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FROM THE EDITORS

Greetings,

As with the previous issues of *Ilahiyat Studies*, this one, too, contains a set of scholarly articles and book reviews that focus on some of the key themes that have relevance to our contemporary situation in religious, philosophical, and cultural studies.

In his carefully crafted essay, "Neo-Humanism and Diminution of the Concept of the Human," Kasım Küçükalp attempts to analyze the transformation of the concept of the "human" from a philosophical perspective, comparing and contrasting the thought-patterns of pre-modern and modern times. According to Dr. Küçükalp, the concept "human" underwent a radical change, which limited the content and meaning of the term, caused by the emergence of modern thought that is marked by secular humanism. The study concludes that the process in which the concept of the "human" has been constricted, resulted in the decentralization of the subject. This, in turn, heralded a new human condition with no ground for legitimacy save unconscious desires.

The article, "Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī's Universalist Interpretation of Islam" by Tahir Uluç, analyzes Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī's views on, among others, nationalism, placing special emphasis on the issue of superiority as a general problem. The author considers al-Māturīdī's views on the age-old debate about the superiority among God's creation in various topics. In this context, the relationship between the Qurʾān as word, and Arabic as a language and the relationship between meaning and wording of the Qurʾān are examined. Towards the end of the paper, the author attempts to relate the subject-matter to the current debate on the Qurʾānic hermeneutics.

Behram Hasanov and Agil Shirinov's joint article, "Suffering for the sake of Cosmic Order: Twelver Shīʿah Islam's Coping with Trauma," attempts to understand the meaning and function of suffering for the sake of cosmic order in the Twelver Shīʿah Islam. The authors try to make intelligible a highly complicated subject by assuming a cultural

sociological perspective, which sees trauma as a cultural construction. The article argues that the suffering experienced in Karbalāʾ is considered to be a necessary turning point in human (hi)story, maintaining the cosmic order in the Shīʿite religiosity. If the arguments presented in the article are valid, then it is clear that the Shīʿite community, as the authors conclude, regards itself as "a subject of history," and as a dynamic social tradition, which functions as a chain of memory.

The final article, "Referential Value of Ḥadīth Transmitter Criticism in the 2ⁿᵈ/8ᵗʰ Century: The Case of Shuʿbah ibn al-Ḥajjāj" by Halil İbrahim Turhan, tries to explicate how acquisitions of discrediting and commendation were evaluated within the scope of transmitter criticism immediately after the second/eighth century to figure out how principles and assessments of transmitter criticism were perceived in the following era. This, according to the author, is necessary to monitor the progress of discipline of transmitter criticism in the course of time. The article takes one of the most influential figures in the field as its test case, Shuʿbah ibn al-Ḥajjāj. At the end, it concludes that assessments on transmitters during and after third/ninth century are substantially in line with those of Shuʿbah.

Apart from the articles and book reviews, there two announcement to make. First, we are pleased to let our colleagues and readers know that Professor Abdulkader I. Tayob of University of Cape Town has joined our editorial team. We would like to extend our warmest welcome to Dr. Tayob and look forward to working with him. Second, we kindly ask our prospective contributors to prepare their manuscript for submission to *IS* according to our newly updated version of the style sheet, which can be accessed at the following address: http://ilahiyatstudies.org/index.php/journal/manager/downloadLayoutTemplate

As always, we wish you the very best and look forward to seeing you again.

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NEO-HUMANISM AND DIMINUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF THE HUMAN

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Abstract

The argument of this study is that the horizon of the "human" concept in premodern eras underwent a gradual constriction in terms of content and meaning upon the emergence of modern thought; accordingly, such constriction and diminution are examined within the course of history. Therefore, the diminution of concept of the "human" is discussed, first, within the context of "modern secular humanism," in the sense of the bereavement of the idea of complete being and completion (*kamāl*) in the wake of positioning the knowing (rational) subject into the center of being and thought. Second, the same discussion is offered in more detail with regard to the transformation of the knowing subject into the desiring/willing subject under the influence of the legitimizing effect of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis. According to this study, abovementioned diminution or constriction in the concept of the human has occurred over a course that led to the decentralization of the subject; nevertheless, it paved the way for a new human condition with no ground of legitimacy other than unconscious desires. Consequently, man has remained in the middle of a complete experience of nihilism in the sense of total disconnection from truth, in line with the reproduction of being and values arising pursuant to the culture of consumption and the image.

Key Words: Modern secular humanism, Neo-humanism, libidinal, psychoanalysis, culture of consumption, nihilism

Introduction

This study generally concentrates on how the world of life and thought to which modern and contemporary man is exposed determines the human horizon. This period covers approximately four centuries of gradually more rapid change; therefore, it is evidently impossible to render it the object of encircling discourses and to make sharp and exact inferences based on it. Nevertheless, it is possible to make some general inferences about the transformation that human comprehension underwent, in the context of characteristics that are decisive in almost every aspect of life determined by modern and contemporary thought, on the condition of reserving a certain amount of caution.

The thought of being and truth, which emerged together with modern thought, brought with it the loss of the idea of a teleological and qualitative universe. Accordingly, just like being and truth, man was also treated within the context of quantitative terms and suffered reification. Consequently, the concept of the human was fragmented and diminished as a result of the loss of idea of completion (*kamāl*). To analyze the causality in the universe conceived via entirely mechanistic terms, modern representative epistemology points to a practice in which a complex whole, initially, is dissolved into its constructive atomistic elements, before being resynthesized pursuant to the ordered functioning between these elements. As a result, such epistemology reifies and dismantles the human being into elements of consciousness and the body.

