 11:2–4)	For them are blessings (<i>tūbā lahum</i> ; Q 13:29)
Give us (<i>hab lan</i>)	Give us (<i>hab lanā</i> ; Q 3:8; 25:74).
They will inherit the earth" (<i>nērtūn l-ar'ā</i> ; Matthew 5:5). Inherit the kingdom prepared for you (<i>īratū malkūtā da-'tidā/ mūbā</i> ; Matthew 25:34)	the earth will be inherited (<i>al-arḍ yarithuhā</i> ; Q 21:105). Bestowed [lit. inherited] upon us the earth (<i>awrathanā al-arḍ</i>)" (Q 39:74)
greet the household (<i>šēlū šlāmēh d-baytā</i>) . . . let your greeting come upon it (<i>šlām kūn nūē 'alawhī</i>) . . . let your greeting return to you (<i>šlām kūn 'alaykūn nēfnē/ ntūb</i> ; Matthew 10:12–14)	greet yourselves (<i>sallimū 'alā anfusikum</i> ; Q 24:61).
Some of them you will kill and crucify (<i>mēnhūn qāṭlīn / tēqtlūn antūn wa zāqfīn antūn / tešlūbūn</i>); and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute them (<i>wa mēnhūn mnagdīn / tēngdūn antūn . . . w tardfūn</i>) from city to city (Matthew 23:34)	Some of them you belied (<i>farīqan kadhdhabtum</i>) and some of them you kill[ed] (<i>wa farīqan taqtulūn</i> ; Q 2:87; cf. Q 2:90; 6:34; 36:13–25)
Some of them they will kill and persecute (<i>mēnhūn nērdfūn wa nēqtlūn</i> ; Luke 11:49)	Killing some (<i>farīqan taqtulūn</i>) and capturing some (<i>wa ta 'sirūn farīqan</i> ; Q 33:26).
And some of them they beat (<i>wa mēnhūn maḥū</i>), then some of them they killed (<i>mēnhūn dēyn qatlū/ qāt līn</i> ; Mark 12:3–5)	

Thus you testify against yourselves (*mashdīn / mawdīn antūn 'al nafškūn / kāl*; Matthew 23:31; cf. Luke 11:47; 13:34)

Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites (*wāy l-kūn sāfrē/sāfrāyē wa prīšē nāsbay b-apē*; see throughout Matthew 23; Luke 11:44)!

In order to be seen by people (*nēth azūn la-bnay anāšā*; Matthew 23:5)

Before people in order that you be seen by them (*qdām bnay anāšā ayk d-tēthzūn lhūn*; Matthew 6:1)

Be wary concerning your works of sincerity (*hūrū/ēzdahrū dēyn b-zēdqātkūn / marḥmānītā dīlkūn*; Matthew 6:1)

In order to be tempted by Satan/the adversary/slanderer" (*d-nētnasē mēn sāṭānā/ākēlqarṣā / marmīnā*; Matthew 4:1; Luke 4:2)

What is like the kingdom of God and with what parable can it be compared (*wa b-aynā matlā namtlīh*; Mark 4:30)

I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven (*lak ētal qlīdē/ iqlīdē d-malkūtā da-šmāyā*; Matthew 16:19)

Have mercy on me (*ētraḥam / raḥ ēm 'lay*; Matthew 15:22; Mark 10:47–48; Luke 18:38–9)! Have mercy on us; *ētraḥam 'layn*; Matthew 9:27; 20:30 cf. Matthew 17:15; 20:30–1)

Your sins are forgiven (*šbīqīn lāk ḥtāhāyk*; Matthew 9:2, 5; Mark 2:5, 9; Luke 5:23)

And behold I am with you (*w-hā ēnā 'amkūn ēnā*), for all the days until the end of the world/age (*kūlhūn yawmātā 'damā l-šūlāmēh d-'ālmā*). Amen (Matthew 28:20). [See.] watch and pray" (Matthew 24:41; 14:38; Luke 21:36)

We testify against ourselves (*shahidnā 'alā anfusinā*) . . . they testified against themselves (*shahidū 'alā 'anfusihim*; Q 6:130; 7:37).

