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

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

This tradition is also reported in the Jāmi‘ of Ma‘mar b. Rāshid (d. 154),3 and in ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s Muṣannaf with the following isnād: ‘Abd al-Razzāq > al-Auzā‘i4 > Ḥassān b. ‘Atiyya5 > Abū Kabsha6 > ‘Abdallah b. ‘Arrr b. al-Āṣ. The Prophet said: “Transmit on my authority, be it even one verse (from the Qur’ān), narrate (traditions) concerning the Children of Israel and there

---

1 Muhammedanische Studien (Halle, 1890), II, 137, note 3; and see G. Vajda, “Juifs et Musulmans selon le Hadîth”, JA CLXIX (1937), 115-120; S. D. Goitein, Banū Isrā‘îl, EI².
3 Ms. Feyzullah 541, fol. 59b, inf. (See F. Sezgin, GAS, I, 291).
4 See on him F. Sezgin, GAS, I, 516.
6 See on him Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhib, XII, 210, no. 974.
is nothing objectionable (in that); he who tells a lie on my authority — let him take his place in Hell."

In the Musnad of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal8 this tradition is recorded with the same chain of transmitters; it contains however a slight variant: \( \text{wa-man kadhaba 'alayya mut'a'mmidan, "intentionally"} \).

---

7 Ms. Murad Molla 604, fol. 113b: \( \text{ballighā 'amī wa-lau āyatan wa-haddithū 'an bānī isrā'īlā wa-lā ḫaraja fa-man kadhaba 'alayya kadhibatūn fa-l-yatabawwā maq'adahu min al-nārī.} \) And see this tradition: al-Ṭabarānī, al-Mu'jam al-saghir, ed. Abd al-Rahmān Muḥammad 'Uthmān (Cairo, 1388/1968), I, 166; al-Fasawi, al-Ma'rifat wa-l-ta'rikh, Ms. Esad Ef. 2391, fol. 162b; al-Nuwayri, Niḥayat al-arab (Cairo [reprint] 1964), XIV, 182; Abū Nuʿaym, Ḥilyat al-auliya’ (Cairo, 1351/1932), VI, 78.


9 See about the tradition \( \text{man kadhaba 'alayya}: \) Ibn al-Jauzi, Kitāb al-maw'ūt, ed. 'Abd al-Rahmān Muḥammad 'Uthmān (Cairo, 1386/1966), I, 55-98; and see ibid., p. 63 the remark of Wahb b. Jarīr: \( \text{wa-lā dhī ḥi, md 'alimtum; qdla: wa-man kadhaba 'alayya; qiila hammiimun: ahsibuhu qdla "muta'ammidan" ... fa-l-yatabawwā ... ;} \) cf. al-Khattāb al-Baghdādi, Taqyid al-'ilm, ed. Youssef Eche (Damascus, 1949), p. 29: \( \text{wa-man kadhaba 'alayya; qāla hammāmān: ahsibuhu qāla "muta'ammidan"... fa-l-yatabawwā... ;} \) cf. J. Goldziher, Muḥ. St., II, 132 (see notes 3-4); and see Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, op. cit., IV, nos. 2675, 2976; V, nos. 3694, 3847; II, nos. 584, 629, 630, 903, 1000-1001, 1075, 1291; I, nos. 326, 469, 507; VI, nos. 4338, 4742; VII, nos. 5232, 5291; IX, nos. 6309, 6478; X, nos. 6592, 6593. And see an interesting setting of this utterance ibid., VI, no. 4156: \( \text{jama'ānā rasālu lāhī (s) wa-naḥnu arba'īnā, fa-kuntu fi ḥarajā man atīhu, qāla: innakum mansūrūna wa-muṣtūna wa-mafīhūn lakum, fa-man adraka dhālīka fa-l-yattaqī llāhā wa-l-y'amur bi-l-ma'rūfī, wa-l-yannya an al-munkarī, wa-man kadhaba 'alayya mut'a'mmidan... ;} \) and see a remarkable version ibid., V, no. 3025: \( \text{ittaqā l-haditha 'annī illā mâ 'alīmtum; qāla: wa-man kadhaba 'alā l-qr'ānī bi-ghayri 'ilmin fa-l-yatabawwā... ;} \) cf. al-Daylaml, al-Firdaws, Ms. Chester Beatty 3037, fol. 27a: \( \text{ittaqū l-haditha 'annī illā mâ 'alīmtum, fa-innahu man kadhaba 'alayya mut'a'mmidan... ;} \) cf. al-Jarrāḥ, Kashf al-khafd' wa-muzil al-ilbās (Cairo, 1352), II, 275; 1993; ibn al-Aṭhīr, al-Nihāya, ed. al-Zāwī al-Ṭanāḥī (Cairo, 1963), I, 159; al-Tirmidhī, Saḥīḥ (Cairo, 1934), XIII, 167 where this utterance is connected with the story of ḥāṣif al-na'īl; al-Qunduzī, Yanābī al-mawadda (Kāzīmiyya, 1385), pp. 59, 209; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi, Ta'rikh Baghda digest. (Cairo, 1349/1931), I, 265; al-Safārīnī, Ghidhā' al-albāb (Cairo, 1324), I, 118; Yūsuf b. Mūsā al-Ḥanāfī, al-Ma'taṣar min al-nakhtansa (Hyderabad, 1362), II, 261-262; al-Ṭabarānī, op. cit., II, 55; al-Fasawi op. cit., fol. 158a; al-Ḥākim, al-Mustadrak (Hyderabad, 1342), II, 401; al-Dhahabi, Mizān, IV, 393 sup.; Abū Nuʿaym, op. cit., II, 369; cf. Abū ' Ubayd, Faḍā'il al-qur'ān, Ms. Leiden, Or. 3056, fol. 3b: \( \text{...annā rasālu llāhī (s) 'ahida ilaynī fī hajjati l-wadā'ī fa-qāla: 'alaykum bi-l-qur'ānī fa-innākum so-tarjī'īna ilā quāmīn yashātāhā l-haditha 'annī fa-man 'aqīla shay'ān fa-l-yuhaddith 'annī bihi, wa-man qāla 'alayya mà lām aqīl fa-l-yatabawwā baytān aṭīfa maq'adūn fī jahannam; and see al-Suyūtī, al-Jāmi' al-kabīr, Ms. al-Jazzār, Acre, I, 351: ḥaddithā 'annī kamā samī'tum wa-lā ḥarajā, illā man akhbarā 'alā llāhī kadhibān mut'a'mmadīn li-yuḏīlī bihi l-nāsī bi-ghayri 'ilmin fa-l-yatabawwā maq'adūhū min al-nārī; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, Futūḥ Miṣr, ed.} \)
Haddithū ‘an bani ʿisrāʾīla