According to the classical perspective, however, both the universe and being as a whole had a teleological character, whereupon qualitative distinctions were in question. Thus, the universe and being were subject to a hierarchic structure in which they became ontologically more real, epistemologically truer, and axiologically more valuable during their journey from substance to God. Each being had a telos (purpose, goal), upon the realization of which such being completely attained its respective horizon of existence. There were qualitative distinctions between such a being and the beings within this conception of the universe; in addition, man was not something among other things. Moreover, man was exposed to this world by chance; he was a mature being for whom it was impossible to find in this world that which he lost in the realm of truth. In this

respect, man as a "being towards completion" could only realize himself by means of leading a virtuous and righteous life. In other words, as Socrates indicates, material needs should not be fundamental or essential, even though they might be necessary. Thus, one should proceed to become Human, his *telos*. Any adverse position of existence meant blunting in the face of the gravity of being in this world, as a result of which one would gradually diminish. In fact, the diminution of the concept of man in modern thought was what the classical world-view feared and attempted to avoid.

Certainly, it is impossible to evaluate every aspect of transformation and change because of the influence of modern thought; in addition, such effort would go far beyond the limits of this study. Accordingly, we attempt to examine the constriction of the horizon or the diminution of the concept of the human in modern and contemporary thought through two concepts, namely, modern secular humanism and neo-humanism, on the axis of the modern manner of thinking.

Modern Secular Humanism

Humanism, in the broadest sense, means the relocation of human reason as a reference for knowledge of truth. The origins of humanism date back to Antiquity, to the time of the Sophists, and this approach can be characterized by the well-known words of Protagoras: "Man is the measure of all things: of the things that are, that they are, of the things that are not, that they are not."[1] Given this background, humanism originally reduces any search for truth to the human perspective and refers to a comprehension in which the idea of the afterlife is abandoned for the sake of this world.

Regarding historical background, the intellectual and social movement of humanism emerged together with the Renaissance and came to dominate art, literature, epistemology, law, and urban life in almost all of Europe, in Italy above all. With the Renaissance, man was rendered the center of thought as a reaction to medieval thinking; consequently, a movement of return to rediscover and capture Greek and Roman philosophies followed, creating a culture exclusively based on man, independent of supernatural or divine

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[1]   Ahmet Cevizci, *İlk Çağ Felsefesi Tarihi* (Bursa: Asa Yayınları, 2000), 81.

foundations. Broadly speaking, Renaissance humanism means a review of the anthropocentric perspectives of classical civilizations. Nevertheless, unlike modern secular humanism, Renaissance humanism was a movement that was aesthetic in nature, rendering human experience the practical measure of everything; therefore, Renaissance thought was located somewhere between the supernaturalism of medieval thought and the scientific and critical approach of modernity. In this regard, Renaissance humanism concentrated on the salvation of the individual and incorporated the mystical and aesthetic qualities of the prescientific era.

The true transformation of the concept of humanism occurred in the 17th century in parallel with developments in philosophy and science. Modern secular humanism resembles Renaissance humanism in the sense of anthropocentrism; nevertheless, the former differs from the latter by considering human reason and science as the only reference and by insisting on leaving behind any mystical and aesthetic experience. Within this framework, humanism is:

> … the philosophical movement that considers reason the only and highest source of value of human existence, that indicates that the creative and moral development of the individual can be realized in a rational and significant manner without referring to the metaphysical, and that, accordingly, brings the naturality, freedom, and activity of man to the forefront in this respect.[2]

Descartes provides the ground for modern philosophical humanism in his "*cogito*;" as noted by Vattimo, it alludes to a perspective that locates man at the center of the universe and renders him the master of being.[3] The distinctive feature of the humanistic perspective is its unconditional dependence on human reason, the "thinking subject" and its optimistic vision of modern science. The Age of Enlightenment brings the most competent form of the humanist philosophical perspective, according to which, man is a part of nature and a being who has arisen at the end of a long-lasting process. Therefore, the depiction of the universe by modern science is sufficient without any need for referring to a cosmic or metaphysical source. Accordingly, the source of moral values is

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[2]   Cevizci, *Paradigma Felsefe Sözlüğü* (Istanbul: Paradigma, 2010), 801.

[3]   Gianni Vattimo, *Modernliğin Sonu: Postmodern Kültürde Nihilizm ve Hermenötik*, trans. Şahabettin Yalçın (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 1999), 86.

human experience; ethics are autonomous and do not require any theological or ideological approval. In this regard, modern secular humanism recommends relying on human intellect rather than divine guidance.[4] Consequently, modern secular humanism is expressed through the rejection of all transcendent authorities above man.[5]

In line with the optimistic progressive notion of the Enlightenment, humanist philosophy adopts the concept of the universe provided by modern science. As a result, the ever-improving human reason inevitably becomes the exclusive reference for human preferences. Therefore, any attempt by man to understand the world depends on sensible data and their comprehension by the mind. Since there is no rational or scientific method for testing transcendent or religious knowledge and truth, such transcendent concepts of knowledge and intuition are completely indefensible. What we define as knowledge must also belong to the space of human understanding.[6]

This humanistic approach claims to have found the answer to all questions. In a sense, it replaces truth with the picture of the world established through the imagination/contemplation of human thought. Man bears the logic of constructing the world as an abstract image; this logic corresponds to the logic of the appearance of the constructed image. Therefore, humanistic thought, in all of its self-confidence, asserts that it has attained truth by means of abstract (rational) thinking. In this context, the safe epistemic position ensured by such an act of thinking, demolishing the idea of transcendent truth above man, can be called the "conformism of truth." Characterizing modern philosophical humanism via the analytics of limitedness, Foucault indicates that this limitedness points to man as a limited being who presents himself as decisive and fundamental, by means of replacing God, and that modern philosophy, since Kant, is a reflection of this figure.[7] Although modern philosophy, as a critical way of thinking, displays a heterogeneous view within the context of the limits of human

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4   Kasım Küçükalp, *Nietzsche ve Postmodernizm* (Istanbul: Kibele, 2010), 93.