Thus, woe unto those who write the scripture with their hands (*fa wayl li al-ladhīn yaktubūn alkitāb bi aydthim*) . . . Thus, woe unto them for what their hands have written, and woe unto them for what they earn (*fa wayl lahum min mā katabat aydthim, wa wayl lahum min mā yaksibūn*; Q 2:79)!

Woe unto the disbelievers on that day (*wayl yawm^a'idh^m li-l-mukadhdhibīn*; Q 77)!

Woe unto those who pray (*wayl li al-mušallīn*; Q 107:4)

In order to show-off to people (*ri'ā' al-nās*; Q 2:264; 4:38)

Those who show off (*al-ladhīn hum yurā'ūn*; Q 107:1–7)

If you reveal alms (*in tubdū al-sadaqāt*) . . . but if you conceal (*in tukhfūhā*; Q 2:271; cf. Q 2:274; 9:60; 13:22; 14:31; 35:29)

And I will, surely, indeed mislead them (*la-aḍillanahum*), tempt them (*la-umaniyannahum*), and command them (*la-āmurannahum*) so that they will indeed mark the ears of their livestock; and I will, surely, indeed command them (*la-āmurannahum*) so that they will indeed change the creation of God . . . (Q 4:119).

The likeness/parable of the paradise promised to the conscious ones (*mathal al-jannah al-latī wu'id al-muttaqūn*; Q 13:35; 47:15)

He possesses the keys of the heavens and the earth (*lah maqālīd al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ*; Q 39:63; 42:12)

Forgive us and have mercy upon us (*taghfir lanā wa tarḥamunā*; Q 7:23; cf. 7:149, 155; 11:47; 23:109, 118)

We forgive for you your sins (*naghfir lakum khat i'ātikum*). We will increase the workers of good (Q 7:161)

Do they wait except that the angels should come to them (*hal yanzurūn illā an ta'tiyahum al-malā'ikah*) . . . Wait! Indeed, We are waiting (*intaẓirū innā muntaẓirūn*; Q 6:158).