The tradition haddithū ‘an bani ʿisrāʾīl forms, as we see, a part of a combined hadith in which the Prophet bids the faithful to transmit verses (of the Qurʾān), urges them to narrate (traditions) concerning the Children of Israel and warns them not to lie while transmitting traditions on his authority. In some versions only two parts of the combined tradition are recorded: “Transmit on my authority be it even one verse and narrate concerning the Children of Israel and there is nothing objectionable (in that).”

The same version as given in the Jāmiʿ of Maʿmar b. Rashid, consisting of three parts, is recorded by al-Muʿāfā b. Zakariyya (d. 390) in his al-Jalīṣ al-ṣāliḥ wa-l-anīs al-nāṣih al-shāfiʿi, and is accompanied by a comprehensive comment by the author. The Children of Israel, al-Muʿāfā argues, were specified in this tradition because of the miraculous events which had happened to them, just as the sea was specified because of the miraculous features which are in it; the permission was granted to narrate about (the wonders of) the sea with keeping away from sin of lie.

The tendency apparent in this tradition to emphasize the miraculous and wonderful aspect of the stories about the Children of Israel is reflected in an enlarged version of this saying: haddithu ‘an bani ʿisrāʾīla fa-innahu kānat fihim aʿajību.

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

C. Torrey (New Haven, 1922), 273 inf.-274: man kadhaba ‘alayya kadhibatan mutaʿammidan... associated with: alā, wa-man sharība ḥamra... 10 Ibn ῶʿAbd al-Barr, Jāmiʿ bayān al-ʿilm wa-qaṣilihi (Cairo, 1346), II, 40; al-Quḍāʾi, Shihāb al-akhbār, Ms. Br. Mus., Or. 6496, fol. 39a. 11 Ms. Topkapi Saray, Ahmet III, 2321, folds. 3a-4a. 12 Fol. 4a: ...wa-khaṣṣa bani ʿisrāʾīla bi-hāḏḥa il-mā maḍā fiḥim min al-aʿājībi kamā khaṣṣa l-bahri bimā fiḥi min al-aʿājībi... (the allusion refers apparently to the well known utterance, or proverb: haddith an al-bahrī wa-lā ḥaraj; see al-Jarrāḥi, op. cit., I, 352, no. 117). 13 Al-Daḏlamī, op. cit., fol. 72a; LʾA, s.v. ʿr ʃ. 14 Al-Muʿāfā, op. cit., fol. 4a: ...wa-lā ḥarajā yattajīhu fiḥi taʾwilāni, aḥaduhumā an yakūna khabaran maḥḍan fi maʾnāhu wa-lafṣihi, ka-annahu dhakara bani ʿisrāʾīla wa-kānat fiḥim...
The two grammatical constructions reflect in fact two conflicting interpretations of the tradition. Taking \( \text{lā ḥaraja as khabar} \) implies that there is no objection whatsoever to tell the stories about the Children of Israel whether true or invented. The motivation adduced for this permission is of interest: refraining from transmitting these stories would bring to a stop the transmission of the \( \text{ḥikma} \), the wisdom, and of thoughtful scrutiny of stories concerning past people and prophets. Further it brings to light the fact that some orthodox circles disliked stories about the Children of Israel, which must have been widely current. On the other hand \( \text{lā ḥaraja}, \) taken as prohibition, implies an interdiction to transmit popular stories similar to those of the \( \text{qussās}. \)

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

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

\( a'ājibu, \ wa-kāna kathirun min al-nāsī yambū sam'uhum 'an-hā, fa-yakānu hādha maqṭ'atan li-man 'indahu 'ilmun minhā an yuhadditha l-nāsa bihi; fa-rubbamā addā hādha ilā durūsi l-ḥikmati wa-niqṭā'ī mawāddī l-fā'ildati wa-nṣīdī ṯāriqī t-mālī l-fikrati wa-iqlīqi ābdābī l-ittīqī wa-l-‘ibrati, fa-ka-annahu qāla: laysa fi taḥadduthikum bi-mā 'alimtumūhū min ḍhālika kārājun; wa-l-ta'wilu l-thānī an yakāna l-ma'nā fi hādha l-nahya; fa-ka-annahu qāla: wa-lā ṭarajū bi-an tataḥaddathā bi-mā qad tabayyana lākum l-kadhibu ǧih, muḥaqqiqūn lahu an ghāfirina ābdān bihi.

