The holy month of Rajab was observed during the period of the Jāhiliyya in spring.1 It was the month of the 'umra and of offering of the sacrifices of the 'ātā'ir to the pagan deities.2 The people of the Jāhiliyya kept the sanctity of the month by refraining from raids and warfare.3 It is said to have been a month of devotional practices and of fasting.4 According to some traditions swearing

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4 See S. D. Goitein, pp. 92-93; K. Wagendonk, pp. 117, 120-122.
The widely circulated utterance of the Prophet \textit{lā farā'a wa-lā 'atīrata, "no sacrifice of the firstlings (of the flock) nor of the animals slaughtered in Rajab"},\(^5\) indicates explicitly the interdiction to perform the sacrifices of Rajab. This \textit{hadith} is however contradicted by a tradition reported by 'Amr b. Shu‘ayb.\(^6\) The Prophet, when asked about the \textit{'aqiqa}, the \textit{fara'a} and the \textit{'atira}, stated concerning the \textit{'atira}: \textit{al-' atiratu haqqun}, “the \textit{'atira} is obligatory” (verbatim: the \textit{'atira} is an obligation). The word \textit{'atira} is explained in the tradition as a sacrifice of a ewe, which the people of the Jahiliyya used in Rajab to slaughter, cook, and whose meat they used to consume and feed from (scil. the needy and poor).\(^8\)

More explicit about the obligatory character of the \textit{'atira}, the sacrifice of Rajab, is the tradition reported on the authority of Mikhnaf b. Sulaym.\(^9\) “Upon the people of every house, stated the Prophet, there is an obligation every


"Rajab is the Month of God..."

year (to slaughter) a victim (scil. of the Sacrificial Feast) and a 'atīra'. The 'atīra is glossed in the tradition as "al-rajabīyya". ('Ālā kullī ahli baytīn fī kullī 'āmin udhīyyātun wa-ātīratun: ĥal tadrīna mā l-ātīratu? hiya l-rajabīyya.)

It is evident that these traditions are contradictory and reflect two diverse attitudes towards the continuation of the practices of the sacrifices of Rajab in Islam: the one approving of the rajabīyya and incorporating it into the body of Islamic sacrifices, authorized by the utterance of the Prophet; the other one aiming at the abolition of the Rajab sacrifice, it too basing its arguments on the utterances of the Prophet.

The two contradictory traditions (lā fāra'a wa-lā 'atīrata and inna 'alā kullī ahli baytīn) are discussed by Abū 'Ubayd (d. 224 AH). Stressing the Jahilli character of the 'atīra, he remarks that this sacrifice was abolished by Islam. In his opinion, the hadith of "lā fāra'a" abrogates the hadith of "'alā kullī ahli baytīn..." (wa-l-ḥadīθu l-awwalu nāṣikhun li-ḥādhḥā).

Al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388 AH) records the opinion of Abū Dā'ūd (d. 275 AH) about the tradition of Mikhnaf b. Sulaym, which is identical with the opinion of Abū 'Ubayd. "The 'atīra, says Abū Dā'ūd, is (an) abrogated (practice)"; al-‘atīratu mansūkah." Al-Khaṭṭābī emphasizes the difference between the meaning of 'atīra in the times of the Jahiliyya and that of Islam. In the period of the Jahiliyya 'atīra denoted a ewe sacrificed for the idol; its blood was poured on the head of the idol — argues al-Khaṭṭābī. But in this hadith (i.e. in the hadith of Mikhnaf b. Sulaym) it denotes the sacrifices of an animal in Rajab. This, says al-Khaṭṭābī, fits the intent of the hadith and is compatible with the prescription of the religion. Al Khaṭṭābī does not consider the

10 In some traditions "aṭāhātun".


12 Abū 'Ubayd, Gharīb al-ḥadīθ, ed. Muḥ. 'Āzīm al-Dīn (Hyderabad 1964), I, 194–195; L'A, s.v. "atīr" (where the opinion of Abū 'Ubayd is recorded differently: wa-l-ḥadīθu l-awwalu ʿasāḥhu); and see the note of the editor in Ibn al-Athīr's Jāmi‘ al-usūl IV, 122 (Abū 'Ubayda stated that the hadith: "lā fāra'a..." abrogated the hadith: '"alā kullī baytīn...').


‘atīra as abrogated; he seems to consider it lawful, although he has some reservations in connection with one of the transmitters of the hadith.\footnote{Comp. Ibn al-Athîr, Jâmi’ al-usâl IV, 122, note 1: \textit{wa-qâla l-Khaṭṭâbî: hâdhâ l-hadîthu dâ’ifi l-mukharrajî, wa-Abû Ramâlata majhûlun.}}

The opinion that the ‘atīra was abrogated by the Sacrificial Feast is plainly reflected in the hadith reported on the authority of ‘Alî. The Prophet said: “The Sacrificial Feast abrogated every sacrifice, the fasting of Ramaḍân abrogated every fasting... etc. (\textit{nasakhâ l-aḍhâ kulla dhabḥîn wa-ṣaumu ramaḍâna kulla ṣaumin...}).\footnote{al-Bayhaqî, IX, 262 sup.; al-Tirmîdî, VI, 312 (quoted in the commentary of Ibn al-‘Arabi).}

Between the two poles of interdiction of the ‘atīra and its recommendation, there are some traditions which reflect an attitude of toleration. This can be gauged in the tradition recorded on the authority of Abû Razîn.\footnote{16} Abû Razîn said, asking the Prophet about the sacrifice of Rajab: “We used to slaughter in Rajab, to eat (scil. from the meat of the slaughtered animal) and to feed people who came to us.” The Prophet then said: “There is no objection to it” (\textit{lâ ba’ṣa bihi}).\footnote{Wakî b. ’Usdus the transmitter of Abû Razîn stated that he would never, following this tradition, abandon the sacrifice in Rajab. Ibn ’Aun and Ibn Sirîn used to sacrifice in Rajab.\footnote{20}}

Slightly different is the tradition reported on the authority of al-Ḥârîth b. ‘Amr.\footnote{22} The Prophet, when asked about the \textit{fârâ’i} and \textit{‘atâ’ir}, said: “He who wants to sacrifice the firstlings (of the flock) may do so; he who does not—may desist. He who wants to sacrifice the ‘atīra may do so, he who does not—may desist; there is a sacrifice on sheep” (\textit{man šâ’a farrâ’ a wa-man šâ’a lam yufarri}; \textit{wa-man šâ’a ‘atara wa-man šâ’a lam ya’ātir}; \textit{wa-fî l-ghanami uḍḥiyatuhâ}).\footnote{23} It may be pointed out that this utterance of the Prophet, as reported by al-Ḥârîth b. ‘Amr, was given by the Prophet
"Rajab is the Month of God . . ." 

at the ḥajjat al-wadāʾ, forming thus his last and definitive utterance in this matter. This cannot be changed of course by an abrogating tradition.

Close to the preceding tradition is the hadith reported on the authority of Nubaysha. 24 When asked about the sacrifices of Rajab, the Prophet said: "Slaughter for God in any month (you like), bestow upon people (graces) for the sake of God and feed (poor people)" (idhbaḥū li-llāhi fi ayyi shahrin kāna wa-birrū li-llāhi 'azza wa-jalla wa-af'īmū). 25

The difference between the tradition of Abū Razīn and the two preceding traditions is substantial: while in the tradition of Abū Razīn the 'atīra is considered as lawful (lā ba'sa biḥā) and meritorious, in the two preceding traditions no merit is attached to the sacrifice in Rajab at all; animals may be slaughtered in any month of the year; reward is given according to the good deed: the animals have to be slaughtered for God and their meat has to be given to the poor and needy.

The tendency of Muslim scholars, as might be foreseen, is to try and reconcile the conflicting opinions. Abū l-Maḥāsin al-Hanafī concludes that it may be supposed that the obligatory character of the 'atīra (in Rajab) was abolished, but that it was left as a permitted and lawful sacrifice (yuḥtamalun naskhu mā kāna wāji'ib an wa-baqi'ya jā'ilīzān). 26 This definition mirrors the opinion of al-Shāfiʿī; lā fara'a wa-lā 'atīra does not indicate interdiction, it merely negates the obligation, but leaves the 'atīra as permissible and lawful sacrifice. Some Muslim scholars even considered it favoured (mustahabb). 27 Some scholars considered the 'atīra obligatory in Islam. 28

The contradictory traditions surveyed above concerning the sacrifice of Rajab, the 'atīra, reflect already the struggle between the different groups of Muslim scholars over the subject of sanctity of Rajab in Islam. The pivot of the polemic is in fact the problem whether the sanctity of Rajab continues

24 See on him Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, p. 1523, No. 2652; Ibn Ḥajar, al-Isāba, VI, 231, No. 8674; idem, Tahdhīb, X, 417, No. 751.
25 Al-Ḥākim, IV, 235; Abū Dā'ūd, II, 8; Muslim, II, 159 (in the commentary of al-Nawawi); Abū l-Maḥāsin al-Hanafī, I, 274; al-Muttaqī al-Hindi, V, 56, No. 490 (and comp. ibid., 57, No. 499); al-Shaukānī, Nayl V, 118; al-'Azīzī, I, 189.
26 Abū l-Maḥāsin al-Hanafī, I, 274 inf.–275 sup.; and see al-'Azīzī, I, 189.
27 See al-Bayhaqī, IX, 313; al-Shaukānī, Nayl V, 119; and see Ibn al-Athīr, Jāmiʿ al-usūl, IV, 122, note 1: wa-qīla "lā fara'a wāji'ib an wa-lā 'atrata wāji'ib an" li-yakūna jam'an bayna l-aḥāḍīthī.
28 Al-'Azīzī, I, 189, line 9, from bottom; Muslim, II, 159 (in Nawawi's commentary); al-Bayhaqī quoted in Ibn al-Athīr's Jāmiʿ al-usūl, IV, 122 commenting on the tradition of Mīkhnaff b. Sūlaym: Ḥadhā l-hādithu, in saḥḥa, fa-l-mūrādū 'alā tāriqī l-istiḥbābī, idh qad jama'a baynahā wa-bayna l-'atīratī; wa-l-'atīratu ghayru wāji'ibān bi-l-imāmā.
in Islam and thus its merits were approved of by the Prophet, or whether its sanctity was annulled by the Prophet and thus its practices are reprehensible or at least of no value whatsoever. The opinion of Lammens that the Prophet forbade or prohibited the "atira (harramahā au mana'ahā)" and the opinion of Jawād 'Ali that Islam abolished it (wa-qad abtala l-islāmu l-rajabiyyata, wa-hiya l-`atiratu, kamā abtala l-fara'a) can hardly be accepted.