Table A2.1 Continued

<i>Aramaic Gospel Traditions</i>	<i>Qur'ān</i>
There are people standing here who will not taste death (<i>īt anāšā d-qāymīn mñān d-lā nēt'mūn mawtā</i> ; Matthew 16:24–28; cf. Mark 9:1; Luke 9:23–27)	Every soul will taste death (<i>kull nafs dhā'iqah al-mawt</i> ; Q 3:184–5; 21:35; cf. 17:75; 29:57)
The kingdom of heaven has approached (<i>qērbat malkūtā da-šmayā</i> ; Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 10:7)	The hour has approached" (<i>iqtarabat al-sā'ah</i> ; Q 54:1)
The kingdom of God has arrived" (<i>mīāt malkūtā d-alāhā</i> ; Mark 1:15)	
He will send his angels with a large trumpet (<i>šūpūrāl qarnā</i> ; Matthew 24:31)	When the trumpet is blown (<i>idhā nufikh fī al-šūr</i> ; Q 18:99; 23:101; 36:51; 39:68; 50:20; 69:13)
The heavens were opened up for him (<i>ēptahū lēh šmayā</i> ; Matthew 3:16; cf. Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21)	[When] the heavens are opened up as doorways (<i>futiḥat al-samā' fa kānat abwāban</i> ; Q 78:17–20).
After this you will see the heavens as they are open (<i>mēn hāšā tēhžūn šmayā da-ptihīn</i> ; John 1:51)	The doorways of heaven will not be opened up for them (<i>lā tufataḥ lahum abwāb al-samā'</i> ; Q 7:40)
And Jesus was transformed before them. And his face shone like the sun (<i>nhar paršūpēh ayk šēmšā</i>), and his clothing, furthermore, became white like light/snow (<i>hwarū ayk nūhrā/ talgā</i> ; Matthew 17:2; cf. Mark 9:3; Luke 9:29).	As for those whose faces are white (<i>al-ladhīn ibyadḏat wujūhuhum</i>), they will dwell in the mercy of God forever (Q 3:106–7).
And behold there was a great earthquake, and an angel from the Lord descended from heaven, approached and rolled away the stone from the entrance and sat upon it. Then his appearance was like lightning (<i>barqā</i>) and his clothes were white like snow (<i>lbūšēh hēwār hwā ayk talgā</i> ; Matthew 28:2–3)	Their faces will shine before them and at their right hand (<i>nūruhum yas'ā bayn aydīhim wa bi aymānihim</i> ; Q 57:12; 66:8; cf. 57:19)
And they were judged equitably between them (<i>wa qudiy baynahum bi al-ḥaqq</i> ; Q 39:69, 75)	On that day will faces be splendid (<i>wujūh yawm^a'idh^m nāḏīrah</i> ; Q 75:22) "bright" (<i>muṣfirah</i> ; Q 80:38) . . . "joyous" (<i>nā'imah</i> ; Q 88:8)
Enter the gates of Gehenna to stay in forever (<i>udkhuḷū abwāb jahannam khālīdīn fthā</i> ; Q 39:72)	"He will separate them one from another (<i>wa nparēš ēnūn ḥad mēn ḥad</i> ; Matthew 25:32)
And immediately there appeared with the angel many hosts of heaven glorifying God (<i>ēthžīw 'am malakā ḥayalwātā sagiyyē da-šmayā</i>) saying, "glory to God (<i>šūbhā l-alāhā</i>) in the heights and on earth. Peace and good hope to humankind" (Luke 2:13–14)	Go from me (<i>zēlū lkūn mēnī</i>) [you] cursed ones (<i>līḗ</i>) into eternal hellfire (<i>nūrā da-l-'ālam</i> ; Matthew 25:41)
	And you will see the angels encircling the throne glorifying the praises of their Lord (<i>wa tarā al-malā'ikah ḥāffīn min ḥawl al-'arsh</i> ; Q 39:75)
	It will be said, "glory belongs to God, Lord of the worlds" (<i>al-ḥamd li allāh rabb al-'ālamīn</i> ; Q 39:76)