15 Taqyid al-'ilm, pp. 30–31: lā taktubū 'anī shay'an illā l-qur'āna, fa-man kataba ghayrahu fa-l-yamḥu, wa-b-haddithū 'an bāni ḫrā'ilā wa-lā ḥaraja, wa-mān kadhaba 'alayya fa-l-yata-bawwa maq'adahu min al-nārī.
things which are more wonderful.” The permission to narrate stories about the Children of Israel is here put in opposition to the prohibition to record the traditions of the Prophet in a written form. It is however established as being on a par with the oral transmission of Prophetic traditions. Even the wording is identical: ḥaddithū ‘ānni wa-lā ḥaraja and ḥaddithū ‘an banī isrā‘īla wa-lā ḥaraja.

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

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

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

---


17 Fol. 59b; ‘Abd al-Razzāq, al-Muṣannaf, Ms. fol. 113b: bāb hal yus‘alu aḥlu l-kitābī ‘an shay’in... ‘an zaydi bni aslama anna l-nabīyya (s) qāla: lā ta‘alā aḥlu l-kitābī ‘an shay’in fa-innakum lan yahdikum, qad aqallū anfusahum. qīla: yā rasūla llāhi, alā nuḥaddithu ‘an banī isrā‘īla? qīla: ḥaddithū wa-lā ḥaraja.

18 Al-Nihāya, I, 361.
19 See Rāghib al-İsfahānī, al-Muʿṣarādāt fi gharib al-qur‘ān (Cairo, 1324), p. 111, s.v. ḥ ṱ j.
20 See al-Majlisi, Bihār, IV, 495 (new ed.).
were told, whether these stories are true or not; the remoteness of time (i.e. between the period of the Children of Israel and the time of Islam — K) makes it impossible to verify the story and the transmitter cannot be responsible for its reliability. This is set in opposition to the traditions about the Prophet: a ḥadīth should only be transmitted after one has made sure about the soundness of the transmission and the righteousness of the transmitters.  

This interpretation was adopted by al-ʿAzīzī (d. 1070) who is even more explicit in his comment. "Narrate concerning the Children of Israel" glosses al-ʿAzīzī by "tell about them the stories and exhortations" (ballīghū ʿanhum al-qiṣaṣa wa-l-mawāʾīza). Lā ḥaraja is explained by the statement that there is no sin incumbent upon a transmitter who records these stories without isnād. Because of the remoteness of time it is enough to make an assumption that the tradition concerns them (fa-yakfi ghala batu l-zamī bi-annahu ʿanhum). This tradition is followed by a ḥadīth, which urges people to transmit traditions about the Prophet and warns against invention and lie in such traditions.  

Here the expression ḥaddīthū ʿanni bimā tasmaʿīna is explained by the recommendation to observe sound isnāds and to refrain from the transmission of ḥadīths with faulty isnāds.  

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

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

---

21 Al-Nihāya, I, 361; and see al-Jazari, Ḍiṣaṣ al-anbiyyāʾ (al-Najaf, 1964), p. 522 (quoting Ibn Athīr); and see ibid., p. 522 supra, a Shīʿī permission to transmit the stories of the Children of Israel.  


*Hadith* 'an banū ʾisrā'īla

entails edification. Al-ʿAlqamī seems thus to consider the saying *hadith* 'an banū ʾisrā'īla as an utterance abrogating an earlier prohibiting utterance.

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

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

A restricting interpretation asserts that the term Banū ʾIsrāʾīl refers to the sons of Jacob; the *hadith* urges their story to be narrated together with that of Joseph. This interpretation is rejected by al-ʿAzīzī with the remark: *wa-hādhā ahādū l-aʿuṣūhī.* A peculiar interpretation explains the reason for this permission by stating that the stories about the Children of Israel contain some distasteful expressions and therefore it was necessary to stress that their transmission was not objectionable.

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

II

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


25 Al-Jarrāḥī, op. cit., I, 353.


27 *Al-Sirāj al-munir*, II, 145.

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

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

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

34 Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya, II, 32.
36 Al-Majlīṣī, op. cit., XIII, 331–332 (new ed.).
Haddithu ‘an banu isra’ila

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

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

---


223
by him as qawiyyun, shadidun) and predict that he will be followed by a man, who has nothing objectionable in him (lā ba’ṣa bihi), but he will prefer his relatives; ‘Umar recognized forthwith that it would be ‘Uthmān. Afterwards, said the bishop, there will be “a crack in the rock” which he explained as “a sword drawn and blood shed.” Later there will be a united congregation (jama’atun). 41 ‘Abdallah b. Salām reported that the description of ‘Uthmān in the Book of God was: “the Commander of those who forsake and kill,” 42 and foretold that he would be murdered. 43 Ka’b foretells the rule of Mu’āwiya. 44 ‘Abdallah b. al-Zubayr stated that everything foretold by Ka’b about his rule really happened to him. 45 It is a Jew who foretells the just rule of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz; 46 and it is from the Torah that the prediction that heaven and earth will bewail the death of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz is quoted. 47 Ka’b foretells the appearance of the black banners of the ‘Abbasids, 48 gives the names of the descendants of ‘Abbās who will rule the Muslim community 49 and emphasizes in a separate statement: al-manṣūru manṣūru bani hāshimīn. 50 It is, of course, an utterance with important political implications. Who was the person the Yemenis believed to be al-Manṣūr, can be gauged from the refutation of ‘Abdallah b. ‘Amr (b. al-‘Āṣ): yā ma’ṣhara l-yamani, taqūlūna inna l-manṣūra minkum, fa-lā; wa-lladhi nafsi bi-yadihi, innahu la-qurashiyyun abīhu, wa-lau ashā u an ansibahu ilā aqsā jaddin huwa lahu fa’altu. 51 Tubay’, the stepson of Ka’b, quoted from the Torah the name of Saffāl) and predicted that he would live forty years. 52 ‘Abdallah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ quoted from the Books which he found after the battle of Yarmūk the names of the ‘Abbasid Caliphs who would rule the Muslim community: Saffāh, Manṣūr, al-Amīn etc. 53 Ka’b

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

42 Nu’aym b. Ḥammād, op. cit., fol. 41b; but al-Mālaqī, al-Tamhīd, p. 113 has instead of “amīrun ‘alā l-khādiḥ wa-l-qāṭīl” “amīrun ‘alā l-qāṭīl al-āmīr” (erroneous) and “amīrun ‘alā l-qāṭīl wa-l-āmīr” (correct); al-Suyūṭī, al-Khaṣā’īs, I, 78–79.