The "atira" forms in fact one aspect of this struggle. The controversy between the different groups of Muslim scholars extends to other observances of Rajab, like fasting, prayer and other acts of piety.

II

The partisans of the sanctity of Rajab emphasized the qualities of this month, basing their arguments — as usual — on the alleged utterances of the Prophet. In a tradition reported on the authority of 'Ā'isha the Prophet is said to have stated that Rajab was the month of God; it is called "the Deaf", al-asamm, because the people of the Jahiliyya used to put down their weapons and refrained from fighting; people lived in security during this month. An almost identical tradition is recorded in Shi' sources.

Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852 AH) comments on this tradition that although the content of this tradition might be true, it cannot be attributed to the Prophet (lā yaṣīḥu 'an rasūl il-lāhī). Two transmitters of this tradition, Ubayn b. Sufyān and Ghālib b. 'Ubaydullah, argues Ibn Ḥajar, were known as forgers of hadith.

The idea of the continuity of the sanctity of Rajab in Islam is plainly expressed in a significant saying of Abū l-Darda' about the fasting of Rajab: it was a month honoured in the times of the Jahiliyya; Islam only enhanced its merit

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31 Jawād 'Ali, Ta'rīkh al-'arab ghabla l-islām (Baghdad), V, 238.
32 But see al-Bayhaqī, III, 4 and IV, 291 where al-Muḥarram is designated as "the month of God" (wa-inna afḍala l-ṣiyāmī ba'da shahrī ramaḍāna shahrī llāhi lladhī tadʿūnahu l-muḥārrama); Abū Ṭālib al-Makki, Qūt al-qulūb (Cairo 1932), I, 111, line 7; Ibn Mājah, Sunan al-muṣṭafā (Cairo 1349 AH), I, 530, ult. (and see ibid., the commentary of Muḥ. b. 'Abd al-Hādī al-Ḥanafi).
33 Ibn Ḥajar, Tabyīn al-'ajab bi-mā warada fī faḍlī rajab (Cairo 1351 AH), p. 14; L'A, s.v. "smm" (but there are two versions recorded: according to one version it was the Prophet who called Rajab "the month of God"; according to the other one the people of the Jāhilīyya named Rajab "the month of God").
36 See on him al-Dḥahabī, III, 331, No. 6645.
"Rajab is the Month of God . . ."

(kānat al-jāhiliyyatu tu'āzzimuhu fī jāhiliyyathihi wa-mā zādahu l-islāmu illā faḍlan). 38 This view is fairly exposed in Shiʿī tradition as well. 39

The elements of “holiness” required for localities and cities, as analysed by G. E. von Grunebaum, 40 are inherent in the traditions of Rajab. The Prophet, claim some traditions, was born in Rajab. 41 Al-Qaṣṭallānī (d. 923 AH) rejects this tradition. The Prophet, argues al-Qaṣṭallānī, was not born in Ramaḍān, Muḥarram or Rajab, nor in any other of the honoured months, as the Prophet is not honoured by time; on the contrary: time is honoured by him. If he had been born in one of these (honoured) months, one might have imagined that he was honoured by them. Therefore God fixed the date of his birth in another month in order to show His concern for him and the grace bestowed upon him. 42

According to another tradition, he “was put into the womb of his mother” in the first eve of Rajab; it was the eve of Friday, and God ordered Riḍwān to announce the tidings in Heaven. 43 Muslim scholars remark that this date (i.e. the first of Rajab as the date of beginning of pregnancy) fits the date established by tradition as the date of birth of the Prophet: Rabiʾ al-awwal. 44

Some traditions maintain that he received his revelation in Rajab. 45 This date is given as well by some Shiʿī sources. 46 Some traditions assert that the event of laylat al-miʿrāj occurred in Rajab. 47

The Prophet gathered the people in Rajab, according to a tradition reported

38 Ibid., p. 29.
41 Al-Zurqānī, Sharḥ `alā l-mawāḥib l-adāluniyya (Cairo 1325 AH), I, 131, line 4; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythamī, al-Ni‘ma al-kubrā `alā l-ʿālam bi-maulidī sayyidi bānī Ādam, Ms (in my possession), fol. 19a, line 1.
44 Al-Ḥalabī, Insān al-‘uyūn (Cairo 1932), I, 68; al-Zurqānī, I, 105, line 10.
45 Al-Suyūṭī, al-Durr al-manṭḥūr (Cairo 1314 AH), II, 235 ult.; Ibn Qayyīm al-Jauziyya, Zād al-maʿād (on margin of Zurqānī’s Sharḥ I, 58); Ibn al-Jauzī, Ṣifat al-ṣafwa (Hyderabad 1355 AH), I, 27; al-Ghazzālī, Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn, (Cairo 1933), I, 328.
on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, and informed them about the virtues of his pedigree. All the rivers of the world visit in Rajab the well of Zamzam — according to a tradition reported by Wahb b. Munabbih.

The sanctity of Rajab was assessed in comparison with that of the other months in a peculiar utterance attributed to the Prophet. The Prophet said: “Rajab is the month of God, Sha'bān is my month, Ramadañ is the month of my people.”

Close to this tradition is a ḥadīth counting the rewards for the believers observing Rajab, Sha'bān and Ramadañ and reported on the authority of Anas b. Mālik. It is recorded in al-Bayhaqī’s (d. 458 AH) Faḍā’īl al-aqwāt and quoted by Ibn Ḥajar. “The month chosen by God is Rajab” — says the Prophet. “He who honours the month of Rajab — honours the order of God and he who honours the order of God — God will introduce him into the Gardens of Paradise and grant him His favour”, etc. Al-Bayhaqī marks the ḥadīth as munkar, but Ibn Ḥajar differs, classifying it as “forged with obvious features of forgery” (bal huwa maudū‘un zāhiru l-wad‘ī) and attributes the forgery to one of the transmitters, Nūḥ al-Jā’mī, “Nūḥ the Collector”, about whom people used to say that “he collected everything except truth.” Nevertheless al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH) recorded this tradition in his commentary of the Qur’ān.

A peculiar Shi‘ī tradition sheds some light on the similarity of growth of pro-Rajab tenets in Sunnī and Shi‘ī societies as well as on the manner of casting of the Shi‘ī traditions in this matter. ‘Ali, says the tradition, used to fast the whole month of Rajab, and he used to say: “Rajab is my month, Sha'bān is the month of the Messenger of God, Ramadañ is the month of God.” It is evident that this is a Shi‘ī re-moulding of the ḥadīth “Rajab is the month of...”
"Rajab is the Month of God . . ."

of God, Sha' bān is my month (i.e. of the Prophet), Ramadān is the month of my people”.

Another assessment of Rajab in relation to other months is reported in a hadith recorded on the authority of Anas b. Mālik. The Prophet said:

“The superiority of Rajab over other months is like the superiority of the Qur’ān over other speech; the superiority of Sha’ bān over other months is like my superiority over other prophets; the superiority of Ramadān over other months is like the superiority of God over (His) believers.”

The scale of qualities is, in this hadith, rather different. The highest rank is, like in the Shi’ī tradition mentioned above, given to Ramadān.

III

One of the most controversial practices of Rajab was the practice of fasting. Just as in the case of the sacrifices of Rajab, the partisans of fasting in Rajab took recourse to alleged utterances of the Prophet pointing to the merits of fasting and the efficacy of fasting during some particular days in this month. The antagonists rejected the sanctity of the month altogether, basing their arguments again on alleged utterances of the Prophet and marking the traditions in favour of fasting in Rajab as weak, untrustworthy or even forged. The lines of discussion on fasting resemble those of the discussion about the sacrifices.

“In Paradise there is a river called Rajab” — says a tradition attributed to the Prophet. “This river is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey.

Or. 1971, fol. 38a: wa-qdla rajabun shahru llāhi wa-sha’ bānu shahrī wa-ramadānu shahrī ‘alīyyin.

55 Al-Samarqandi, Tanbīh al-ghāfīlnu (Cairo 1347 AH), p. 116; Ibn Ḥajar, Tabyīn ‘al-ʿajab, p. 14; al-Pattani, p. 116 inf.; al-Sakhāwī, p. 299, No. 740; Ibn al-Dayba’, Tamyīl al-tayyib min al-khabīṭh fīma yadārū ‘alā alsinātī l-nāṣī min al-ḥadīth (Cairo 1324 AH), p. 137; al-Shaukānī, al-Fawā’id, p. 440 sup.; and see an interesting Shi’ī tradition in al-Majlisi’s Bihār XXXVII, 53 (new ed.): Muḥammad among his believers is like Ramadān in relation to other months, the family of Muhammad among the believers is like Sha’ bān in relation to other months, ‘Alī among the family of Muḥammad is like the best of the days of Sha’ bān, i.e. the fifteenth day of this month. The believers of the family of Muḥammad are like Rajab in relation to Sha’ bān.

M. J. Kister

He who fasts one day of the month of Rajab — God will give him to drink from that river.”57

“In Paradise” — asserts another tradition — “there is a palace (prepared) for the people fasting in Rajab.”58

The obligation of fasting in Rajab is motivated by miracles of God, His aid and deliverance of the righteous after plight and distress and His favour and grace granted to His believers in this month. Fasting is in fact an act of gratitude. God bade Nūḥ to set out on his ark in Rajab. He fasted this month, thanking God for His grace and ordered the people of the ark to fast this month according to some traditions.59 In Rajab God split the sea for Moses; Ibrāhīm and ʿĪsā were born during Rajab. God forgave the people of Yūnūs their sins in Rajab; in this month too God forgave Ādām.60 Rajab is nicknamed “the Deaf” (al-ʿasamm), because the wrath of God was never heard of during this month; God punished peoples in other months, but never in Rajab.61 Rajab was also nicknamed al-ʿasabb, “the Pouring”, because the mercy of God poured forth during this month and flooded His servants; God bestows on them in this month graces and rewards which never an eye has seen, nor an ear heard, nor had it occurred to the mind of a man.62

Special rewards were promised, according to some traditions, for fasting on some particular days in Rajab. One of these especially venerated days is the twenty-seventh day of Rajab. On this day Muhammad was granted his prophethood. “He who fasts on the twenty-seventh day of Rajab will be granted by God the reward (otherwise) due for fasting sixty months”, says a tradition reported on the authority of Abū Hurayra and attributed to the Prophet.63

In another version of this ḥadith, he who fasts the twenty-seventh day of Rajab, and spends the preceding night awake (praying) will be rewarded just


59 Al-Jilānī, I, 197; Ibn Ḥajar, Ṭabyīn al-ʿaṣāb, p. 17; al-Suyūṭī, al-Durr al-manṭūrī, III, 235; and see al-Shaukhānī, al-Fawāʾid, p. 440, line 12; ʿAlī al-Qārī, al-ʿAdab, fol. 65a.