3 Cognate Short Phrases

Nominal/Possessive/Partitive Constructs

<i>Aramaic Gospel Traditions</i>	<i>Qur'ān</i>
Sons of God" (<i>bnūhī d-alāhā</i> ; Matthew 5:9)	Sons of God (<i>abnā' allāh</i> ; Q 5:18; cf. in relation 9:30)
The house of offerings of God (<i>bayt qūrbānē d-alāhā</i> ; Luke 21:4)	Servants of God (' <i>ibād allā</i> ; Q 44:18; 76:6; 37:40, 74, 128, 160, 169; cf. Q 25:63)
False witnesses (<i>sāhdē d-šūqrā</i> ; <i>lā šwīn sāhdūthūn</i> ; Matthew 26:59–60; Mark 14:55–57)	In the way of God (<i>fī sabīl allāh</i> ; Q 49:15; 61:11; etc.)
The hardness of your hearts (<i>qašyūt labkūn</i> ; Matthew 19:8)	He will be against them a witness (<i>yakūn 'alayhim shahīdan</i> ; Q 4:159)
A sign from Heaven (<i>ātā mēn šmayā</i> ; Matthew 16:1; Mark 8:11)	your hearts were hardened (<i>qasat/qasā qulūbukum</i>) after that; so it is as stone or even harder . . . (Q 2:74; cf. Q 4:155)
The kingdom of heaven (<i>malkūtā d-šmayā</i> ; throughout Matthew)	A sign from his Lord (<i>āyah min rabbih</i> ; Q 10:20)
The kingdom of God (<i>malkūtā d-alāhā</i> ; throughout)	If only signs would be revealed to him [i.e. Muḥammad] (<i>law lā unzil 'alayh ayāt</i> ; Q 29:49–50)
Lord of heaven and earth (<i>mārā d-šmāyā wa d-ar'ā</i> ; Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21)	The kingdom of the heavens and the earth (<i>malakūt al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ</i> ; throughout)
A mustard seed (<i>frēdtā d-ḥardlā</i> ; Matthew 13:31–32; 17:20; cf. Mark 4:31; Luke 13:19; 17:6)	The kingdom of the heavens and the earth (<i>mulk al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ</i> ; throughout)
Our Father who is in Heaven (<i>abūn d-ba-šmayā</i>)	The kingdom of all things (<i>malakūt kull shay'</i> ; Q 23:88)
The light of the world (<i>nūhrēh d-ālmā</i> Matthew 5:14; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16; 11:33; John 8:1 = 8:12 NRSV; 9:5)	Lord of the Heavens and the Earth (<i>rabb al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ</i> ; Q 13:16; 44:7; 78:43; etc.)
The Day of Judgment (<i>yawmā d-dīnā</i> ; Matthew 10:15; 11:22, 24; 12:26)	The weight of a mustard seed (<i>mithqāl ḥabbah min khardal</i> ; Q 31:16; cf. 10:61; 34:3)
	In the Name of God (<i>bi-ism allāh</i> ; Q 1:1; 27:30)
	The light of the heavens and the earth (<i>allāh nūr al-samāwāt wa al-arḍ</i> ; Q 24:35)
	The Day of Judgment (<i>yawm al-dīn</i> ; Q 1:4; 15:35; 26:28; 37:20; 38:78; 51:12; 56:56; 70:26; 74:46; 82:15–18; 83:11)

Verbal Couplets

<i>Aramaic Gospel Traditions</i>	<i>Qur'ān</i>
Repent and believe . . . (<i>tūbū wa haymēnū</i> ; Mark 1:15; cf. Matthew 3:2). The baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (<i>ma'mūdītā/maṣ bī'ay d-taybūtā l-ṣubqānā d-ḥtāhē</i> ; Mark 1:4–5; cf. in relation Luke 3:3; 17:3–5)	Those who repent, believe . . . (<i>tāb wa āman</i> ; Q 20:82; cf. Q 19:60; 28:67; 7:143, 153) Repent (<i>tūbū</i>) to God a clear repentance (<i>tawbatan naṣūḥan</i>). Perhaps your Lord may blot out your sins (<i>yukaffir 'ankum sayyi'ātikum</i> ; Q 66:8)