44 Nu’aym b. Ḥammād, op. cit., fol. 28b.

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


47 Al-Suyūṭī, al-Ḥawī, II, 284.


49 Ibid., fol. 27b: ‘an kā’bin qāla: yamīku thalāḥatun min wuldi l-‘abbāsi al-manṣūru wa-l-mahdīyyu wa-l-saffāhu.

50 Ibid., fol. 27a.

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

53 Ibid., fol. 25b; and see about the books and these traditions Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya, II, 298 infra.–299 supra.
predicts the signs which will announce the end of the ‘Abbasid rule,\textsuperscript{54} gives
details about civil wars which will occur in the different provinces of the
Muslim Empire,\textsuperscript{55} and foretells the appearance of the Sufyānī.\textsuperscript{56} Farqad al-
Sabakht predicts from the Holy Scriptures cruel battles in Judda.\textsuperscript{57}

Jews and Christians predicted the appearance of the Prophet\textsuperscript{58} and it was
Jews and Christians who knew the exact date of his death: two Jewish scholars
from Yemen informed Jarir b. ‘Abdallah al-Balaji on the day of the death of
the Prophet about the sad event.\textsuperscript{59} A monk could fix precisely the date of
the death of the Prophet for Ka‘b b. ‘Adīyy according to what he found in his
Book.\textsuperscript{60} A Jew from ‘Umnān informed ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ on the day of the death
of the Prophet about this; ‘Amr recorded the date, checked it later and found
it accurate.\textsuperscript{61}

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

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{54} Nu‘aym b. Ḥammād, \textit{op. cit.}, fol. 56a–b, 57a–b, 58b, 60b, 61b.
\item \textsuperscript{55} \textit{Ibid.}, fols. 34b, 61b, 62a, 63a–b, 65a–b, 69b, 71a–b, 72a–b.
\item \textsuperscript{56} \textit{Ibid.}, fols. 74a–b, 81a.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Al-Fākiḥ, \textit{Ta‘rikh Makka}, Leiden, Or. 463, fol. 414a.
\item \textsuperscript{58} See e.g. al-Nuwayrī, \textit{op. cit.}, XVI, 136, 143, 149–153; al-Haythami, \textit{al-Ni‘ma l-kubra
\item \textsuperscript{59} Ibn Kathir, \textit{al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya}, V, 278.
\item \textsuperscript{60} \textit{Ibid.}, V, 278–279.
\item \textsuperscript{61} Ibn Ḥubays, \textit{al-Maghāzī}, Ms. Leiden, Or. 343, p. 24.
\item \textsuperscript{62} See al-Suyūṭī, \textit{al-Ḥawi}, II, 283: …\textit{wa-waradat al-‘āthārū ayyān bi-anīs wa-llāhā bayyāna
li-anbiyā’ihi fi kutubihim jam‘a má hūwa wāq‘ī‘un fi ḥādhīhi l-ummait min an ‘ādhāthin wa-fītānīn
wa-akhbārī khulaṣā’iḥā wa-mulūkīḥā…} And see ‘Abd al-Jabbar, \textit{Tathbit dāl‘i l-nubuwwa},
li-anā‘ l-yahūda wa-l-‘asrārā kānā yu‘mināna bi-mūsā wa-ghayrihi mimman kānā yaddā‘i
l-nubuwwata, wa-qad aḥḥāra hā’alā‘i fi kutubihim bi-nubuwwati muḥammadīn (ṣ) fa-lam
yuqdimū ‘alā l-tamamīt l-hādhā…}
\item \textsuperscript{63} Al-Suyūṭī, \textit{al-Ḥawi}, II, 284: …\textit{wa-qad u’turīda ‘alayya fi ħādhā l-tarīqī bi-anīnahu yalsamū
‘alayhi an yakūnā kullu mā fi l-‘ur‘ānā muḍammānān fi jam‘i‘ l-kutubi l-sāḥiqātī; wa-aqūsu: la mānā‘ l-mīd dālīlku, bal dallat al-adillatu ‘alā thuḇūtī ḥādhā l-lāzīmī…}
\item \textsuperscript{64} \textit{Ibid.}, II, 285: …\textit{wa-qad nāṣa‘ ‘alā ḥādhā bi-a‘yinihī l-imānām abū ‘anfisfatay haythu stadallā
bi-ḥādhīhi l-‘ayyāt ‘alā jawāzī qir‘ātī l-‘ur‘ānā bi-ghayri l-ilsānī l-‘arabīyyī, wa-qāla: inna l-
qur‘āna muḍammānān fi l-kutubi l-sāḥiqātī, wa-hiyya bi-ghayri l-ilsānī l-arabī, akhadhan bi-
ḥadhihi l-‘ayyāt (i.e. Sūra xxvi, 197–98), wa-minnā yashhadu bi-dḥālika wasfuhu ta‘alā l-l-}
\end{itemize}
The idea of identity of contents led consequently to the identification of some passages of the Holy Books with those of the Qurʾān. The beginning of the Torah is identical with the beginning of Sūrat al-Anʿām, the end of the Torah is identical with the end of Sūrat Yā Sīn is called in the Torah al-Muʿamma.66 God urged Moses to read the verse of the Throne (Sūra ii 256) after every prayer and mentioned the reward for this reading.67 Muhammad b. Kaʾb al-Quraṣī could identify a quotation from some Holy Books mentioned by Abu Saʿīd al-Maqburi with Sūra ii 204.68 The first sentence in the Torah was Sūra vi 152: “Say: Come, I will recite what your Lord has forbidden you... etc.69 “Hādhā” in Sūra lxxxvii, 18: inna hādhā laṣī l-sīrāt l-ūlā, sīrāt ibrāhīma wa-mūsā was interpreted as referring to the whole sūra; the whole sūra, the commentators maintained, was included in the Holy Books of the earlier prophets.70 Another tradition states explicitly that the sūra was copied from the Books of Moses and Abraham.71 Some commentators tried to limit the extent of inna hādhā... to some verses (āyāt) of the sūra.72 The Prophet is said to have given an utterance about the sūhuf of Ibrāhīm and Mūsā: the sūhuf of Ibrāhīm were proverbs, the sūhuf of Mūsā were exempla (ʿibar).73 Quotations from these sūhuf are in fact uttered by the Prophet.74