60 Ibn Ḥajar, Ṭabyīn al-ʿaṣāb, p. 17.

61 Al-Jilānī, I, 196 inf.

62 Ibid., I, 197.

63 Ibn Ḥajar, Ṭabyīn al-ʿaṣāb, p. 28; al-Jilānī, I, 205.
"Rajab is the Month of God..."

as if he fasted one hundred years and spent the nights of a hundred years awake.\textsuperscript{64} According to a tradition reported on the authority of 'Ali b. Abī Ṭālib, the Prophet promised forgiveness of ten years (of sins) to the man who would fast that day and would supplicate at the breaking of the fast (\textit{da‘ā 'inda l-iʃfār}).\textsuperscript{65} It is noteworthy that 'Abdallāh b. 'Abbās — according to a tradition reported on the authority of al-Ḥasan al-Ṭaṣrī — used to practice the \textit{i’tikāf} on the twenty-seventh day of Rajab, and recite (among other \textit{sūrā}s of the Qur’ān) the \textit{sūrā} of Laylat al-Qadr.\textsuperscript{66} This may, of course, point to the continuity of the Jāhiliyya practice of \textit{i’tikāf} during Rajab in the period of Islam and support the proposition of Wagtendonk about the link between the \textit{laylat al-qadr} and the twenty-seventh day of Rajab.\textsuperscript{67} The link between \textit{laylat al-qadr} and the month of Rajab is indicated in some comments on Sūra XIII, 39. Mujāhid relates this verse to the former, while Qays b. 'Ubād refers it to the tenth of Rajab.\textsuperscript{67a}

Of special merit was also fasting on the first day of Rajab. The Prophet, according to a tradition reported by Abū Dharr, said: "He who fasts the first day of Rajab, will get the reward equivalent to the fasting of a month." The seven gates of Hell will remain closed — continues the tradition — for a man who fasts seven days of Rajab; he who fasts eight days — the eight gates of Paradise will be opened for him. God will turn into good deeds the wrong ones of a man who would fast ten days of Rajab. He who fasts eighteen days — a herald will call from Heaven: "God already forgave you (your sins), so start work (scil. of worship) again".\textsuperscript{68} Slightly different is the scale of rewards in a Shi‘ī tradition. Nūḥ embarked on his ark on the first day of Rajab and ordered the people of the ship to fast this day. The fire of Hell will keep a distance of one year’s journey from a man who fasted this day. The seven fires of Hell will be closed to a man who fasted seven days of Rajab. The eight gates of Paradise will be opened in the face of a man who fasted eight days of Rajab. The wishes of a man who fasts ten days of this month will be fulfilled. The sins of a man who fasted twenty five days will be forgiven and he will be told: "start again your (pious) work". He who adds (days of) fasting — his rewards will be augmented.\textsuperscript{69} A tradition reported on the


\textsuperscript{65} Ibn Ḥajar, \textit{Tabyīn al-‘ajāb}, p. 28.

\textsuperscript{66} Al-Jīlānī, I, 205.

\textsuperscript{67} K. Wagtendonk, pp. 117–118.


\textsuperscript{68} Al-Jīlānī, I, 201.

\textsuperscript{69} Al-Baḥrānī, XIII, 381; al-Suyūṭī, \textit{al-La‘ālī l-maƞnū‘a fi l-aḥādīthi l-mauḏū‘a} (Cairo n.d.) II, 115; see Ibn Ḥajar, \textit{Tabyīn al-‘ajāb}, p. 23.
authority of Ibn 'Umar records as reward for fasting on the first day of Rajab
the equivalent of fasting a year. If the believer would fast seven days, the
seven gates of Hell would be closed for him. If we should fast ten days, a
herald would announce from Heaven: "Ask (anything you like) and you will
be granted (it)". A gradually decreasing list of rewards is given in a tradition
reported on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas: God will forgive the sins of three
years for fasting on the first day of Rajab, two years for fasting on the second
day of Rajab, one year for fasting on the third day of Rajab, then fasting on
every following day will be counted with reward of one month. A consider-
able reward is promised for fasting on the first day of Rajab in another tradi-
tion: God will forgive sixty years' sins to the man who fasts on the first day
of Rajab; God will bring a mild judgment upon a man (hāsabahu ḥisāban
yasīran) who fasts fifteen days; God will grant His favour to a man (kataba
llāhu lahu riḍwānahu) who fasts thirty days of Rajab and He will not punish
him.

Some versions of the traditions quoted above do not mention the first day
of Rajab, but mention only the rewards of fasting "a day of Rajab". Un-
usual in its generosity is a list of rewards reported on the authority of 'Ali.
The Prophet said:

"The month of Rajab is a great month; he who fasts one day of this
month — God will count for him (the reward of) fasting a thousand
years. He who fasts two days — God will count for him (the reward of)
fasting two thousand years. He who fasts three days of this month —
God will count for him (the reward of) fasting three thousand years.
He who fasts seven days — the gates of Hell will be closed for him..."

Among the fourteen nights of the year, which the faithful are urged to
spend awake, there are three nights of Rajab: the eve of the first, of the
fifteenth and of the twenty seventh of Rajab. The eve of the first day of Rajab
is counted among the five nights in the year; if its practices are properly ob-
served by the believer he will enter Paradise. Of special merit is also fasting
on the first Thursday of Rajab (connected with the vigils of the eve of Friday
and ṣalāt al-raghā'ib), the fifteenth and the last day of Rajab.

70 Al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, VIII, 360, No. 2648.
71 Ibid., VIII, 360, No. 2647; al-Suyūṭī, al-Jāmi' al-saghir, II, 45; al-'Azīzī, II, 391.
72 Al-Jīlānī, I, 201 inf.
73 See Ibn al-Jauzī, Kīt. al-maudū'āt, ed. 'Abd al-Rahmān Muḥ. 'Uthmān (Cairo 1966),
    II, 206–207.
74 Al-Jīlānī, I, 202; Abū Ṭālib al-Makki, I, 93; al-Ghazālī, I, 328.
75 Al-Jīlānī, I, 202.
76 Ibid., I, 204.
A current tradition about fasting in Rajab reported on the authority of Sa’id al-Khudri gives a detailed account of the rewards of fasting on every day of the month. “Rajab is the month of God, Sha’bān is my month, Ramaḍān is the month of my people” — says the Prophet. Therefore he who fasts one day of Rajab out of belief and piety (imān wa-ḥisāban) deserves God’s greatest favour (istaujaba riḍwāna Ilāhi l-akbara) and God will lodge him in the upper part of Paradise. He who fasts two days of Rajab will get a double reward; the weight of every single reward will be like the mountains of the world. He who fasts three days God will put between him and between the fire (of Hell) a ditch extending for a distance of a year’s journey. He who fasts four days of Rajab, will be healed from madness, elephantiasis, leprosy, the trial of the false Messias (fitnat al-masihi l-dajjali) and the chastisement of the grave (‘adhāb al-qabr). He who fasts five days, will be protected from the chastisement of the grave (waqtīya ‘adhāba l-qabrī). He who fasts six days, will step out from his grave, his face shining more than the moon at the night of full-moon. He who fasts seven days — God will close for him the seven gates of Hell (closing for every day of fasting one gate). He who fasts eight days of Rajab, God will open for him the eight gates of Paradise (opening for every day of fasting one gate). He who fasts nine days, he will step out from his grave proclaiming lā ilāha illā Ilāhi and his face will not be turned away from Paradise. He who fasts ten days — God will lay for him at every mile of the path to heaven bedding (farāsh) on which he might rest. As for him who fasts eleven days — there will be at the Day of Resurrection no believer superior to him except a believer who would fast the same number of days or more. He who fasts twelve days — God will bestow upon him two garments, one of which would be better than the world and all that is in the world. He who fasts thirteen days — a table will be put up for him in the shade of the Throne (of God) and he will eat from it, while other people will remain in distress (wa-l-nāsu fī shiddatin shadiqatin). He who fasts fourteen days — God will grant him a reward which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and which has not occurred to the mind of men (wa-lā khaṭara ‘alā qalbi basharin). He who fasts fifteen days — God will raise him on the Day of Resurrection in the stand (mauqif) of the believers.

77 “Yasman” omitted in Ibn al-Jauzi’s Mauqif and in Suyuti’s La’ālit.
79 The reward of five days is not mentioned in Ibn Jauzi’s Mauqif and in Suyuti’s La’ālit.
80 Here the tradition stops in Ibn al-Jauzi’s Mauqif II, 206, in Ibn Ḥajar’s Tabyin p. 12 and in Suyuti’s La’ālit II, 115, line 2 (there is however an additional phrase in Ḥilāl’s Ghunya I, 198: fa-lā yamurru bihi malakun muqarrabun wa-lā nabīyun mursalin illā qäla tībā laka anta min al-āminin); it is continued in Ḥilāl’s Ghunya with the remark: wa-ﬁ laʃin ākhara ziyaḍatun ‘alā khamsata ‘ashara wa-ḥiya…; and see Ibn Ḥajar, Tabyin al-‘ajab, p.12 Inf.
first who would visit the Merciful, look at Him and hear His speech. He who
fasts seventeen days — God will arrange for him at every mile of the path
to Heaven a resting place.  

He who fasts eighteen days — God will build for him a palace opposite the palace of Ibrāhīm and Ādām; they would greet him and he would greet them. He who fasts twenty days — a herald will proclaim for Heaven: “God has forgiven you what passed, begin thus anew your (pious) work.”

Some descriptions of the rewards of people who fasted the whole month of Rajab are of the type of stories of the quṣṣāṣ and describe the palaces in Paradise, the meals and the ḥūris awaiting these people in Paradise.

A Shi‘ī tradition gives the following vivid description of the Day of Resurrection.

“At the Day of Resurrection — says the tradition reported on the authority of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq — a herald will call from the interior of the Throne: “Where are the Rajabis (people fasting in Rajab)?” Then will stand up people with faces shining for the gathered (crowds), on their heads will be crowns of kingdom inlaid with sapphires and pearls. On the right side of every man of them will be a thousand angels and on the left side a thousand angels. They will say: “O servant of God, mayest thou enjoy the grace of God”. Then will follow the call from God, the Exalted: “My servants and My maidens, I swear by My majesty and power: I shall honour your residence and I shall bestow upon you gifts in bounty. I shall introduce you into apartments in Paradise under which rivers will flow and you will be for ever in it. How good is the reward of the pious. You volunteered to fast for Me a month which I sanctified and whose observance I bade. My angels, Introduce My servants and maidens into Paradise”. Then Ja‘far b. Muhammad said: “That concerns also people who fasted a part of Rajab, even one day at the beginning of the month, in its midst or at its end”.