5   Derda Küçükalp, "Siyaset Felsefesini Yeniden Düşünmek," *Türkiye Günlüğü* 128 (2016), 90.

6   Ibid., 94.

7   David Owen, *Maturity and Modernity: Nietzsche, Weber, Foucault and the Ambivalence of Reason* (London: Routledge, 1994), 165.

knowledge, the central position of man in this philosophical tradition remains evident, albeit in different forms.

In a broader sense, modern secular humanism, which broke the mind off its theoretical aspect pursuant to the meanings of *ratio* and *reason* and which confined it within the limits of modern rationalism, paved the way for the loss of the idea of quality and for the domination of an entirely quantitative worldview, by means of limiting the horizon of being and truth by means of a scientific and rational reality pursuant to the anthropocentric atomistic paradigm. Evidently, the most exact and shortest way to trace the modern interest in the quantitative is the structure of the universe that functions within the scope of the modern mechanistic conception of the world and the laws of nature that are binding even on God. Thereupon, everything in the universe, where man is also, should function under the sovereignty of physical laws that can be theorized via mathematical or geometrical methods or that can be represented by representative human practice.

According to such a conception of being, man, with all his biological and physiological existence, is reduced to a thing among others in the universe. Nevertheless, at this point, man has been carried to a privileged ontological status as an epistemic subject that is capable of representing things as they are owing to his capacity for rational thinking. This privileged status bestows a privileged position on the modern subject in terms of knowledge, truth, and righteousness. As Foucault indicates, the difference between the truth experience of man in the premodern era and the truth experience established pursuant to subjective conceptualization, particularly in the philosophies of Descartes and Kant, is closely related to the status that the subject acquired in line with its construction in modernity. During the classical period, under the Platonic influence, man could not manifest himself in the truth experience without changing his own form of existence through spiritual transformation; however, according to modern thought under the Cartesian influence, in which the scientific practical model plays a significant part, the subject is rendered capable of truth as a subject without any spiritual transformation.[8]

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[8]   Michel Foucault, *Öznenin Yorumbilgisi: College de France Dersleri 1981-1982*, trans. Ferda Keskin (Istanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2015), 163.

In light of the foregoing, Foucault indicates that the prerequisite of spiritual transformation for attaining truth is abolished by Descartes and Kant. Indeed, "opening the eyes is sufficient in order to be capable of truth; it is sufficient to put forward ideas in an accurate, rightful manner, adhering to the line of evidence, and never leaving it. Therefore, the subject no longer needs to transform itself. It is sufficient for the subject to be what it is, in order to attain the truth, where it manifests its own structure, within knowledge."[9] Certainly, the conception of knowledge underwent a complete change upon the notion of a subject capable of knowing the truth; knowledge no longer meant attaining truth but, rather, became the perception of truth as knowledge of a space of an object; consequently, the notion of knowledge of an object could replace the notion of attaining truth.[10]

In parallel with the foregoing, the modern conception of mind was no longer the capacity of knowing and understanding; instead, it underwent a radical change, and *intellect* was abandoned in favor of *ratio* and *reason*. Intellect, which incorporates intuition, was a faculty of thinking that enabled the manifestation of human existence to truth, whereas *ratio* and *reason* render truth an object of calculation, externalizing it within a manner of calculative thinking of a completely epistemic subject. Thereupon, *ratio* and *reason* point to a faculty of thinking that knows truth within its own subjective limits and enables its acquisition as an expendable object.

In classical thought, man refused to make himself a limit with regard to truth by comprehending his own intellectual limits. Thus, the act of reasoning/contriving coincided with the awareness of the ontological connection between the witness and the unknown; moreover, it was an act of contemplation that required a consideration of the manifestation of the unknown in the witness and its aspects hidden from the witness. Accordingly, the eye saw what was visible; nevertheless, this seen part did not consume the possible horizon of the visible/known. Every manifestation pointed to the one who manifested; nevertheless, the being of manifesting was also veiled by manifestation. Thinking, on the other hand, was to half-open the veil, eliminate the epistemic horizon of human ordinariness that was a veil in itself, and to arise towards or to open to the one that

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[9]   *Ibid.*, 164.