A very early compilation containing wise sayings, stories and exhortations of Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, Ayyūb, Dāwūd, Sūlāyān, Ḥisā, Yaḥyā b. Zakariyya and Luqmān is the Kitāb al-mawāʾiṣ of Abu ʿUbayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224).75 The numerous traditions, sayings and stories, provided with chains of isnād and recorded by one of the greatest scholars of the second century of the Hijra, attest that in this period knowledge of Jewish and Christian tradition

quʾānī fl iʾiddati mawāʾiṣ bi-annahu musaddiqun (text vowelled: musaddaqun) li-mā bayna yadayhi min al-kutub; fa-lau-lā anna mā fihi maufūdun fiḥā lam yashīḥa hādhā l-wasfu...

68 Al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, IV, 231–232, nos. 3964–65; al-Suyūṭī, al-Durr, I, 238.
69 Al-Maʾṣūlī, Ghāyat al-wasāʾil ilā maʿrifati l-awāʾil, Ms. Cambridge Qq. 33, fol. 41a; al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, XII, 227, no. 14157 (and see nos. 14158–59); Abū Nuʿaym, op. cit., V, 383.
70 Al-Shaukānī, Fiṭḥ al-qadrī (Cairo, 1383/1964), V, 427; al-Suyūṭī, al-Durr, VI, 341.
72 Al-Suyūṭī, al-Durr, VI, 341; al-Qurtūbī, Tafsīr, XX, 24: min qalāḥi qad aflaḥa ilā ākhirī l-sīrātī; Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, VII, 273.
73 Al-Suyūṭī, al-Durr, VI, 341.
74 Ibid.
75 Ms. Hebrew University, Collection Yahuda, Ar. 95.

226
**Hadithū ‘an banī isrā‘ila**

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


77 Abū ‘Ubayd, *op. cit.*, fol. 6b; Ibn Qutayba, ‘Uyun al-akhbār (Cairo, 1346/1928), II, 263.

78 *Al-Durr*, VI, 341.


83 Abū Nu‘aym, *op. cit.*, VI, 30.

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


87 Ibn Wahb, *op. cit.*, page 20, l. 18.
lengthen your life and I shall give you a good life and transfer you into a better one." Tha’labā b. ābī Mālik89 says that ‘Umar invited Jewish scholars and asked them to discuss (religious subjects — K). With them came Tha’labā’s father, Abū Mālik, who was a Jewish convert to Islam.90 He came with a book, opened it and put his hand on a passage of it. When he lifted his hand and the Jewish scholars read: “he who shows filial piety to his father, God will lengthen his life” they admitted that it was revealed by God. People did not know it until that day.91 Al-Tha’labī records the Ten Commandments revealed to Moses.92 Al-Nuwayrī quotes al-Tha’labī; he remarks that God revealed to the Prophet the contents of the Ten Commandments in eighteen verses of the Qurān, which he records.93 The maxim that as a part of filial piety one has to be beneficient to the friends of one’s father after his death is quoted from the Torah.94 A faqīh quoted from the Torah: “Woe to the man who sins, then asks forgiveness from Me...”95 “In the Torah it is written”, a Shi‘ī tradition says, “O man, remember Me when you are angry, then I shall remember you when I am angry and I shall not annihilate you among those whom I shall annihilate; if you are unjustly treated be satisfied with My help to you, as My help is better for you than your help for yourself.”96 “In the Torah it is written: he who sells landed property or (rights on) water not investing the sum gained in land or water (rights), the money (gained) will be squandered.”97 It may be remarked that a similar tradition is reported on the authority of the Prophet: lā bāraka llāhu fī thamani arḍīn au dārīn lā yuj’alu fī arḍīn au dārīn.98 Some quotations from the Gospel and “other Books” are transmitted by Thaur b. Yazīd.99 He read in the taurāt that Jesus said to the Apostles: Converse much with God, converse with people a little”. They asked: “How should we converse with God”? He said: “Be in solitude with Him in your invocations and supplications”.100 Ka‘b states that the well