One of the most discussed topics involving the Rajab fast was fasting during the whole month. The opponents of fasting in Rajab based their argument

81 See above the reward for fasting ten days.
82 Al-Jullānī, I, 198–199; al-Suyūṭī, al-La‘ālī, II, 114–115; Ibn Ḥajar, Tabyin al-‘ajab, pp. 10–12, 29–30; comp. Ibn Bābūyah, pp. 52–57 sup. (continued until the thirtieth of Rajab); Muḥ. b. Fattāl, 396–400 (continued until the thirtieth of Rajab); and see al-Sahmi, pp. 56 inf., 302 inf.
84 Al-Babrānī, XIII, 401 (and see ibid., pp. 381, 396 about rewards for fasting of the first and the fifteenth of Rajab).
85 See K. Wagtendonk, p. 121.
"Rajab is the Month of God..."

on the well-known hadith reported on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās: "The Prophet forbade fasting in Rajab". Later scholars transmitted this tradition with the addition of the word "whole" (nahā 'an saūmi rajābin kullihi). Partisans of fasting in Rajab criticized this tradition, emphasizing that two of its transmitters were "weak". The two weak transmitters were Dā'ūd b. 'Atīr88 and Zayd b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd. They argued further that the word "nahā" was erroneously inserted into the text, as the tradition referred originally to the actions of the Prophet; it was the transmitter who changed erroneously the word into prohibition (wa-innāmā l-riwāyatu fīhi min fī'ī l-nabīyyi sālā l-lāhu 'alayhi wa-sallama wa-sallama l-ḥarrajāfā l-rāwī l- fi'ī lā l-nahyi). If this version (i.e. nahā) is correct, the interdiction indicates merely a preventive measure (thumma in sahha fa-huwa māhmūlūn 'alā l-tanzihī). It has to be interpreted according to the opinion of al-Shāfī'ī. Al-Shāfī'ī stated that he would disapprove of fasting a whole month like the fasting of Ramadān, or fasting on a peculiar day. He was afraid that some ignorant person might imitate such practices considering it obligatory.90 This opinion of al-Shāfī'ī is quoted by al-Subkī (d. 771 AH),91 (like by Ibn Ḥajar), from al-Bayhaqī's (d. 458 AH) Faḍā'il al-aqāṭ. Al-Bayhaqī records the opinion of al-Shāfī'ī with a remarkable phrase: "wa-in fā'ala fa-ḥasamun", and comments that as it is common knowledge among the Muslims that the only obligatory fast is Ramadān, the idea of reprehensibility (connected with fasting a whole month, in this case Rajab) is accordingly lifted (fa-ritafa'a bi-dhālikā ma'nā l- karāhiyyati).

Consequently it can be deduced from the arguments of al-Bayhaqī that the tradition of Ibn Mājah merely expresses disapproval of fasting the whole of Rajab if this fast is put on an equal footing with Ramadān as obligatory. As the Muslim community is aware of the fact that the only month of mandatory fasting is Ramadān, there is no reprehensibility in fasting a whole month (in this case Rajab); if the believer fasts this month — it is a good deed.

Although al-Subkī could not find the additional phrase wa-in fā'ala fa-ḥasamun in other sources — he accepts the version recorded by al-Bayhaqī

86 Ibn Mājah, I, 531 (annā l-nabīyya sālā l-lāhu 'alayhi wa-sallama nahā 'an saūmi rajābin); al-Shaukānī, Nayl, IV, 210; comp. about the interdiction of fasting of the whole month of Rajab: Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, I, 231, No. 181; al-Ṭurtūshī, p. 130; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi, II, 227; K. Waqwendonk, p. 121 (and note 4).
87 Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhib, III, 193, No. 370; al-Dhahābī, Mīzān, II, 12, No. 2631.
88 See on him Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhib, III, 193, No. 370; al-Dhahābī, Mīzān, II, 12, No. 2631.
89 See on him Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhib, III, 417, No. 764.
as sound. As the interdiction of fasting of the whole month of Rajab is not a sound one — it has to be considered, states al-Subkî, as *mustahabb*, desirable (*wa-'idhâ lam yaktun al-nahiyu 'an takmili saumîhî šâhîhun baqiya 'alâ ašli l-istiḥbâb*); the utterance of al-Shâfi‘î indicates that fasting the whole month of Rajab is good (*hâdhâ l-naṣṣu illadhî rawâhî l-Bayhaqîyyu 'an al-Shâfi‘îyyi fîhi dâlîlatun bayyinatun 'alâ anna šauma rajabin bi-kâmâlihi ḥasanûn*). This, al-Subkî states, confirms the opinion of 'Izz al-Dîn b. 'Abd al-Salâm that he who forbids to fast in Rajab is ignorant of the principles of the Law (*man nahâ 'an šaumi rajabin fa-huwa jâhilun bi-ma'khadhi ahkâmi l-sharî‘i*).

Al-Shaukânî (d. 1250 AH) discusses the problem of fasting in Rajab in connection with fasting the whole month of Sha'bân and concludes that the traditions enjoining fasting during the holy months (*al-ashhur al-burûm*) include the recommendation of fasting of the month in Rajab. There are no traditions stating that fasting in Rajab is reprehensible (*makrûh*).93

Al-Qaṣṭallânî discusses the contradictory traditions about fasting during the whole month of Sha'bân.94 The reference to fasting on Sha'bân is indicated in the *hadîth* reported on the authority of Usâma b. Zayd in which the Prophet said: “That (i.e. Sha'bân) is a month neglected by the people, (a month) between Rajab and Ramaḍân. It is a month in which the deeds are brought before the Lord of the Worlds, and I want therefore that my deeds be brought before Him when I am fasting.”95 Al-Qaṣṭallânî remarks that many people think that fasting in Rajab is preferable to fasting in Sha'bân, because Rajab is one of the holy months (*al-ashhur al-hurûm*); but it is not so (i.e. fasting of Rajab is not preferable to the fasting of Sha'bân). Al-Zurqânî supports the opinion of al-Qaṣṭallânî, quoting the *hadîth* reported on the authority of 'Ā'isha, that when people fasting Rajab were mentioned to the Prophet, he said: “How (poor are) they (in their reward compared to those fasting in) Sha'bân.”96 Nevertheless al-Qaṣṭallânî admits that some of the Shafi‘îya considered fasting of Rajab as more meritorious than fasting of other months. Fasting in Rajab is recommended as Rajab is one of the holy months; the fast of these months is indicated in the tradition recorded by Abû Dâ‘ûd. 'Abdallah b.

92 See below, p. 207.
94 Al-Zurqânî, VIII, 124–125.
96 Al-Zurqânî, VIII, 126; this tradition is recorded by Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabyin al-‘ajab*, p. 33 with the following story: “A woman entered the home of ‘Ā‘îsha and mentioned that she fasted Rajab. ‘Ā‘îsha said: fast Sha'bân, as the merit is in (fasting) Sha'bân.” She then quoted the utterance of the Prophet.
"Rajab is the Month of God..."

'Umar stated that the Prophet used to fast in Rajab and honoured this month. Although the hadith of Ibn Mājah forbidding the fast of the whole month of Rajab is a weak one — the Ḥanbalis considered it as valid. They concluded on the basis of this tradition, says al-Zurqānī, that it was reprehensible to single out the month of Rajab as a month of fasting (yukrahu ifrāduhu bi-l-ṣaumī).97

A significant passage quoted from a book of al-Damīrī (d. 808 AH) by 'Alī b. Aḥmad al-Ẓāzī (d. 1070 AH)98 records the favourable opinion of two scholars of the seventh century of the Hijra towards fasting in Rajab. Abū 'Amr b. al-Ṣalāḥ99 was asked whether fasting the whole month of Rajab was a sin or whether it was a rewarded practice. He answered that there was no sin in it at all. None of the Muslim scholars, argued Abū 'Amr b. al-Ṣalāḥ, considered it as sin. It is true that some scholars of hadith stated that there were no sound hadiths about the merits of fasting Rajab; that does not however imply any sin in fast; traditions about fasting in general and about fasting in the holy months in particular indicate that this fasting (i.e. in Rajab) is meritorious. The tradition of Ibn Dīya claiming that the fire of Hell is kindled every year for the people fasting Rajab is not sound and its transmission is unlawful.100

'Izz al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Salām101 was asked about the opinion of scholars who denounce the fast of Rajab and its observance and whether fasting the whole month as a vow was lawful. 'Izz al-Dīn gave permission to vow fasting the whole month arguing that none of the scholars of Islam included Rajab among the reprehensible periods of fasting (fīma yukrathu ṣaumūhū); on the contrary: it is a pious deed (qurba) as indicated by sound traditions and it is recommended. He who honours Rajab in a different way than the people of the Jahiliyya, the argument says, does not imitate them. Besides, not everything practised by the people of the Jahiliyya is forbidden to follow (in Islam), unless it is interdicted by the Law (wa-laysa kullu mā fa‘alathu l-jāhiliyyatu manhiyyan ‘an mulābasatihī illā idhā nahat al-sharī‘a ‘anhu wa-dallīlat...). Truth should not be abandoned on the ground that people of falsehood practised it, says 'Izz al-Dīn. Furthermore, he gives his statement about the ignorant scholar who forbids fasting on Rajab as quoted above from Subkī's Tabaqāt.

Al-Damīrī sums up the two fatwās in a poem of ten verses, concluding that

97 Al-Zurqānī, VIII, 127.
99 See on him al-Dhahabī, Tadhkīrat al-ḥuffāz, IV, 1430, No. 1141.
100 See this fatwā in Fatawā Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (Cairo 1348 AH), p. 21.
fasting the whole month of Rajab is recommended. A vow of fasting in the month is binding (wa-bi-l-nadhri yajib). In the opinion of Ahmad (b. Ḥanbal) singling out the month for fasting is reprehensible, but the opinion that forbids it should be rejected. The prohibition of fasting was reported by Ibn Mājah, but the hadith proved to be weak because of its (weak) isnād. The shaykh ʿIzz al-Dīn stated that he who forbade fasting in any case is heedless. He strongly rejected the opinion of scholars who forbade fasting, and stated that they should not be consulted for fatwā. The transmitters of the Shariʿa did not reprehend fasting the whole (month). The recommendation of fasting (in this month) is included in the recommendation of fasting in general and there is no sin upon the fasting (person). Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ stated that the hadith about punishment for fasting in Rajab was not a sound one, and it was not permissible to attribute it to the Prophet. The merits of fasting in general, as stated in (valid) texts, indicate that it is even desirable (mustahabb) in particular — this is how al-Damīrī concludes his poem.