[10]   *Ibid.*, 165.

manifested itself via spiritual transformation, as Foucault emphasizes. Therefore, although the act of knowing in the classical world did not have a character determined by the ideal of precision and the horizon of sharpness as in modernity, it was concerned with steering toward divine questions that were impossible to seize and consume. Referring to Thomas Aquinas, Schumacher states that in the classical world, "the weakest knowledge obtained from most sublime things was considered more desirable than the most certain knowledge obtained from the littlest things." Certainly, the position of weak knowledge in the face of exact knowledge signifies uncertainty; nonetheless, such uncertainty, which comprises a character oriented towards the content of the knowledge of sublime things, expresses how large a loss it would be to restrict knowledge with things that offer undoubtedness and certainty.[11]

Modern thought with epistemological emphasis is performed from the uncertainty of sublime things to the certainty of little things; such approach abolishes all qualitative distinctions for the sake of the quantitative, whereupon comes along a notable constriction or restriction on the horizon of human existence, providing the concept of the human with content. Both divine and satanic interventions are out of the question in the modern understanding of being; man, under the guidance of "independent secular reason,"[12] is disconnected from the chain of revelation that is captivated by the horizon of his domination in the world. Grades of being, which were considered the possibility of contact with being and truth in classical philosophies and religions, are thus completely lost and located within the order of things and are reduced to an object of modern disciplines. Philosophies that restrict man by the horizon of being of this world include man as analyzed by Hobbes, pursuant to naturalist anthropology, the epistemic subject highlighted by the Cartesian *cogito*, the autonomous moral subject of Kant, the approach of the Enlightenment, in which any transcendent reference other than reason and science is denied and man is rendered a part of the narrative of liberating progress that occurs pursuant to natural grounds, and the Hegelian modern individual, unearthed by a

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[11] E. F. Schumacher, *Aklı Karışıklar İçin Kılavuz*, trans. Mustafa Özel (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2015), 17.

[12] Leszek Kolakowski, *Modernliğin Sonsuz Duruşması*, trans. Selahattin Ayaz (Istanbul: Pınar Yayınları, 1999), 17.

completely correspondent dialectic between the rational and the real and whose will is capable of reflecting the general will. Thus, modern thought conceals the severity[13] of the existence of man in the world; it restricts the horizon of existence within a rational horizon of being and truth that precludes any external reference in both the physical and the intellectual sense. In fact, the severity of the existence of man on earth is concealed by means of the epistemic interventions of the human subject, and the resulting blindness has imprisoned modern man in a human horizon in which man contents himself as an ordinary being of common sense who conceals the difference of content between man and the worldliness of the world of things.

In the beginning, man was fascinated by his obtained domination over nature; over the course of time, however, he became the object of the aforementioned domination. The optimistic vision of the Enlightenment, the last stronghold of rationalism, was destroyed by the appearance of a bureaucratic and instrumental rationalism, emerging wars, and the nuclear and ecological threats created by science. In connection with the discovery of the unconscious, it became clear that the definition of man merely as a being of mind led to a perspective that negated differences by means of a deficient and totalizing epistemic discourse. Consequently, the confidence in the master narratives of the Enlightenment, which were grounded in a rational being and truth horizon, the idea of the epistemic subject above all, was lost.

Evidently, one of the main reasons of this process was capitalism, which took science in tow and finally evolved into a culture of consumption. The practice of everyday life under capitalism transformed everything into a commodity, including science and knowledge; humanity, as a whole, came to be destined to lose its final connections with reality at an imaginary plane of being under the influence of globalism. Apparently, the nihilism of the contemporary world is also a symptom of the world of images to which man is exposed because of the culture of consumption.

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13   For an ontological analysis of the concealment of the severity of the existence of man in the world through being rendered a thing among things and an ordinary being with foresight, see İsmet Özel, *Tahrir Vazifeleri VII* (Istanbul: Çıdam Yayınları, 1993), 7-10.

Neo-humanism

In chronological terms, critiques of modern secular humanism and efforts towards the decentralization of the subject began with Vico and Rousseau. Over the course of time, the German Romanticism of the 19ᵗʰ century, the German School of History, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, the philosophies of life and existence, Critical Theory, which came to forefront in the 20ᵗʰ century with its critical approach to instrumental rationalism, the philosophical anthropology established by Max Scheller and Nicolai Hartmann, the philosophies of Heidegger and Nietzsche, and the fundamental ontology nourished by the phenomenological tradition gradually brought more severe critiques of modern secularism. The reactionary tone grew even more radical with poststructuralism and postmodernism.

The scope of this study is evidently too small to detail the critiques of humanism posed by all of the foregoing. Nevertheless, from a general perspective, we can assert that contemporary philosophies and the ensuing world of everyday life under capitalism, which stresses the decentralization of the subject in line with the radical critique of humanism, created a new type of humanism or at least legitimized the emerging neo-humanism. According to Deleuze and Guattari, ideologies such as Marxism and Freudianism nourish capitalism. From this perspective, the practice of everyday life under capitalism, which grew and progressed owing to the assistance of science over the course of time and which, in parallel with globalism, emerged as the absolute decisive power over human desires all around the world, provided the fertile soil and climate needed by the aforementioned neo-humanism.

Deleuze and Guattari consider Marx and Freud to be the dawn of Western culture; according to them, Marxism and Freudianism, if not Marx and Freud themselves, were oriented toward generating new codes for modern society that broke from conventional codes. Marxism re-established the codes of the state in a general manner, whereas Freudian psychoanalysis re-established the codes of the family in a more private aspect; and they functioned as two fundamental bureaucracies that sought the establishment of new codes for the resolving aspects of Western culture.[14] In the eyes of

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[14]   Gilles Deleuze, "Göçebe Düşünce," trans. Aslı Kayhan, *Toplumbilim: Gilles Deleuze Özel Sayısı* 5 (1996), 53.

Deleuze and Guattari, Marxism and Freudianism can even be considered forms of ideology that fortify capitalism. Marxism fortifies capitalism by reducing everything to economic practices and convincing humans to admit economic relations as the principal factor, whereas Freudianism fortifies capitalism by legitimizing the nuclear family just as it is foreseen by the practice of everyday life under capitalism within the framework of the trio of the mother, the father, and the ego. In fact, there is a complete overlapping between the appearance of neo-humanism and faith in the economy, Freudian psychoanalysis, in which sexuality and desire (*libido*) under the influence of the unconscious are the principal decisive factors, and the practice of everyday life under capitalism, which flexibly congregates these two principal factors.