---

89 See on him Ibn Ḥajar, al-Iṣāba, I, 209, no. 948; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, op. cit., I, 212, no. 277
90 Ibn Ḥajar, al-Iṣāba, VI, 169, no. 998.
92 Qīṣṣa al-anbiyā‘, p. 270.
95 Ibn Abī l-Dunya, Kit. al-tauba, Ms. Chester Beatty, 3863, fol. 20b.
96 Al-Majlisi, op. cit., XIII, 358, no. 66.
97 Al-Majlisi, op. cit., XIII, 360, 73.
98 Mughulṭāy, al-Zahr al-bāsim, Leiden Or. 370, fol. 120b; al-Ṭabarī, al-Muntakhab min dhaylī l-mudhayyal (Cairo, 1358/1939), p. 59.
99 See on him Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhib al-tahdhīb, II, 33, no. 57.
100 Abū Nu‘aym, op. cit., VI, 94.
Haddithū 'an baṣīr isrá‘īla

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

man ya‘al al-khayra lā ya‘dam jāwāziyahu:

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

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

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

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

---

101 Al-Fākihī, op. cit., fol. 342a.
102 Ibid., fol. 453a.
107 See on him Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhib al-tahdhib, IX, 307, no. 506.
108 Ibn Ḥajar, al-Isāba, V, 324.
109 See e.g. Abū ʿUbayd, op. cit., fol. 16b; Abū Nu‘aym, op. cit., IV, 27, 32, 33, 57; VI 16, 55.
From "Hikmat al-Dāwūd" Abū 'Ubayd quotes the following passage: "It is incumbent upon a wise man not to be neglectful about four hours: an hour in which he exerts himself for his God, an hour in which "he makes accounts for his soul", an hour in which he talks with his friends who speak to him frankly about his vices and bad behaviour and an hour devoted to his lawful pleasures; this (latter) hour is a recreation for his heart and should help him to carry out the obligations of the three (former) hours. It is incumbent upon a wise man to know his time and to set about his matters. It is incumbent upon a wise man to set out on his journey with provision taken only for his life to come, approving the means of life and lawful pleasure".110 In some other sources these utterances are quoted from the Ṣuḥuf Ibrāhim.111

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

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

---

110 Al-Mawā‘īr, fol. 10b; cf. al-Suyūṭī, al-Durr, IV, 189, l. 10; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādi-Mūḍīh auhām, I, 457 (fi ḥikmati al dawūda); Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya, II, 15 (fi ḥikmati al-dawūda).
111 Al-Majlisi, op. cit., XII, 71; al-Qurṭubi, Tafsīr, XX, 25; al-Suyūṭī, al-Durr, VI, 341.
112 Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, al-Iṣřaf, fol. 93a (al-‘āfiyatū l-mulku l-kaḥfīyyu).
113 Al-Jawāhir al-saniyya, p. 90, l. 3 from bottom, p. 95.
114 Bihār, XIV, 36, 41 (new ed.).
115 Al-Ḥīya, VI, 56–57; and see Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya, II, 14 inf.
116 Al-Jawāhir al-saniyya, p. 94.
117 Al-Suyūṭī, al-Durr, IV, 188.
118 Ibid., IV, 188: a ...tūbā li-raja‘ul lā yasluqū ṭarīqā l-khaṭṭā‘īna wa-lam yujālis al-baṭṭālīna wa yastaqīmū ‘alā ‘ibādatī rabbīhi ‘azza wa jalla, fa mithaluhu ka mithalī shajaratin nābitātīn ‘alā sāqiyyātīn lā tazālu fīhā l-mā‘u yafṣūlu thamārūhā fi zamānī l-thimārī wa lā tazālu khaqadrā‘a fi ḥayrī zamānī l-thimārī; (cf. Abī Nu‘aym, op. cit., IV, 62 penult.), p. 189: b ...tūbā li-man lam yasluq sabīla l-aṭḥamātī wa-lam yujālis al-khaṭṭā‘īna wa-lam yafṣī‘ fī hammi l-mustahzī‘īna wa-lakīnma hammahū sunnalu ilāhi wa-īyyāhā yata’allamū bi l-layli wa-l-nahārī, mithaluhu mithalū shajaratin tābītī ‘alā shaqīnī tu tā thamārāhā fī ḥinnihā wa-lā yatanātharu min waraqīhā shay‘un, wa-kullu ‘amalīhi bi-amrī, layṣa dhālika mitlā ‘amalī l-munāfīqīn...
Haddithū ‘an bani īsra‘īla

2, 10, 17, 23, 30, 36, 46, 47, 65, 67, 68, 71, 84, 100. The last thirty lines of the zabūr121 and a short passage from this source are given by Wahb.122 These translations are however not accurate; sometimes no similarity with the text can be detected. The wise sayings attributed to Salomon123 can be traced to Ecclesiastes and Proverbs.124 Al-Muḥāṣibī quotes from Ḥikmat ‘Īsā a saying about the love for worldly goods125 and a saying from Risālāt ‘Īsā.126 Lengthy chapters from Ṣahāf ‘Īdrīs and Sunan Idrīs are recorded by Ibn Ṭāwūs.127 It would be needless to add quotations from the prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Habaquq or from the Injīl of Jesus. The compilation of Abū ‘Ubayd may serve as the best proof for the flow of Jewish and Christian traditions which poured into Muslim circles and were gladly taken up by Muslim scholars.