4 Lexica**Shared Roots**

<i>Aramaic Gospel Traditions</i>	<i>Qur'ān</i>
Glutton (<i>ākel</i> ; Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:34)	Devours food (<i>ya'kul al-ṭa'ām</i> ; Q 25:7)
Marketplace (<i>šūqā</i> ; Matthew 11:16; 20:3; Mark 6:56; Luke 7:32)	Marketplaces (<i>aswāq</i> ; Q 25:7)
Prophets and sincere men (<i>nabiyyē wa zdīqē</i> ; Matthew 13:17).	The prophets (<i>al-nabiyyūn</i>), the sincere (<i>al-ṣiddīqīn</i>) . . . (Q 4:69).
The elect whom He elected (<i>gabyē dagbā</i> ; Mark 13:20; cf. Matthew 24:22)	You [merely] chose a few (<i>ijtabaytahā</i> ; Q 7:203) We elected (<i>ijtabaynā</i> ; Q 19:58)
The elect (<i>gabyē</i>)” (Matthew 24:24; Mark 13:22)	He elects you (<i>yajtabik</i> ; Q 12:6) He elected him (<i>ijtabāh</i> ; 68:48–50)
His elect (<i>gbūhī/ aḥīdawī</i> ; Matthew 24:31; cf. Mark 13:27)	
His elect (<i>gbūhī/ bhīrawī</i> ; Luke 18:7–8)	
Her purification (<i>tadkīthūn</i> ; Luke 2:22)	A pure son (<i>ghulāman zakīyyan</i> ; Q 19:19)
Greetings (<i>šlāmā</i> ; Matthew 23:7; Mark 12:34; Luke 11:34; 20:46)	Greetings (<i>salām</i> ; Q 25:63; 28:55)
To go astray (<i>t'ā</i> ; throughout)	misguidance (<i>tāghūr</i> ; Q 2:256–7; 4:51; 60, 76; 5:60; 16:36; 39:17), Abomination (<i>tāghīyah</i> ; Q 69:5) “to go astray” (<i>taḡhā</i> ; Q 79:37–39; 96:6)
Scribes (<i>sāfrē/sāfrāyē</i> ; throughout)	Books (<i>asfār</i> ; Q 62:5)
Satan (<i>saṭānā</i> ; throughout)	Satan (<i>al-shayṭān</i> ; throughout)
Temptation (<i>nēsyūnā</i> ; Matthew 6:13; Luke 11:4)	He was tempted (<i>fa-nasiy^a</i> ; Q 20:115) We are tempted (<i>nasīnā</i> ; 2:286)
[His] throne (<i>kūrsyā/ēh</i> ; Matthew 5:33–35; 19:28; 23:22; Luke 22:30)	You were tempted (<i>nasīt</i> ; 18:23) His throne (<i>kursiyuh</i> ; Q 2:255)

Lamp (<i>šrāgā</i> ; throughout)	Lamp (<i>sirāj</i> ; Q 25:61; 71:16; 78:13)
Mercy (<i>rahmē</i> ; throughout)	Mercy (<i>rahmah</i> ; throughout)
World/ages (<i>‘ālam ‘ālmīn</i> ; throughout)	World/ages (<i>‘ālamīn</i> ; throughout)
They keep (<i>nēṭrūn</i> ; Matthew 28:20)	They wait (<i>yanṣurūn</i> ; Q 2:210; 7:53; 16:33; 35:43; 43:66; 47:18)
Abundance (<i>šēf’ā</i> ; throughout)	Abundance (<i>shafā’ah</i> ; throughout)
Chasm (<i>hawtā</i> ; Luke 16:26)	Chasm/barrier (<i>hāwiyah</i> ; Q 101:9; 23:100)

Calques

<i>Aramaic Gospel Traditions</i>	<i>Qur’ān</i>
The meek (<i>mkīkē</i> ; Matthew 5:3, 5)	The downtrodden (<i>al-mustad’afūn</i> ; Q 4:75, 98, 127)
Prophets (<i>nabiyyē</i>), wise men (<i>ḥakīmē</i>), and scribes (<i>sāfrē</i> ; Matthew 23:34)	messengers (<i>rusul</i> ; Q 2:87)
Prophets (<i>nabiyyē</i>) and righteous men (<i>šlīḥē</i> ; Luke 11:49)	
Scribes and Pharisees (<i>sāfrē wa-prīšē</i> ; Matthew 23; Luke 11:44)	Their scribes and priests (<i>aḥbāruhum wa ruhbanuhum</i> ; Q 9:31)
For my sake (<i>mēṭūlātī</i> ; Matthew 5:11–12)	My way (<i>sabili</i> ; Q 3:195)
Adversary, slanderer, or backbiter (<i>ākēlqarṣā</i> ; lit. “eater of morsels;” throughout)	Adversary, enemy, foe (<i>‘aduww</i> ; Q 2:168; 2:208; 6:142; 7:22; 12:5; 17:53; 28:15; 35:6; 36:60; 43:62)
Temptation/trial (<i>nēsyūnā</i> ; Matthew 6:13; Luke 11:4)	Test/trial (<i>fīmah</i> ; Q 20:85; 22:53; 29:3; 38:34; etc..)
A mustard seed (<i>frēdtā d-ḥardlā</i> ; Matthew 13:31–32; 17:20; cf. Mark 4:31; Luke 13:19; 17:6)	The weight of an atom (<i>mīthqāl dharrah</i> ; Q 4:40; cf. 34:22; 99:7–8)
Lamp (<i>šrāgā</i> ; Matthew 5:14–16; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16; 11:33)	Lamp (<i>miṣbāḥ</i> ; Q 24:35)
Lampstand (<i>mnārtā</i> ; Matthew 5:14–16; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16; 11:33)	Niche (<i>mishkāḥ</i> ; Q 24:35)
It illuminates (<i>manhar</i> ; Matthew 5:14–16; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16; 11:33)	It illuminates (<i>taḏīr</i> ; Q 24:35)
truly (<i>āmīn</i> ; throughout)	truly (<i>al-ḥaqq</i> ^a ; Q 25:25–26; 38:84–85)
The word (<i>mēltā</i> ; John 1:1, 14)	His word (<i>kalimatuh</i> ; Q 4:171)
Nations (<i>ammē</i> ; Matthew 25:32)	Multitudes (<i>zumar</i> ; Q 39:71, 73)