At this point, the most fundamental difference between modern secular humanism and contemporary humanism, which we conceptualize as neo-humanism, becomes apparent in the difference regarding the conceptualization of the transition from man as a being of consciousness/reason/ego to man as a being of desire/libido/ instinct. In our opinion, modern secular humanism founds epistemic problems such as truth, reality and meaning with reference to conscious human existence or epistemic subject and thus provides man with a central position. On the other hand, neo-humanism, which arises from the decentralization of the subject, also provides man with the same central position by rendering him an unconscious being of desire. With modern secular humanism, man began to lose the possibility of being a spiritual being of arbitrariness that opens to the heavens. Together with the exploration of the unconscious, man became deeper downwards and a being of biopsychic desire and instinct, which becomes clear with his irrational aspects. Therefore, contemporary debates with regard to the decentralization of the subject seem to have shaken the central position of the subject and to have demolished modern secular humanism; however, the exploration of the unconscious and the ensuing philosophies paved the way for a new humanism that is liable for opening man to the expansiveness of the libido and eliminating obstacles before boundless desires under the decisiveness of irrational aspects.

In addition to several poststructuralist and postmodern philosophies as well as discussions within the scope of psychoanalysis after Freud and Lacan, the philosophies of desire of

Lyotard, Deleuze, and Guattari*, who concentrate on the abovementioned opinions and arguments, stress the libidinal.[15] Accordingly, their view insists on the necessity of an absolute code degradation with regard to desires coded as objects of desire within the practice of everyday life under capitalism. Thus, these thinkers legitimize neo-humanism, which is a consequence of downward deepening, in terms of content. In our eyes, the stress laid by Deleuze and Guattari in their *Anti-Oedipus* on the concept of the schizophrenic and its implied conceptualization of productive desire confirms the foregoing finding. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the schizophrenic, who is highlighted via emphasis on the ego/self/subject/consciousness and who is declared abnormal and excluded for pointing to the madness of the modern subject, which decides the standards of normality, "produces himself as a free, lonely, and joyous man; he can say and do whatever he wants, without asking anyone else for permission. Desire lacks nothing; it is a love that has overcome all spectrums of obstacles. Consequently, desire can never be designed as ego. The schizophrenic is the person who has eliminated the fear of becoming mad."[16]

Lyotard proposes a similar approach to the philosophy of desire of Deleuze and Guattari. *Discourse, Figure* and *Libidinal Economy* by

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*   Certainly, it is possible to note various philosophies or thinkers who emerged within contemporary philosophy within the context of psychoanalysis in the wake of Freud and Lacan. However, given the limitations of our study, the philosophies of Deleuze, Guattari, and Lyotard are provided as the best examples to reflect how neo-humanism comprehends human.

[15]   As Cevizci, in particular, notes, "in terms of postmodern thought, desire defines the libidinal powers and drives that shock the intellectual power of the individual. As a matter of fact, in the eyes of postmodernist thinkers, desire is the driving force which Western culture has tried to oppress over last few centuries since it poses a threat to the social order and institutional structures. This is why, according to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, modem psychoanalysis is a technique of social control that seeks to prevent desire and ensure the adaptation of individuals to a social system. This is also why schizophrenics are the ideal types according to Deleuze and Guattari." Cevizci, *Paradigma Felsefe Sözlüğü,* 144.

[16]   Madan Sarup, *Post-yapısalcılık ve Postmodernizm*, trans. Abdülbaki Güçlü (Ankara: Ark Yayınevi, 1995), 119.

Lyotard[17] bear a parallelism with the views of Deleuze and Guattari, and they can be read as a philosophy and politics of desire. Lyotard, who was highly influenced by Marx and Freud but breaks from Marx towards a Nietzschean philosophy of affirmation, asserts that, since Plato, the Western philosophical tradition has served to devalue the senses.[18] In terms of the importance that he attaches to life, the senses, and the instincts, Lyotard has a clear Nietzschean character; his approach also implies the insolvency of the notion of the complete subject, an ever-emphasized aspect of Western philosophy. Indeed, given Lyotard's evaluations of desire, his works, *Libidinal Economy* above all, represent a total break from modern discourse and comprise destructive critiques of the discourses of theory, reason, and modernism. This means adopting a philosophy of life that affirms vitality and the free-flowing energies of life, thus abandoning the notion of a complete, thinking subject. According to Lyotard, desire in modern thought has lost its dynamism since it is exposed to oppression by various social institutions. The thing to do is to free desire from the coagulating effects of theory, fixed categories, values, and manners of thought and behavior and to ensure its free-flowing nature.[19]

Lyotard's approach is clearly anti-humanist and excludes the idea of self-representation through which the subject can understand himself. A thought of representation in the sense of the direct penetration of the self into its own consciousness and its representative capability requires presupposing a difference between the representing and the represented. Accordingly, the effort by the subject to express its essence will inevitably bring its distortion. However, for Lyotard, the libidinal essence of the subject will continuously negate the effort of comprehending it through a rationalist perspective, and it will transform such an effort into an act

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[17] "The term 'libidinal economy' expresses an attack by postmodernism against Marxism as a philosophy and a cultural project. To push further, it signifies a refusal of the rationalistic heritage of philosophy and defines a post-philosophical or anti-philosophical attitude." See Cevizci, *Paradigma Felsefe Sözlüğü*, 1021.