Ibn ʿAsākir (Abūl-ʿQāsim ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan)102 devoted a special chapter in his Amālī to the merits of Rajab. He composed some verses in which the river Rajab in Paradise is mentioned:

O he who wants a drink from Rajab in Paradise,  
If you desire it — fast for God in Rajab  
And pray the prayer of the longing103 and fast  
Because everyone who exerts himself in (deeds of) obedience will not be disappointed.104

Orthodox scholars denied any merit to fasting in Rajab, basing their argument on the tradition reported on the authority of Saʿīd b. Jubayr.105 When Saʿīd b. Jubayr was asked about the merits of fasting in Rajab, he said: “I was told by Ibn ʿAbbās that the Prophet used to fast (to an extent) that we thought that he would never break his fast, and he used to break his fast (so often) that we thought that he would not (start again to) fast.”106 Al-Qaṣṭālānī remarks rightly that this tradition indicates that fasting in Rajab is neither forbidden nor recommended (wa-l-zāhiru anna murādā Saʿīdin — i.e. Saʿīd b. Jubayr — bi-hādhā l-īstīlāḥu ʿalā annahu lā nahyā ʿanhu wa-lā nadhba fihi, bal lahu ḥukmu bāqī l-shuhūrī).107 The opponents of fasting in Rajab argue that this tradition

102 See on him C. Brockelmann, GAL, SI, 566.
103 “Salāt al-rāqihībina”: the salāt al-rāqihīb is here, of course, alluded to.
104 Abū Shāma, pp. 55–57.
106 Al-Ḥurr al-ʿAzhārī, p. 128; Ibn Ḥajar, Tabyīn al-tajab, p. 32.
107 Al-Zurqānī, VIII, 127; and see al-ʿAzīzī, II, 392, line 23 (the opinion of al-Nawawī).
"Rajab is the Month of God . . ." points clearly to the fact that the Prophet used to fast during different months of the year. It is accordingly evident that the Prophet did not single out any month for fasting, and therefore no special merit can be attached to the fasting of Rajab; the only meritorious month of fasting is Ramadān.

There is a version of the tradition of Sa‘īd b. Jubayr quoted above, reported on the authority of ‘Ā‘īsha. “The Prophet used to fast (to an extent) that we thought . . . etc.” This ḥadīth has however a significant addition: “And I did not see the Prophet, states ‘Ā‘īsha, completing the fast of any month at all except Ramadān, and I did not see him fasting more (in any month — K) than in Sha‘bān.”108 Two points in this tradition are noteworthy: the one stressing that the Prophet did not complete fasting in any month except Ramadān. This implies that it is not permitted to fast a whole month except in Ramadān. The other point emphasizes that he used to fast in Sha‘bān more than in any other month. One may not be surprised to find a contradictory tradition, reported on the authority of ‘Ā‘īsha, stating that the Prophet used to fast the whole month of Sha‘bān (kāna yāṣūmu shābāna kullahu).109 Another tradition, reported on the authority of Abū Hurayra, gives a different version: “The Prophet did not complete the fast of any month besides Ramadān except for Rajab and Sha‘bān” (anna rasūla llāhi ṣallā llāhu ‘alayhi wa-sallama lam yutimma saumah shahrin ba‘da ramaḍāna illā rajaba wa-sha‘bāna).110 Ibn Ḥajar classifies the tradition as “munkar”,111 because of the transmitter Yusuf b. ‘Atiyya,112 who is considered as “very weak”.113 It is not surprising, however, that the ḥadīth on which opponents of fasting in Rajab based their argument is also reported on the authority of ‘Ā‘īsha: “The Prophet did not single out any month of the year for fasting” (inna l-nabiyya ṣallā llāhu ‘alayhi wa-sallama mā kāna yakhuṣṣu shahrān min al-sanati bi-ṣaumin).114

Opponents of fasting in Rajab attempted to prove that the Companions, like the Prophet, disapproved of fasting Rajab, did not attach any sanctity to the month and considered fasting during Rajab as adherence to Jahiliyya observ-

9949), II, 77 ult., No. 711.


109 Al-Haythaml, Majma’ al-zawii‘id (Cairo 1352 AH), III, 192; and see ibid.: kāna yāṣūmu shābāna wa-ramaḍāna yaṣīluhumā.


112 See on him al-Dhahabi, Mīzān al-‘tīdāl, IV, 488, No. 9877.

113 Ibn Ḥajar, Ṭabyin al-‘ajab, p. 10, line 1.

114 Al-Ṭūrūshī, p. 128.
M. J. Kister

rances. 'Umar, says the tradition, used to beat the hands of people fasting in Rajab when they lifted them from (dishes of) food and compelled them to put them into it. He used to say: "Eat because Rajab was merely adored by the people of the Jāhiliyya."\(^{\text{115}}\) In another version of this tradition, 'Umar used to flog people who fasted the whole month of Rajab.\(^{\text{116}}\)

Another tradition states that Ibn 'Umar disliked to see people prepare for fasting Rajab. He told them: "Fast (some days) of it (i.e. of the month) and break the fasting; it is merely a month which the people of the Jāhiliyya revered".\(^{\text{117}}\) According to these traditions fasting on some days of Rajab, just as fasting some days of other months, is not forbidden; but fasting for the whole month and attaching sanctity to the month itself are not lawful.

The adoration of Rajab might endanger the position of Ramadan. This is reflected in a story about Abū Bakr. When he saw his people prepare for fasting Rajab he said: "Do you make (i.e. observe) Rajab like Ramadan?" (a-ja'altum rajaban ka-ramādan).\(^{\text{118}}\) Ibn 'Abbās insisted that Rajab be not established as an obligatory feast ('id) like Ramaḍān. Al-Ṭurtūshī concludes that these traditions indicate that "the honouring of Rajab by some people is a vestige of the bonds of the Jāhiliyya" (dallat ĥadīhi l-ṭāhūru 'alā anna lādāhi fi aydī l-nāsī min ta'zīmihi innamā hiya ḥabarātun min baqāyā 'uqūdī l-jāhiliyyati).\(^{\text{119}}\) In summary al-Ṭurtūshī states that fasting in Rajab is not obligatory, it is not a sunna of the Prophet and is not meritorious; it is reprehensible.\(^{\text{120}}\)

A special treatise against fasting in and veneration of Rajab, named Adā'u mā wajab min bāyāni waḏ'ī l-wawdā'īna fi rajab, was compiled by Ibn Dihya.\(^{\text{121}}\) From this treatise the following hadīth is with all probability quoted: "The Prophet said: 'Hell is kindled from year to year for the people fasting in Rajab.'"\(^{\text{122}}\)

One of the main arguments of the opponents of the Rajab fast was the tenet

\(^{\text{115}}\) Al-Shaukānī, Nayl, IV, 210 (here the tradition is quoted from Ibn Abī Shayba's al-Muṣannaf. The remark of Wagendonk, p. 121, note 3 that "these are late traditions" can hardly be accepted.); al-Ṭurtūshī, p. 129; Ibn Ḥajar, Tabyin al-'ajab, p. 32; al-Haythamī, Majma' al-sawā'id, III, 191; Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, Ishāh al-masājid min al bi'da'i wa-l-'awā'id (Cairo 1341 AH), pp. 76--77; al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, VIII, 409, No. 2966; Abū Shāma, p. 38; al-Manbijī, Kit. al-samā'i wa-l-raṣāṣ in Majmū'at al-raṣā'il il-Ibn Taymiyya (Cairo 1323 AH), II, 360 inf.

\(^{\text{116}}\) Al-Ṭurtūshī, p. 129.

\(^{\text{117}}\) Al-Ṭurtūshī, p. 129.

\(^{\text{118}}\) Ibid., p. 129; al-Qāsimī, p. 77; Abū Shāma, p. 38.

\(^{\text{119}}\) Al-Ṭurtūshī, p. 129 ult.--130 sup.

\(^{\text{120}}\) Ibid., pp. 130--131; Ibn Ḥajar, Tabyin al-'ajab, pp. 34--35; al-Qāsimī, pp. 77--78; Abū Shāma p. 38 (all quoting al-Ṭurtūshī).

\(^{\text{121}}\) See on him al-Dhahabi Tadhkirat al-hubbūz (Hyderabad 1958) IV 1420 No. 1136.

\(^{\text{122}}\) Al-'Azīzī, II, 391, line 6 from bottom; and see above p. 207.

210
“Rajab is the Month of God . . .”

that the believer is not entitled to establish days or months of religious practices to which particular merits may be attached; this privilege is exclusively reserved for the Lawgiver (fa-l-ḥāsilu anna l-mukallafa laysa lahu mašṣibu l-takhšiṣi bal dhālikā ilā l-shārī‘ī).\textsuperscript{123} As the tradition reported by Sa‘īd b. Jubayr (stating that the Prophet used to fast through the whole year) refutes the traditions about fasting in Rajab, as the Companions repudiated this fasting, as the traditions about fasting in Rajab are weak and untrustworthy — the view that the Rajab fast may be included into the category of good deeds has to be rejected. Good deeds necessitate the approval of the Prophet, which the fasting of Rajab did not get. As the traditions about fasting in Rajab are lies, the fast is, of course, unlawful (fa-in qila- a-layṣa hādīh huwa istī‘māla khayrīn? qila lahu: istī‘mālu khayrīn yanbaghī an yakūnā mahrū‘ān min al-nabiyyī șallā īlāhu 'alayhī wa-sallama; fa-idhā ‘alimnā annahu kadhibun wa-sha’bāna min al-mahrū‘iyyati).\textsuperscript{124}

Opponents of Rajab tried to show the weakness or the forgery of the pro-Rajab traditions, revealing the weakness of the isnād. Abū Shāma (d. 665 AH), who devoted a good deal of his Bā‘ith to the rebuttal of pro-Rajab ḥadīths, and Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852 AH) in his Tabyīn al-lajab, a treatise with the same aim, both used the same method of scrutinizing isnāds. The tradition about the Rajab river in Paradise was rejected by Abū Shāmā\textsuperscript{125} on the ground that Mūsā al-Ṭawīl\textsuperscript{126} was a liar. The ḥadīth: “Rajab is the month of God, Sha‘bān is my month etc.” was discarded because the transmitter was al-Naqqāsh al-Mausilī\textsuperscript{127} a famous liar and forger of ḥadīth. The ḥadīth: “kāna rasūlu șallā șalla ilāhu ‘alayhī wa-sallama idhā dakhabun qāla ilāhumma bārīk lañī fī rajabin wa-sha’bāna... etc.”\textsuperscript{128} was rejected on the ground that Ziyād b. Maymūn\textsuperscript{129} was considered as “discarded” (literally: “abandoned”, “mattrāk”). Ma‘mūn b. Aḥmad al-Sulami\textsuperscript{130} and Aḥmad b. ‘Abdallah al-Juwaybārī,\textsuperscript{131} transmitters of pro-Rajab ḥadīths, were known as notorious liars;\textsuperscript{132} Ibn al-Jauzī counts both Ma‘mūn b. Aḥmad and Aḥmad

\textsuperscript{123} Abū Shāma, p. 37.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., p. 38.