5 Phonetic And Rhetorical Relationships***Rhyme***

<i>Aramaic Gospel Traditions</i>	<i>Qur'ān</i>
<i>ā; ūn</i> (Matthew 5:3–16; cf. Luke 11:2–4)	<i>ūn /īn /īm;ā</i> ; Throughout

Internal Repetition

<i>Aramaic Gospel Traditions</i>	<i>Qur'ān</i>
Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites (<i>wāy l-kūn sāfrē/sāfrāyē wa prīšē nāsbay b-apē</i> ; see throughout Matthew 23; Luke 11:44)!	Woe unto the disbelievers on that day (<i>wayl yawm^a'idhⁱⁿ li-l-mukadhdhibīn</i> ; Q 77)!

Appendix C: Raw Data

Table A3.1 Raw Data

Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
Q Sur	1	2	3	4	5
Mn Vs Cit	1-7	24, 48, 74, 79, 87, 90, 110, 113, 115, 123, 126, 136, 161, 164, 167, 168, 177, 184, 208, 210, 215, 224, 225, 254, 255, 264, 268, 271-276, 286	8, 21, 45, 50, 59, 93, 106, 107, 169, 175, 179, 181, 184, 185, 192-195	2, 3, 8, 14, 36, 38, 40, 49, 69, 75, 85, 95, 98, 119, 127, 138, 141, 155-159, 171	18, 24, 78, 89, 95
Mn Vs Tally	7	34	18	23	5
Tot Vs Q = 6234					

Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
6	7	8	9	10
34, 51, 70, 75, 87, 130, 142, 158	22, 23, 37, 40, 50, 53, 71, 89, 161, 179, 182-185, 203	21, 41	3, 30, 31, 32, 34, 46, 74-80, 86	3, 6, 20, 26, 61, 67, 68, 85, 86, 102
8	15	2	14	10

Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
22, 29, 47, 51	5, 6, 97, 108,	16, 29, 35	24, 37	35	2, 32, 24, 25, 49, 65, 75, 76, 89, 102, 121	26, 53, 64, 71, 107-110	23, 24, 31, 46, 47, 99, 10	8, 7, 58, 87-91, 22, 82, 85, 10	9, 115, 122,
4	4	3	2	1	11	8	7	7	6

Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
28, 35, 47, 105	1-3, 17, 28, 53, 56, 69, 73	28, 88, 91, 99-101, 109	22, 35, 36, 61	7, 25, 26, 31, 44, 61, 74	15, 28, 96-102, 109, 169	12, 30	15, 21, 32	3, 57	23, 38, 57
4	9	7	4	7	16	2	3	2	3