[18] Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, *Postmodern Teori: Eleştirel Soruşturmalar*, trans. Mehmet Küçük (Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 1998), 183-184.

[19] *Ibid.*, 189-190.

of misrepresentation.[20] Therefore, desire should be allowed to slide in its free flow through a practice of thought (neo-humanism) that does not restrict the libidinal essence of the subject with rational schemes.

Apparently, critiques of the modern epistemic subject, the idea of the rational being and truth, which began with the philosophies of life, existence, and desire of the 19th century, attained a scientific status owing to the psychoanalytical conceptualization of unconsciousness. Thus, the transition from the definition of man as a being with logos to man as a being of irrational desire and instinct became legitimized. The critiques of the philosophies of identity established by rational thought grew even more radical, and they paved the way for radically libertarian philosophies that sought to save the concept of difference from the hegemony of totalizing rational discourses.[21] At this point, it is worth noting that the abovementioned philosophies brought some justified and appropriate critiques of humanistic philosophies or manners of thought that stand out with emphasis on the idea of rational being and truth; nevertheless, they correspond to the Western metaphysical tradition in general and to the gradual radicalization of the critical aspect of modern thought in particular. Therefore, although they emphasize the break from conscious epistemic subjects, they do not imply the abandonment of the idea of the centrality of the subject (man). It may be convenient start to associate this fact with European nihilism, which Nietzsche conceptualizes as the end of 2500 years of illusion to expound the problem and to comprehend the new position of man within the practice of everyday life under capitalism.

Nietzsche defines nihilism as follows: "the self-devaluation of the highest values, the loss of purpose, and the lack of response to the question of 'why'."[22] In this regard, nihilism implies the indifference of the world in the face of value, meaning, and purpose due to the lack of value, meaning, and purpose within becoming.[23] It is even possible to define nihilism as thus: "A human condition in which,

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[20]   Todd May, *Postyapısalcı Anarşizmin Siyaset Felsefesi*, trans. Rahmi G. Öğdül (Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2000), 102-103.

[21]   Derda Küçükalp, *Siyaset Felsefesi* (Bursa: Dora Yayınları, 2016), 190.

[22]   Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967), 9.

[23]   Hüseyin Aydın, *Metafizikçi Olarak Nietzsche* (Bursa: Uludağ Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1984), 39.

looking for a principle of authority on the one hand, humans render impossible such principle and ascent to its consciousness."[24]

For Nietzsche, it is wrong to include the social worries, psychological degenerations, errors or temptations of the age within efforts to understand nihilism.[25] Similarly, Heidegger considers nihilism to be a historical process and indicates that any attitude to understand its appearances that in itself will render such an attempt negative and defensive.[26] Therefore, any effort to understand nihilism should take its origins into account. Nietzsche states that nihilism is a consequence of the faith in the categories of reason; because of the faith in reason, man has devalued this world in favor of categories that refer to a fictional world.[27] According to Nietzsche, nihilism originates from the Western tradition of metaphysics and Christian moral doctrines. The Western mind, which is composed of Greek and Christian perspective, has finally destroyed itself and left us alone with nihilism. Thus, any possible belief in truth and faith has been displaced.[28] Therefore, the end of the moral interpretation of the world is conceptualized with the metaphor of the death of God, and any discourse of humanistic transcendence has devalued itself and paved the way for nihilism, in which everything has lost its meaning.[29]

Together with modern secular humanism, the notion of the isolated subject is made an ontological point of departure for truth, value, and meaning to preclude referring to any transcendent reference. Now, all principles and values including the subject of God and the epistemic subject, which were considered in connection with the rational, undergo a complete devaluation process. The loss of belief in the categories of reason made it impossible to establish even an anthropocentric but holistic and comprehensive truth, meaning,

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[24] David Miller, *Blackwell'in Siyasal Düşünce Ansiklopedisi*, trans. Nevzat Kıraç and Bülent Peker (Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, 1995), II, 166.

[25] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 7.

[26] Martin Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1977), 66.

[27] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 13.

[28] Eric Heller, *The Importance of Nietzsche: Ten Essays* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 6-7.

[29] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 7.

and value. At this point stands the modern human, who must found a world for himself by referring to desire, passion, instinct, and the irrational, who comes to the forefront via the emphasis on individual differences, and who has no capacity to appeal to anything other than willing it. The opinions of Nietzsche concerning what man is subject to upon the death of God, which he expresses as a cry of truth ahead of his time, are noteworthy. Nietzsche calls the man subject to nihilism the "last man or last race," as though describing man in the culture of consumption, even though he was not yet aware of it. According to Nietzsche, the last race is nothing but a herd without a shepherd in which everybody wants the same and thus everybody is the same and anyone with the will to stay out of the masses is declared mad. The last man, who loses the possibility of a sane culture in which he thinks to have found happiness, has minor pleasures for the day and minor pleasures for the night. Moreover, since he has no other concern than willing, he cannot be himself in a sane manner.[30]

The practice of everyday life under capitalism brought such a being of desire in addition to science and thrived all around the world via the globalism triggered by the mass communication industry. This process corresponds to a complete coincidence or at least a parallelism with its character that evolved into the culture of consumption in the wake of various processes. Within the scope of discussions about identity and difference, modern man is expected to appear with the utmost differences; however, man is taken to a tragic ending in the life world provided by the culture of consumption since he has lost the possibility of principles, values, and meanings that could enable a notion of completion with all his differences. The problem of nihilism emerges in the most profound manner with regard to this tragic end (the postmodern world ruled by neo-humanism) in which man lives a meaningless life without any discomfort.[31]

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[30] Nietzsche, *Böyle Buyurdu Zerdüşt*, trans. A. Turan Oflazoğlu (Bursa: Asa Kitabevi, 1999), 28-29.