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., p. 55 penult.

\textsuperscript{126} See on him al-Dhahabi, Mizān al-i’tidāl, IV, 209, No. 8888.

\textsuperscript{127} See on him al-Dhahabi, Mizān al-i’tidāl, III, 520, No. 7404.


\textsuperscript{129} See on him al-Dhahabi, Mizān al-i’tidāl, II, 94, No. 2967.

\textsuperscript{130} See on him al-Dhahabi, Mizān al-i’tidāl, III, 429, No. 7036.

\textsuperscript{131} See on him al-Dhahabi, Mizān al-i’tidāl, I, 106, No. 421.

\textsuperscript{132} Abū Shāma, p. 55.
b. 'Abdallah in the list of "big liars".\textsuperscript{133} Both are accused of the transmission of the forged \textit{hadith}, in which the Prophet foretold: "Among my people will be a man called Muhammad b. Idrīs; he will be more harming for my people than Iblis"; one of them invented the \textit{hadith}.\textsuperscript{134} By Muhammad b. Idrīs, the imām al-Shāfī`i is meant. It is quite plausible that al-Shāfī`i`s assessment of the personality of Ma`mūn b. Aḥmad was concise: \textit{Ma`mūn ghayru ma`mūn}.\textsuperscript{135} The \textit{hadith}: "He who fasts the twenty seventh day of Rajab, God will write for him a reward of sixty months; it is the first day when the angel Gabriel brought the Prophet the Message" is marked by Abū Khaṭṭāb (i.e. Ibn Dihya) as a spurious tradition. The tradition that the date of the \textit{Isrā} was the twenty seventh day of Rajab is marked as "the essence of lie".\textsuperscript{136} One of the transmitters of the tradition: "He who fasts three days of Rajab — God will count for him (the reward of) fasting of a month... etc." was Abān (b. abī `Ayyāsh).\textsuperscript{137} Ibn al-Jauzī rejects the tradition as unsound because of Abān. He quotes negative opinions of scholars about Abān, and records the saying of Shu`ba\textsuperscript{138} that he prefers adultery to transmission of the traditions reported by Abān.\textsuperscript{139} The scholars opposing the fasting of Rajab faced the hostile attitude of the common people who practised fasting and special devotions in some nights of Rajab. They faced the pressure of the rulers as well. A peculiar case of this kind is reported in connection with the activities of 'Izz al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Salām, whose favourable opinion about Rajab fasting was mentioned above. In the year 637 AH 'Izz al-Dīn acted as preacher and imām of the mosque of Damascus; he was a very learned and pious man, strictly following the \textit{sunna}. Just before the beginning of Rajab, he preached in the mosque on Friday, and stressed that the \textit{salāt al-raghī`ib} was a \textit{bid`a} and that the \textit{hadith} enjoining the practice of this prayer was a lie. 'Izz al-Dīn compiled a treatise in which he expounded his view and warned the people against the practice of this \textit{bid`a}; he named it "\textit{al-tarhib `an salāti l-raghī`ib}". He was however compelled by the common people and the sultan to change his mind and to compile a treatise which contradicted his former treatise. In his second treatise he issued a favourable judgment about the \textit{salāt al-raghī`ib}.\textsuperscript{140} The orthodox permission of the popular Rajab fast in the tenth century of the Hijra is fairly exposed in the treatise of the Ḥanafī scholar 'Alī al-Qārī'\textsuperscript{133} Al-Shaukānī, \textit{al-Fawā'id}, p. 426.\textsuperscript{134} \textit{Ibid}, p. 420; see al-Dhahabi, \textit{Mizān}, III, 430; al-Suyūṭī, \textit{al-La`āli`}, I, 457.\textsuperscript{135} Abū Shāma, p. 55, line 5 from bottom.\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 56 sup.\textsuperscript{137} See on him al-Dhahabi, \textit{Mizān} I, 10–15, No. 15.\textsuperscript{138} See on him al-Dhahabi, \textit{Tadhkirat al-huffāz}, I, 193, No. 187.\textsuperscript{139} Ibn al-Jauzī, \textit{al-Mauqūf`at}, II, 206. And see his assessment of \textit{insāds}, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 207–28.\textsuperscript{140} Abū Shāma, pp. 32–33.
“Rajab is the Month of God . . . ”

“al-Adab fi rajab”. Although he follows strictly the path of orthodox assessment of the hadith concerning fasting Rajab, he nevertheless gives his consent to fasting Rajab and regards it rewardable. The interdiction of fasting Rajab in the hadith of Ibn Mâjah — argues ’Ali al-Qârî” — has to be considered as an interdiction of its obligatory character, as it was in the period of the Jâhiliyya (wa-amnâ mâ rawâhu Ibn Mâjah annahu ’alayhi l-salâmu nahâ ’an siyâmi rajabin fa-mâhmûlun ’alâ ’tiqâdi wujûbihi kamâ kâna fî l-jâhiliyyati).141 Except that (i.e. this reason for the reprehensibility of fasting) none of the scholars said that fasting in Rajab was reprehensible (wa-illih fa-lam yaquf ahdun min al-’ulamâ’ bi-karâhâtî 6aumihî).142 The opinion that every hadith about fasting Rajab and prayers in some nights of Rajab is a forged one deserves to be re-examined. It is true that there are some forged traditions, but traditions about fasting in Rajab are numerous and they, although weak, strengthen each other.143 Scholars agree, argues al-Qârî, that it is permissible to perform pious deeds having recourse to “weak” traditions (wa-ajma’a l-’ulamâ’u bi-jawâzi l-’amali bi-l-aahîthi l-’dâ’ifati l-wâridati fî faqâ’ili l-’amâlî). The interdiction of fasting Rajab by some scholars and considering it a bid’a is therefore not plausible (wa-lâ ma’nâ li-nahyi...). What is required from the believers is worship and obedience according to their ability. Rajab, as can be deduced from tradition, is a month surpassing other months in merits.144

Radical and uncompromising scholars rejected all the traditions about the virtues of Rajab and the merits of its fast. Ibn Taymiyya states that all the traditions about fasting in Rajab, fasting on the first Friday of Rajab and other merits are lies according to the consensus of the scholars. The best hadith on this subject is, of course, the hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah, stating that the Prophet forbade the fast of Rajab.145

Among the distinctive features of Rajab are the special prayers and supplications connected, of course, with the fasting. These special prayers, devotions and supplications were the subject of fervent discussions and were strongly reproved by orthodox scholars.

Rajab is a month of repentance, of refraining from sin and of doing pious actions. It is a month of great merit and reward, and the believers are exhorted to perform its deeds with sincerity and devotion. Rajab is a month of fasting, praying, and performing good deeds, and it is a time for spiritual renewal and rejuvenation.

143 Ibid., fol. 61a.
144 Idem, al-Adab, fol. 65b.
deeds. This idea of Rajab is expounded in a tradition attributed to the Prophet. In a speech delivered a week before Rajab, the Prophet stated that the rewards for good deeds in this month were doubled, supplications responded to by God and distress relieved by Him. The Prophet bade the believers to fast the days of Rajab and to keep vigilance in its nights. He who prays during some days of Rajab fifty prayers, reciting in every rak'a passages from the Qur'an — God will grant him rewards for his good deeds as much as the number of his hairs. He who fasts one day — God will reward him with the reward of fasting of a year. He who keeps his tongue (from bad speech) — God will tutor him in arguments of his defence when the two angels Munkir and Nakîr would come to question him (in his grave). He who would give some alms — God will save his neck from the fire of Hell. He who does good deeds to his people — God will treat him kindly in this world and in his life to come, and will help him against his enemies during his lifetime. He who visits a sick person — God will order the noble of His angels to visit him and greet him. He who prays in a funeral ceremony during this month, is as one who revives a buried girl-child. He who gives food to a believer — God will lodge him on the Day of Resurrection at a table where Ibrâhîm and Muḥammad will be sitting. He who clothes a believer during this month — God will put on him a thousand of the suits of Paradise. He who bestows a favour upon an orphan and strokes his head — God will forgive him as many of his sins as the number of the hairs (scil. on the head of the orphan) upon which his hand passed. God will grant forgiveness to the believer who asks it. He who praises God once — will be counted in God's presence among the people mentioning God many times. He who completes in this month the reading of the Qur'an — God will crown him and his parents with crowns inlaid with pearls and he will be assured not to be inflicted with the horrors of the Day of Resurrection. 146


147 'Abd al-Qâdir al-Jîlânî, I, 200.

"Rajab is the Month of God . . ."

“He who fasts one day of Rajab is (considered) as if he had fasted a thousand years. He who grants alms (once) is (considered) as if he would give alms of a thousand dinars and God will credit him for every good deed with a number of rewards equal to the number of his hairs. God will raise him a thousand steps, erase a thousand of his sins and credit him for every donation of alms with (the reward of) a thousand pilgrimages and of a thousand ‘umras and build for him in Paradise a thousand courts and a thousand palaces and a thousand apartments; in every apartment there will be a thousand enclosures, in every enclosure a thousand hûris, who are a thousand times more beautiful than the sun.149

According to a Shi‘î tradition, an angel called al-Dâ‘î proclaims every night of Rajab from the seventh Heaven on the order of God: “Blessed are those who remember (Me), blessed are the obedient.” God the Exalted says:

I am the Companion of (the believer) who would sit by Me, I obey him who obeys Me, I forgive (the believer) who asks My forgiveness; the month is Mine, the servant is Mine, the mercy is Mine; he who would call Me — I shall respond to him; he who supplicates Me — I shall give to him, he who will ask my guidance — I shall guide him. I made this month a rope between Me and My servants; he who will hold fast by it — will reach Me.150

Al-Shaukânî points out as a reprehensible innovation in Rajab and Sha‘bân, that people use to exert themselves in acts of obedience and adhere to religious prescriptions during these months, but neglect these actions during the rest of the year.151

Of interest is an Ismâ‘îlî exhortation stressing the sanctity of Rajab (called al-asamm, al-fard, al-asabb) and summoning the faithful to practise fasting, repentance and submission to God. The rewards of good deeds in this month are multiplied.152