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


130 Siyar a‘lām al-nubalā‘, ed. As‘ad Ṭalas (Cairo, 1962), III, 57.
Sa'd records a story about 'Āmir b. 'Abd Qays and Ka'b sitting in a mosque: Ka'b read the Torah and explained some interesting passages to 'Āmir.\textsuperscript{131} Abu l-Jald al-Jauni used to read the Qur'an and the Torah. He used to celebrate each conclusion of reading of the Torah (he read it during six days) summoning people (for this purpose) and used to quote a saying that Mercy descends at each conclusion of the reading of the Torah.\textsuperscript{132}

Shi'i tradition explicitly stressed the link between the Torah and the true knowledge of the Prophet, 'Ali and the succeeding Imāms. The Tablets of Moses reached the Prophet and he handed them over to 'Ali.\textsuperscript{133} The Tablets of Moses, the Gospel, the Šuhuf Ibrāhīm and the Zabūr are in the possession of the Shi'i Imāms.\textsuperscript{134} The White Jafr contains the Torah, the Gospel, the Zabūr and the first Books of God.\textsuperscript{135}

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

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

\textsuperscript{131} Tabaqāt, VII, 110.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., VII, 222.
\textsuperscript{134} Al-Majlīsī, op. cit., XXVI, 180–189 (new ed.).
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., XXVI, 18.
\textsuperscript{136} Nu'aym b. Ḥāmād, op. cit., fol. 4b: lam yakun fi bani isrā'īla shay'un illā wa-huwa fikum kā'īnun.
\textsuperscript{137} Cf. "Ashāb al-Ra'y", EI\textsuperscript{2} (Schacht).
\textsuperscript{138} Ibn Mājah, Sunan (Cairo, 1349), I, 28; al-Bayhaqī, Ma'rīfat al-sunan, I, 110 (and see the references of the editor).
\textsuperscript{139} Al-Ma'rifat wa-l-ta'irkh, fol. 271a.
\textsuperscript{140} Al-Muttaqī I-Hindi, Kanz, XI, 123, nos. 555–556; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Nihāya, IV, 28; Ibn Tawus, Sa'd, pp. 64, 65, 116, I. 3; al-'Ayyāshī, op. cit., Ms. fol. 93a–b; and see M. Talbi, "Les Bida", Studia Islamica, XII, 50.
The Aus and the Khazraj, says a tradition recorded by Ibn Ishaq, are descendants of four hundred scholars from among the Children of Israel, left by Tubba' in Medina. Abū Ayyūb was the descendant of the scholar whom Tubba' entrusted with the keeping of the letter for the Prophet; Abū Ayyūb indeed handed it over to the Prophet. A late compilation recording the story remarks that this genealogy of the Anšār is a Jewish plot.

The Prophet states, according to a Shi'i tradition, that his name is Ahmad and Isra'il and that the obligations laid by God upon Isra'il are incumbent on him as well. By Children of Israel the (Alid - K) Al Muhammed are meant. The 'Alids in the Umayyad period complained that they were "like the Al Mūsā in the time of Al Fir'aun". Ibn Ṭawūs records many passages from the Torah about Aaron in order to stress the importance of the utterance of the Prophet, that 'Alī is in relation to the Prophet in the position of Aaron in relation to Moses. The role of 'Alī as wasjiyy in relation to the Prophet corresponds to the role of Joshua b. Nūn in relation to Moses.

But the feeling of affinity or identity which Muslims experienced with regard to the righteous from among the Children of Israel did not detract from the latter's faults, sins and vices. The sunna of the Children of Israel should not be followed. In many traditions the Faithful are warned of these sunan and ordered to act contrary to them. Even their strictness in observing religious rites was criticized. "Do not be like the Children of Israel; having been strict with themselves, God imposed strictness on them."

143 Al-'Ayyāshi, op. cit., I, 44, no. 45 (and see ibid., note 6).
144 Ibid., I, 44, nos. 43, 44 (refers to Sūra ii 48).
146 Sa'd al-su'ūd, pp. 43–46; Ex. xxix 5, 27, 31, 44, 13; Num. xvi 17. Sa'd al-su'ūd, pp. 43–46 (and see p. 43: 'īlam anna qaula l-nabīyyi (ṣ) li-ma'allūnā 'alīyyi bni abi ṭālibin (ʿa) anta minni bi-manżilati hārūna min mūsā yashtamīlu 'alā khaṣā'īsa `aẓīmatin nakhi l-khilafta; wa-qad wājdatu ft l-taurātī min manāzialī hārūna min mūsā mal yaddīqu mā qaṣadnūhu bi-juṣūli ħādīhā l-kitābī minmā yantafṣu bi-maʿrifatihā dhawā (text: dhawi) l-ahlībā. Furāt, op. cit., pp. 65–68.
148 Furāt, op. cit., p. 42: wa-lā ta'khudhū sunnata bani isra'ila kadhāhabū anbiyyā'ahum wa-qatalū ahlā baytihim.
Contrary to the permission to transmit traditions about the Children of Israel concerning their history or stories about their prophets and saints, the early sources point clearly to the tendency of the orthodox circles to prevent the Faithful from learning or copying the Holy Scriptures of the People of the Book, and especially of legal chapters or chapters concerning the tenets of faith. ‘Umar, says a tradition, walked past a Jew from Qurayza and asked him to copy for him summary chapters from the Torah. When he came to the Prophet and begged his permission to read these chapters, the face of the Prophet became changed (scil. with anger — K). ‘Umar was frightened by this and exclaimed: “I am satisfied by Allāh as God, by Islām as religion and by Muḥammad as Prophet.” When the rage of the Prophet had gone, he remarked: “I swear by Him Who keeps in His hand the soul of Muḥammad: were Moses among you and if you followed him, leaving me, you would have gone astray; you are my lot among the peoples and I am your lot among the prophets”.