[31] Derda Küçükalp, "Heidegger ve Nihilizm," *Kutadgubilig: Heidegger Özel Sayısı* 30 (2016), 491.

In Lieu of Conclusion: The Culture of Consumption and the Image as the Tragic End of Man

The practice of everyday life under capitalism has evolved from times when the concept of the commodity relatively referred to concrete beings to a culture of consumption in which it is almost impossible to determine that to which this concept refers. This evolving character of capitalist practice has brought a time in which human desires are codified as the produced objects of desire at an imaginative level of being. The world of contemporary life is formed within a very complex network of components. The distinctive point of such a world is that the modes of mad consumption and imaginative being have become the only ideals within a practice of everyday life in which the loss of reality, the image and the lack of thought are in charge. Being subject to the decisiveness of the visual, modern man has had to forget to forget, as Heidegger underlines. Similarly, the ever-growing decisive power of advertisement and television separated the public sphere from the private sphere and finally prepared the end of the social in the present age.[32] Simulation replaced truth and reality and serves to conceal the absence of truth; the masses, on the other hand, function as a black hole that destroys the social by rendering it anonymous.[33]

In this context, the contemporary culture in which we live consists of a play with remnants of devastated modernity. This means man is living within a post-period or, in other words, a meaningless post-history.[34] As Baudrillard indicates, this meaninglessness originates from transforming everything into an aesthetic phenomenon. The world is enacted and turned into an image in a cosmopolitan manner, whereupon emerged an abundance of images with nothing worth seeing.[35] Thus, the distance between the signifying and the signified has collapsed, and it has become difficult to develop a transcendent or realistic perspective on things. Indeed, the overproduction of signs

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[32]   Hans Bertens, *The Idea of the Postmodern: A History* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), 150, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203359327.

[33]   Jean Baudrillard, *Sessiz Yığınların Gölgesinde: Toplumsalın Sonu*, trans. Oğuz Adanır (Ankara: Doğu Batı Yayınları, 2013), 12.

[34]   *Ibid.*, 155.

[35]   Baudrillard, *Kötülüğün Şeffaflığı: Aşırı Fenomenler Üzerine Bir Deneme*, trans. Işık Ergüden, 2nd ed. (Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 1998), 22-23.

ultimately caused them to lose the grounds by which they referred to themselves in the sense of the signified.[36]

Presently, nihilism is experienced almost as a reproduction of being and value. Together with the almost revolutionary emergence of television and cinema, memories are subject to a world of simulation and become a part of the influencing-influenced dialectic. Accordingly, the memories fragment their being and values while simultaneously reproducing them. Man is absorbed into this world of simulation, in which he can simultaneously be everybody and nobody. Positioned at an equal distance from every value, man has become an anonymous entity within the masses and is absorbed into a grey area with his entire being. In this simulation, man has pleasures, pains, loves, worries, and many various emotions that are obtained without paying any price. The ceaseless enjoyment of completely different emotions is possible only by paying their material price. Man has lost his being and values just at a time when he thought that he finally had everything that he wanted, understood everything and attained the truth. Man has been exposed to such effective images and emotions that he lost his belief in his being and values, having become alienated from his emotions and being.

The color grey has penetrated into all layers of the contemporary world, which in turn has created a new humanism that has centralized man not only as a being with reason but also with all his desires, passions, emotions, and irrational aspects. Not only being and values but also God and religion had their share from this neo-humanism. God, dismissed by the Enlightenment, is invited back to earth. Nevertheless, the arrival is not the same as the departure. The new condition was hailed as a return of God; however, new religions, which arose under these circumstances, had to gain a position to satisfy the irrational aspects of human existence via spirituality. The idea of unity was abandoned, and a new paganism, born out of plurality, came into existence.

In this experience of being, almost all possibilities within the world of possibilities became actual and followed a world in which everything is possible. Everybody sees this world, in which everybody is simultaneously good and evil, through the eyes of an

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[36]   David Ashley, *History without a Subject: The Postmodern Condition* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 5.

aesthete; consequently, everything can be simultaneously beautiful and ugly. Imitations, which replace the originals, neither disappoint nor worry man. After all, since ignorance is bliss, nobody puts himself out by striving for truth, which comes at a high price.

In the sphere of imaginative beings, the criterion of existence, once established by Descartes as "I think, therefore I am," is replaced by the motto "I appear, therefore I am." Cafeterias, restaurants, and shopping malls have become firms of the image, which instill a feeling of existence in man. In the world of images, man against the mirror is concerned with seeing himself through the eyes of others, even though he cannot see his own being. As a being at the mercy of glances, man has gained and lost his being with them. The value of man, who has no value originating from his being, is to be established only upon feelings by means of brands and places with the value of the image.

In today's world, desires and objects of desire are produced simultaneously. In all their differences, everybody runs in hurry to the same objects of desire dyed in their own colors. Great capitalists, as though they were a modern Rumi, are humanist merchants of a culture of consumption, calling "come, whatever you are." The same object of desire is served in green to Muslims, in red to communists and in black to hip-hoppers. The differences vanish within the masses in which everyone desires the same things and nobody actually is; consequently, one has lost all possibility of becoming himself.