Table A3.1 Continued

Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
16, 27, 34,	4, 25	26, 41–46, 63	3, 23	6	13–26, 51, 55–57, 60, 83	20, 159	17, 34, 76–85	29, 44, 63, 66–75	18
3	2	8	2	1	20	2	12	13	1

Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
44, 47	12, 13	36, 43–47, 57, 61, 62, 70, 86	7, 59	NA	NA	15, 38	NA	15	20
2	2	11	2	0	0	2	0	1	1

Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
1–9, 12	1–10, 31, 43	26, 32	1, 2	NA	1–56, 74, 81–96	1, 10, 12	4, 19–21	1, 7, 10	3, 5
10	12	2	2	0	73	3	4	3	2

Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
1, 6–8, 11	1, 5	2, 6, 10	1	NA	8, 10, 11	6–11	48–50	13, 34, 52	1–10, 26
5	2	3	1	0	3	6	3	3	11

Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
16	8	NA	43–48	1–11, 22	8, 12–27	1–50	13, 17–20, 43	1–9	34–38
1	1	0	6	12	17	50	6	9	5

Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
1–14	1–5, 15–18	11, 29–36	1–5, 24	NA	NA	NA	2, 8	17–20	1, 18
14	9	9	6	0	0	0	2	4	2

Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
NA	8	1–8	1–5, 9–11						
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	8

250 Raw Data

Table A3.1 Continued

MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
7, 9, 12-15	5, 16, 19, 22, 24, 25	7, 26, 34	12, 15, 17, 24, 31-33	N/A	10, 11, 12-18, 22	1, 19, 23-28	2, 20	21, 22	3-8, 21, 22, 24, 28-30
6	6	3	7	0	10	8	2	2	12
MK	MK	MK	MK	MK	MK	MK	MK	MK	MK
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	TOTAL	% of Mk	
2, 21, 22, 25, 47, 48	N/A	1-11, 26, 38-44	8, 10, 12, 13, 17-27, 31, 32	3, 7, 9, 55-72	N/A	15			
6	0	19	17	21	0	1	81	11.9469	
LK	LK	LK	LK	LK	LK	LK	LK	LK	LK
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
21, 25	2, 3, 4, 33, 44, 47-49, 52	46	6, 19, 30, 34, 35	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 13, 14, 21	3	9, 19-31	3, 4, 5, 6	1, 7-9, 13, 22, 23, 25, 38, 39	N/A
2	9	1	5	8	1	14	4	10	0
JN	JN	JN	JN	JN	JN	JN	JN	JN	JN
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
10	55	8, 43	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	36	NA
1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
42	57	50	38	31	27	33	26	40	42

MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	TOTAL	% of Mt
3, 16, 30, 31	33-43	1722, 32, 35	1-37	7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 19, 20, 22-31, 35, 36	29, 31-46	7, 11, 13, 28, 29, 59-75	51, 52	17-20		
4	11	8	37	19	17	22	2	4	215	20.0747
MK	MK	MK	MK	MK	MK	MK	MK	MK	MK	MK
LK	LK	LK	LK	LK	LK	LK	LK	LK	LK	LK
20	21	22	23	24	TOTAL	% of Lk				
23, 37, 46, 47	1-4, 10, 11, 16-19, 23-27, 29, 33	25-31, 55-62	44, 45	N/A						
4	17	15	2	0	115	9.99131				
JN	JN	JN	JN	JN	JN	JN	JN	JN	JN	JN
20	21	TOTAL	% of Jn							
NA	24, 25									
0	2	14	1.59272							
31	25	879								

Note: Q = Qur'ān

Mt/MT = Gospel of Matthew

Mk/MK = Gospel of Mark

Lk/LK = Gospel of Luke

Jn/JN = Gospel of John

Sur = Surah

Ch = Chapter

Mn Vs Cit = Main Verse cited

Mn Vs Tally = Main Verse Tally

Tot Vs = Total Verses

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