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

Slightly different is the utterance of the Prophet as recorded in another tradition. ‘Umar asked the Prophet whether he would be permitted to write down traditions (ahādīth) heard from Jews, by which he was pleased. The
Haddithū ‘an banā ‘isra’īla

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

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

In fact ‘Umar forbade copying or reading the Books of Jews and Christians. According to a tradition a man came to ‘Umar and informed him about a wonderful book which he had found in Madā’in when the Muslims had conquered the city. “Is it from the Book of Allāh”? (i.e. the Qurān — K) ‘Umar asked. “No”, said the man. ‘Umar began to beat him with his whip, reciting the first four āyas from Sūrat Yūsuf and said: “What caused the peoples who lived before you to perish was that they devoted themselves to the study of books of their scholars and bishops and abandoned the Torah and the Gospel until those two Books became effaced and knowledge of them disappeared”.159

In another story a similar case is told. ‘Alqama and al-Aswad came to Ibn Mas‘ūd and showed him a scroll (šahīfā) containing a story which they found pleasing. ‘Abdallah b. Mas‘ūd ordered to efface the script. “These hearts are vessels (of knowledge — K); engage them with the Qurān, not with anything else”, he said.160

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


159 Ibid., I, 335, no. 1632.

160 Abū ‘Ubayd, Faḍā’ill al-Qurān, Ms. Leiden, Or. 3056, fol. 4a–b. Abū ‘Ubayd remarks: “We think that this scroll was taken from a man who belonged to the People of the Book, therefore ‘Abdallah b. Mas‘ūd disliked it”.

161 See EI2, s.v. “Dāniyāl” (G. Vajda).
said to have contained information about strifes (fitan) which will happen.\textsuperscript{162} Abū l-Āliya\textsuperscript{163} says about the book: “I was the first Arab to read this book the way I read the Qur’an.” It contained, says Abū l-Āliya, information about your history (siratukum) and your matters, your religion and the ways of your speech (luhān kalāmiyum) and what will happen in the future.\textsuperscript{164} When ‘Umar was informed about a man who copied (or read) the Book of Daniel, he ordered that man to be brought into his presence, beat him with his whip until he promised to burn books of this kind and not to read them.\textsuperscript{165}

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

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

\textsuperscript{162} Nu‘aym b. Ḥammād, \textit{op. cit.}, fol. 4b (= Ms. Atif, fol. 3a).
\textsuperscript{163} See on him Ibn Sa‘d, \textit{op. cit.}, VII, 112–117.
\textsuperscript{166} Kitāb al-‘uṣla (Cairo, 1352), p. 80.
\textsuperscript{167} Al-Tadhkira, ed. Āḥmad Muḥ. Mursī (Cairo [n.d.]), pp. 610–611.
\textsuperscript{168} Biḥār al-anwār, LVIII, 346–350 (new ed.).
\textsuperscript{169} Al-Dhahabi, \textit{Siyyar al-ṣāliḥ al-nubalā’}, III, 323–325; and see \textit{idem.}, \textit{Ta’rikh al-islām}, III, 99–101, on the bottom of the sea of Tiberias are buried the Ark of the Covenant and the Staff of Moses; they will be raised on the Day of Judgement. See al-Nuwayrī, \textit{op. cit.}, XVI, 43.
Haddithū 'an bani Isrā'īla

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

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

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

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

172 Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, IV, 282.
174 Ibn al-Jauzī, Kit. al-qussā‘īs, Ms. Leiden, Or. 988, fol. 20a.
period. The assumption of W. Montgomery Watt\textsuperscript{175} that the material of the Bible discussed above was directed in the first phase towards illiterate people with no knowledge of the Bible, can hardly be accepted. W. M. Watt takes it that the passage in Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's Jāmi' bayān al-'ilm, II, 40-43 about “Avoidance of information from Jews and Christians” suggests “that it belongs to the first phase” because “it envisages Muslims conversing with Jews and Christians, but not reading their books”;\textsuperscript{176} but this argument is in fact untenable. The tradition recorded by al-Bukhārī\textsuperscript{177} reports explicitly that “the Jews used to read the Torah in Hebrew and to interpret it to the people of Islam in Arabic.” Al-Suddī reports that some Jews used to compile books, claiming that they are books revealed by God, and used to sell them at cheap prices to the Arabs.\textsuperscript{178} The stories about books of Ahl al-Kitāb being copied by Muslims, quoted above and mentioned in the chapter of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr bear evidence that the contacts between Muslims and the People of the Book were not confined to mere consultation. Lastly it may be remarked that the title of the chapter is: Bāb mukhtasar fi muṭāla'ati kutubi ahli l-kitābi wa-l-riwāyati 'anhum. It is plainly stated that the subject discussed in the chapter is the reading of books of the Ahl al-Kitāb and transmission of traditions on their authority, not merely conversing. W. M. Watt’s doubts, as to “whether any of it (i.e. the traditions recorded by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr) had its present form at a still earlier period” are unfounded; as far as the “Jāmi'” of Ma'mar and the “Musannaf” of 'Abd al-Razzāq are concerned, the traditions and their isnāds are copied by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr with accuracy; this can be ascertained by comparing the material of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr with the Mss. quoted in this paper.

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

\textsuperscript{175} The Early Development of the Muslim Attitude to the Bible (Glasgow Univ. Oriental Society Transactions, XVI, 1955–1956, pp. 50–62.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., pp. 60–62. \textsuperscript{177} Al-Ṣahih (Cairo [n.d.]), VI, 25; Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, I, 329.
\textsuperscript{178} Al-Suyūṭī, al-Durr al-manthīr, I, 83.
The orthodox solution was that a Muslim had to believe in the Torah and the Gospel, but not to observe the practices enjoined in these Books. The Prophet said: "Believe in the Torah, the Zabūr and the Evangel, but the Qur'ān should suffice you."\(^\text{180}\)

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


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