The main point in the fervent discussion about Rajab devotions is the topic of šalât al-raghd‘îb, a prayer performed on the eve of the first Friday of Rajab.153 To this šalât al-raghd‘îb the Prophet referred in a hadîth reported on the authority of Anas b. Mâlik. The Prophet, when asked why the month of Rajab was nicknamed “the month of God”, answered: “It is because it is singled out (makhṣûs) with (the quality of) forgiveness. In this month blood-

149 Ibid., I, 201.
150 Al-Majlîs, XX, 338 (lithogr. ed.).
151 Al-Fawâ‘îd, p. 440.
153 But šalât al-raghd‘îb was formerly called the prayer of the midst of Sha‘bân; see Abû Shâma, p. 29, line 8 from bottom.
shed is prevented. God forgave his prophets in this month and rescued his saints (auliyā') from the pains of punishment.” The Prophet further counted the rewards of fasting in Rajab and recommended to an old man, who had complained that he would not be able to fast the whole month, that he restrict his fasting to the first day of Rajab, to the middle day of Rajab and to its last day. “Do not be heedless — continued the Prophet — about the eve of the first Friday of Rajab; it is a night called by the angels al-rahgā'ib, “the large (desirable) gifts”. This (is so) because after passing of the first third of this night no angel on Earth or in Heaven remains who does not gather in the Ka’ba or around it. God the Exalted has a look (at them) and says: “My angels, ask Me whatever you want”, and they answer: “Our need is that Thou mayest forgive the people fasting Rajab”. Then God the Exalted says: “I have done it already”. The Prophet enjoined the believers to fast the day of the first Thursday of Rajab and to pray in the first third of this night (i.e. the eve of Friday) twelve rak'as reciting in every rak'a the fāṭihā once, the sūra “innā anznānāhu fī laylati l-qadrī” three times, the sūra “qul huwa llāhu âdhadun” twelve times; between every rak'a a taslima has to be recited. After this prayer the believer has to recite seventy times “lliihumma salli 'ala l-nabīyyi l-ummiyyi wa-'ala l-malā'ikati wa-l-rūḥi”. Then he would raise his head and say seventy times “rabbi ghfir wa-rham wa-tajdwaz ‘ammd ta’lamu, innaka anta t’azizu l-a’āmu”. Then he should prostrate a second time repeating the supplication quoted above (in the first sajda). Then he pleads for his needs and his plea will be responded to by God. Every servant of God with no exception — says the tradition — praying this prayer, God will forgive him all his sins even if they were (as much) as the foam of the sea and numbering the number of leaves of the trees, and he will intercede for seven hundred of his people at the Day of Resurrection. At the first day of his stay in his grave, he will be visited by the Reward of this prayer. The Reward will greet him with a bright countenance and tell him: “O my beloved, rejoice because you were delivered from every woe”. He will then ask: “Who are you, as I have not seen a face finer than yours and I have not smelled a smell more fragrant than yours”. Then Reward will reply: “O my beloved, I am the Reward of the prayer, which you prayed that night of that and that month; I came this night to you in order to fulfil the obligation towards you and to cheer you up in your loneliness. When the Horn will be blown, I shall be the shade above your head. Rejoice, because you will receive bounty from your Lord.”

Rajab is the Month of God ...

Al-Nawawi classifies the ʿṣalāt al-raghāʿib as a shameful bidʿa (hiya bidʿatun qabīhatun munkaratun), which has to be abandoned, reprehended and prevented. In his fatwā he points out that although many people observe this prayer and that the ʿḥadīth about the merits of the prayer was recorded in Abū Ṭalib al-Makkī’s Qūṭ al-qulūb and in al-Ghazālī’s Iḥyāʾ— it is nevertheless a futile bidʿa (bidʿatun bāṭilatun).

Ibn Ḥajar classifies this ʿḥadīth as forged. ʿAlī b. ʿAbdallāh b. Jahḍam is accused of the forgery of this ʿḥadīth. Al-Ṭūrṭūshī mentions as the ʿṣalāt al-raghāʿib the prayer of fifteenth Shaʿbān and Rajab. The prayer of Rajab was introduced for the first time in Jerusalem: it happened after 480 AH.

AI-ʿAbdarī refutes in a special chapter, the opinion that the ʿṣalāt al-raghāʿib is meritorious or even lawful. He records the fatwā of ʿAbd al-Azīz b. ʿAbd al-Salām strongly condemning this prayer. It is evident that this fatwā is the first fatwā of ʿIzz al-Dīn mentioned by Abū Shāma. ʿIzz al-Dīn was compelled, as quoted above, to compile a fatwā with a contradictory opinion about this prayer. Beside the detailed refutation of the lawfulness of this prayer in the special chapter— al-ʿAbdarī stresses the reprehensible features of the performance of the prayer: men and women mix together in the mosque during the ʿṣalāt al-raghāʿib. If somebody claims that there exists a ʿḥadīth recommending this prayer quoted by al-Ghazālī— then the prayer has to be performed by the believer privately (fi khāṣṣati najṣihi), not as a common prayer in the mosque. Further it is reprehensible to turn it into a continuous and obligatory sunna (sunna dāʿima lā buḍḍa min ḫāṭirat). The traditions about “merits of actions” (faqāʿil al-aʿmāl) have weak isnāds— argues al-ʿAbdarī; although Muslim scholars permitted believers to act according to these ʿḥadīths, they allowed it on the condition that the practice would not be a continuous one. Thus if the believer acts according to such a tradition even once in his life, he would be considered as obeying the (recommendation of)

155 Iḥyāʾ (Cairo 1289 AH), I, 182 (al-Ghazālī remarks that the people of Jerusalem are eager to perform this prayer).


158 See above, note 153.

159 Al-Ṭūrṭūshī, pp. 121–122; and see ibid., note 4 of the editor, M. Talbi.


161 Ibid., pp. 277–282 (he is, however, mentioned as Abū Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʿAbd al-Salām b. ʿAbī Qāsim al-Sulānī al-Shāfīʿi).
M. J. Kister

tradition — if it is indeed a sound one; if, however, the tradition has an isnād which is dubious and open to dispute (wa-in yakun al-hadīthu fi sanadhi ma' ḥanun yaqdaḥu fihī) — his action (performed according to this hadīth) would not harm (him) as he performed a good deed (li-annahu fa'ala khayran) and did not turn it into a publicly performed rite (sha'iratun ḵāhiratun), like ṭabaqāt or other (obligatory) practices. He finally remarks that according to the madhhab of Mālik, the 'ṣalāt al-raghū'ib is reprehensible (makrūḥ).162

'Alī al-Qāri' differs, as in the case of fasting Rajab, in his opinion about the 'ṣalāt al-raghū'ib. He records the tradition about this prayer in his Risālat al-hadīth al-mauṣūla163 and in his al-Adab fi Rajab.164 He quotes the opinion of al-Nawawī (d. 676 AH), as recorded in his commentary on Muslim's Sahih, that this prayer is a reprehensible 'bid'a of error (bid'atu ḵalālatin) and ignorance containing reprehensible actions (munkarāt). "May God curse the inventor of this prayer and the man praying it" — says al-Nawawī.

Al-Nawawī based his disproof of the prayer on a tradition forbidding the singling out of the eve of Friday by vigilance and the day of Friday by fasting (la takhtassū laylata l-jumu'ati bi-qiyāmin wa-la takhṭassū yauma l-jumu'ati bi-qiyāmin).165 'Alī al-Qāri' disagrees arguing that calling the prayer of the eve of Friday ḥalāla is subject to inquiry (maḥallu bahthīn), because prayer is the best deed. If this tradition is forged, the sin is upon its inventor, but no harm is on the believer who acts according to it. Besides, the singling out of the eve of Friday by vigils and the day of Friday by fasting are subject to discussion by the scholars: they contradict each other in their opinions on whether it is reprehensible. It seems that it is in fact a reprehensibility of violation of the preventive measure (al-kariihatu al-tanzhiyyat). The tradition about the prayer recorded only by Razīn is a weak one, but the famous scholar Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ permitted the prayer, the hadīth is recorded by al-Ghazâlī and accepted by scholars and learned men. The argument that the prayer was invented in the fifth century of the Hijra does not justify its designation as 'bid'a sayyi'a, as the principle of prayer is well based on the Book and the Sunna. In fact, a 'bid'a sayyi'a, states 'Alī al-Qāri', is the mixing of sexes during the prayer, dancing, 'ṣamā'ī and wasting money for lighting the mosques on the eve of the prayer.

The practice of the 'ṣalāt al-raghū'ib was formally forbidden by a decree of the sultan al-Kāmil Muhammad b. 'Abī Bakr b. Ayyūb (d. 1238 AD).166 However, it seems that this order of the sultan was not effective for a long

162 Al-Mudkhal, I, 293–294.
163 Fol. 61a.
164 Fol. 65a.
165 Al-Nabhānī, al-Fath al-kabīr (Cairo 1350 AH), III, 318.
166 Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, p. 105.

218
“Rajab is the Month of God . . .”

period: the prayer remained a practice widely observed by common people and ṣūfī fraternities, and gained the approval of some scholars.

V

Rajab continued to be a venerated month in Islam. The tradition that the Prophet performed the 'umra in Rajab was indeed questioned and subjected to discussion, but the people of Mecca used to perform their 'umra in Rajab. ‘Alī al-Qārī’s attitude towards performing the 'umra in Rajab is a positive one. His arguments in the case of the 'umra are very similar to those which he used in the case of fasting and prayers. He gives in fact his consent to the existing custom, arguing that the 'umra, payment of zakāt and other pious deeds performed during Rajab are permissible and rewardable (wa-kadhā ikhrājuha l-zakāta min al-dirhami wa-l-dīnārī wa-ghayrī dīhilīka min a’māl al-abrārī fa-lā shubhata fi jawāzi dīhilīka wa-maziddī l-ajřī wa-l-thawābī hulālika). Although al-Qārī records the tradition about the 'umra of the Prophet in Rajab and the categorical denial of 'A'isha — he points out that when 'Abdallah b. al-Zubayr re-built the Ka'ba, he ordered the people of Mecca to perform the 'umra and slaughtered animals, dividing the meat among poor and needy; the celebration was performed on the twenty-seventh day of Rajab. The Companions of the Prophet (in this case 'Abdallah b. al-Zubayr) — argues al-Qārī — should be imitated according to the utterance of the Prophet: “My Companions are like the stars: whomever you follow — you will then be following the right path” (asli; ka-l-nujjāmi bi-ayyihim iqtadaytum ihtadaytum). Al-Qārī’s consent to the popular practice of the 'umra is further aided by an utterance attributed to the Prophet: “What the Muslims

167 Ahmad b. Hanbal, VII, 233, 248 (No. 5383, 5416; and see the references given by the editor), IX, 3, 131, 210 (No. 6126, 6295, 6430); al-Zarkashi, al-Ijāba li-irddi mī sadrakathu 'A'isha 'alā l-ṣahāba, ed. Sa'id al-Afghānī (Damascus 1939), pp. 114–116; al-Bayhaqī, V, 11; M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, p. 193, note 2.


169 Al-Adab, fol. 65b.

170 See K. Wagendonk, p. 107.

171 See this tradition in Muh. ' Abd al-Luknawi, Iqāmat al-ḥujja 'alā anna l-iḥthāra min al-ta'abbudi laysa bi-bid’a, ed. ' Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda (Haifa 1966), pp. 48–51 (and see the references of the editor, ibid.); al-Sulami, Šdāb al-ṣuhba (Jerusalem 1954), p. 80, note 239.
consider as good is considered as good by God".172 (ma ra’āhu l-muslimūna ḥasanan fa-huwa 'inda llāhi ḥasanun)173.

The attendance of large crowds of people in Mecca in Rajab in early times is attested by the report recorded by Ibn Zahira, that Mu‘āwiya used to send scents for prayers in the Ka’ba twice each year: in the season (of the pilgrimage) and in Rajab.174 Khalid b. ‘Abdallah al-Qasrī was the first who ordered to light lamps (on the way) between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa during the time of the ḥajj and during Rajab; it occurred in the time of Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik.175

The people of Sarw used to perform their ‘umra in Rajab; ’Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb is said to have guaranteed to them for this ‘umra the reward of a pilgrimage.176

Snouck Hurgronje gives a vivid description of the Rajab caravans setting out from Mecca to Medina to visit the tomb of the Prophet and graves of saints.177

The practice of i’tikāf in Rajab can be traced in early times in the story of a woman who vowed to practise the i’tikāf during Rajab in a mosque (although that year Ziyād ibn Abīhī forbade women to practise this rite); Waki‘ records the verdict of Shurayḥ (the judge) in this case.178

Among the popular practices of Rajab was the payment of the zakāt during this month, which was reproved by orthodox scholars.179

Orthodox scholars classified the traditions about the observances of the night which falls in the middle of Rajab180 and of the first day of Rajab181 as forged. But the common people stuck to these popular celebrations. Al-‘Abdārī

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172 See this tradition in Ibn al-Dayba‘, p. 179 (and see the references ibid.); al-Jarrāḥ, II, 188, No. 2214; Mub. ‘Abd al-Ḥayy al-Lunkawi, p. 53.
175 Al-Suyūṭī, al-Wasī’il itti musiimarati l-awī’il, ed. As’ad Ṭalas (Baghdad 1950), p. 35 (awwalu man istaṣāba ḥayna l-Ṣafā wa-l-Marwa Khālidu bnu ‘Abdillāh ); al-Fākhri, Ta’rkhab Makka, Ms. Leiden, Or. 463, fol. 443a.
177 Mekkā, p. 60.
179 Al-Shaukānī, al-Fawā‘id, p. 440, line 6–7; and see ‘Abd al-Qādīr al-Jilānī, I, 196, line 6 from bottom; al-Pattani, 117 line 10 (and see the differing opinion of ‘Abīl-Qārī’, above p. 219).

220
records some details about the customs of the celebration of the first day of Rajab. People used to prepare kinds of sweet shaped in different figures. He points out that it is an interdicted practice and states that people looking at these shaped kinds of sweet and not forbidding its usage must not be permitted to act as witnesses in courts. If these shaped sweets would even be broken into pieces — “people of merit” (ahlu l-faḍlī) would have to avoid to buy them because these sweets were prepared in a way forbidden by the Law. People, and especially young couples and the betrothed, used to send expensive gifts to their relatives. Al-ʿAbdārī draws a line between the pious predecessors (al-salaf) and contemporary people in observing Rajab; the pious predecessors used to increase in it their pious deeds and worship and to venerate in a proper way this month, the month of the improvement of actions (tazkiyat al-aʾmāl), the month of blessing (baraka), the first of the four holy months (al-ashkur al-hurum). Contemporary people celebrate it by vying in eating and dancing and by spending money on expensive gifts.182

The ʿsalāt al-raghāʾib mentioned above was performed in lavishly lightened mosques; men and women crowded the mosques and the imāms led the prayers.183

Similar practices are recorded by al-ʿAbdārī concerning the eve of the twenty-seventh day of Rajab, the honoured night of the miʿrāj;184 people gather in illuminated mosques, carpets are spread out, food is brought and people eat and drink in the mosque. Qurʿān is read in a reprehensible way,185 the dhikr is recited in a way that the words are almost not understandable (lā yīlāh yīllāh instead of the correct lā ilāha illā llāhu). Disorder prevails in the mosque, as some people recite poetry, while others recite Qurʿān. Cleanliness is not observed in the mosque and its surroundings, as people used to go out to relieve themselves; some ladies pass water in the mosque itself in vessels, which are collected and emptied by some men paid for this service.186 E. W. Lane gives a detailed description of the celebration of the twenty-seventh day of Rajab, the laylat al-miʿrāj, in Cairo.187

182 Al-ʿAbdārī, I, 291–293.

183 Ibid., I, 293.

184 See on these prayers: ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jilānī, I, 205; Ibn ʿAsākir, Taʾrīkh, VII, 344 (but the twenty-ninth day of Rajab is recorded, not the twenty-seventh); Ibn Ḥajar, Taḥbīn, pp. 18, 27–28; ʾAlī al-Qārī, al-Adab, fol. 65b (quoted from al-Suyūṭī’s al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr); Ibn al-Jauzī, II, 124–126.

185 wa-l-qārīʿu yaqrʿu l-qurʿānā fī-yaysidū fīhi mā layṣa minhu wa-yansīṣu minhu mā ḥuwa fīhi bi-hasbi tilka l-naghamāt wa-l-tarjīʿāt īlāt tushbihu l-ghināʾa wa-l-hunūk (?—probably: wa-l-hanāt — K) īlāt qad ḭūtalāhā ʾalayḥā... etc.

186 Al-ʿAbdārī, I, 294–298.

Şūfīs and common people believed in a special group of the *abdāl*\(^{188}\) called *al-rajabiyyūn*.\(^{189}\)

People of Lahj and Abyan used in ancient times (*fī sālīfī l-dahri*) to set out in Rajab for pilgrimage.\(^{190}\)

Popular practices of Rajab in ʿIrāq were recorded by Ahmad Ḥāmid al-Sarrāj.\(^{191}\) Every Saturday of Rajab is called *sabt al-banār*. In these Saturdays girls wear their best dresses and go out to visit the holy shrines (*mazārāt*). They use to sit down in the court of the *mazār*, near the shrine (*marqad*) and talk about subjects of interest to them. This custom is especially observed in big cities.

"*Ṣaum al-yatīma*" is a practice of fasting observed by girls in the last Tuesday of Rajab. It is connected with a tale of a girl ill-treated and persecuted by her step-mother. She fasted the last Tuesday of Rajab and vowed to fast on this day of Rajab for ever if God would deliver her from her distress. She cooked a meal of coarsely ground wheat (*jarīša*) in a hidden place, fasted the day and supplicated God in prayer. After some time the wife of the sultan, who sought a bride for her son, was pleased by the beauty and manners of the poor girl and chose her as wife for him. They married and lived happily. Young girls follow the practice of the *yatīma*, cook in a hidden place the *jarīša* and break their fast with a meal of it. They fast and supplicate God to fulfil their wishes.

The twenty-seventh day of Rajab is a venerated day in the Jaʿfari community. On this day amulets and charms are prepared.

The fast of the last Wednesday of Rajab is called *Shābirīyūn*. This fact is connected with a tale of a poor wood-cutter, who became happy fasting this day. Once, says the story, when he was sleeping under a tree in the desert, he saw three birds: Shāh-biḍrīyūn, Māḥ-biḍrīyūn and Asmā-biḍrīyūn. The birds told him that if he would fast the last Wednesday of Rajab and break his fast by eating barley-bread, sesame and sugar, place before himself a vessel with water and light a candle, praying to God — God would grant him his livelihood in abundance. He did so and indeed his wife who was barren bore a child; she was after some time taken to the palace of the king as a nurse for his child. The wood-cutter became a gardener in the garden of the king. When after a year of pleasant life the couple forgot to fast this day of Rajab, a distress befell them: a bird caught the jewels of the king’s daughter when


\(^{189}\) See on them Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Muḥādārat al-abrār* (Cairo 1906), I, 245.

\(^{190}\) Ibn al-Mujāwir, I, 105.

\(^{191}\) *Awāḥid al-shuḥūr* (Les Superstitions attachées aux Mois), Loghat el-ʿArab (1928), VI, 28–32.
she was bathing in the company of the wife of the wood-cutter. The wood-cutter and his wife were accused of having stolen the jewels and were put in prison. In this month of Rajab, when in prison, they remembered the story of the birds and fasted the month. One day (of this month) the wood-cutter saw a man running hastily to rescue a dying man. The wood-cutter asked him to bring him the products needed for the breaking of the fast of Shābīryūn and promised him that the man would recover. In fact when the products were brought the wood-cutter and his wife consumed the products after the fast, put the vessel with water before them and lit the candle. The ill-man recovered and a bird came to the palace and brought in its beak the jewels of the king's daughter. The wood-cutter and his wife were freed and lived happily until the end of their days. Women in Iraq used to fast on the last Wednesday of Rajab until midday; this — they believe — brings the blessing (baraka). They buy barley-bread, sugar, sesame, light candles and the family sits down to a midday-meal. The fasting girl tells the story of Shābīryūn.

The first day of Rajab is a local holiday (rajabiyya) in Saiwun (Ḥaḍramaut) and various local festivals fall within this month — reports Philby. “The sighting of the new moon of Rajab — attests Philby — was announced by firing an ancient piece of artillery”¹⁹² This is reminiscent of course, of some practices pertaining to Ramaḍān.

The incessant struggle of the orthodox scholars against the practices of Rajab has not been entirely successful. Some of them yielded to the pressure of popular belief and granted their approval to some observances, counting them among the meritorious deeds of the faithful. Even the veneration of Rajab in the period of the Jāhiliyya got its recognition and was described by a contemporary Muslim scholar as “a remainder of the ḥanifiyya”.¹⁹³ Only a small group of orthodox extremists of the type of Ibn Taymiyya remained stubbornly opposed to the Rajab practices. These survived and form until the present time an essential part of Muslim popular belief and devotion.

¹⁹² Sheba’s Daughters (London 1939), p. 278.