Presently, man must differ from others with his perfume by inventing perfumes that oppress the human scent. Even the spleen, the only possibility of hearing the sound of being and of opening ourselves to truth, is tagged as depression and stress, whereupon the final door to being is shut in our face. Having forgotten the meaning of being, man has also forgotten what he forgot within fast-flowing time, which renders him late for everything. The loss of meaning in every expressed thing occurs by means of reproduction, the peculiar form of destruction in our times. Knowledge is obtained in the form of information, whereupon truths, which require huge existential prices, became a consumable object that can be rapidly used up by the masses. Wise words can only bring momentary emotions despite their highly influential dosage. These words are snatched from existential planes that create such wisdom, are multiplied and left to

the consumption of the masses within the influencing-influenced dialectic in a world of simulation that is completely disconnected from reality.

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ABŪ MANṢŪR AL-MĀTURĪDĪ'S UNIVERSALIST INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM

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Abstract

This article, composed of three main sections, analyzes the views of the founder of the Māturīdī school of Islamic Sunnī theology, Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944), that directly concern or can be legitimately associated with nationalism. The first part will discuss al-Māturīdī's theoretical framework concerning the relation of superiority among the Muslim nations by examining his arguments about the superiority of man over the angels and that of Adam over Satan/the Devil (*Iblīs*). It will also discuss the Arab-*ʿAjam* (non-Arab) relationship, a context in which the Imām intensifies his discussion of nationalism, and I will unpack his perspective on the relationship between the Arabs and the non-Arabs in terms of superiority. The second part will examine relationship between the Qurʾān and Arabic *qua* the language of the Qurʾān as well as the possibility and probability of the Qurʾān being revealed in any language other than Arabic. The third part will focus on the relationship between the wording and meaning in the Qurʾān as well as between translations of the Qurʾān and its Arabic original. In the conclusion, I will suggest the relevance of al-Māturīdī's Qurʾānic hermeneutics to the present situation of the Turks as a non-Arab Muslim nation vis-à-vis the question of better understanding the meaning and essence of the Qurʾān.

Key Words: The Qurʾān, al-Māturīdī, Arabic, non-Arabic, nationalism.

I. Superiority among the Kinds of Beings and among the Muslim Nations

Al-Māturīdī discusses the relationship of superiority among the Muslim nations on the basis of the Aristotelian categorization of beings into substance and accident, the principal scientific paradigm of the ancient and medieval ages. For al-Māturīdī, neither nations nor any other beings or kinds of beings are superior to one another *in substance* or *substantially*. However, one can legitimately talk of the existence of superiority among beings with respect to certain properties or qualities, that is, *in accidents* or *accidentally*. The Imām treats this latter type of superiority through the relationship between man and the angels on the one hand and between Adam and Iblīs or the Devil on the other.

1. The Relationship of Superiority between Angels and Man and between Adam and the Devil

Man, in revealed religious traditions, shares the domain of rational beings with angels, *jinn*s, and satans, the last being non-believer *jinn*s according to Islamic theology. In these traditions, man is compared to angels and is said to grow angelic inasmuch as he acquires good attributes and moral virtues and adheres to them and is likened to Satan or is said to become satanic inasmuch as evil attributes prevail over him to the extent of becoming his nature, as it were. Thus, angels have always stood for every kind of goodness and beauty as well as obedience to God, i.e., piety. Satan, on the other hand, has always symbolized all kinds of evil and disobedience to God. The relationship between man, angels, and Satan is thus epitomized by the story of creation as it occurs in the Qurʾān, in which Satan or the Devil tempts Adam and Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit with the promise that they will become immortal or angels once they do so.[1] Muslim theologians discussed which of these three kinds of rational beings is superior. Al-Māturīdī also addresses the same question in interpreting various Qurʾānic verses in his exegetical *magnum opus*, *Taʾwīlāt Ahl al-sunnah*.

Al-Māturīdī sees no superiority among these three types of beings with respect to substance; he refuses such a relation of substantial superiority, at least between man and angels. In the context of the

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[1] Q 2:35-36. For the Biblical version of the story, see *Genesis*, 2:16-3:19.

interpretation of the verse, "فَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَاكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ: if it had been His will, He could indeed have guided you all,"[2] he quotes the following remarks of the famous scholar of the second generation of Islam, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728): "If God had willed, He would have prevailed and overpowered the human beings, incapacitating them to commit a sin, as He did to the angels. God has created the latter with an obedient nature; therefore, they never commit a sin."[3]

Al-Māturīdī goes on to quote al-Baṣrī, who places the angels above the messengers, prophets, and all human beings on the basis of the assumption that the angels are by nature obliged to obey God (i.e., instinctually) and cannot fail to do so. Afterwards, al-Māturīdī discards al-Baṣrī's position as contradictory because al-Māturīdī holds that one who is compelled instinctually to be obedient cannot be superior to one who acts with his free will despite the carnal desires rooted in him and in spite of the wants that overcome him and prevent him from acting in obedience to God.[4] In theological and philosophical terminology, al-Māturīdī maintains that volitional action is superior to instinctual action and that a volitional agent is superior to an agent that is limited by instinct. Therefore, he argues, it is clearly contradictory to claim that the angels, on the grounds of their quality of instinctuality (which implies inferiority), should be superior to human beings on the basis of their attribute of volitionality (which entails superiority).[5] The Imām, nevertheless, fails to conclude his argumentation decisively: either the angels are inferior to men because of the instinctual nature of their action or they act by free will because of their superiority to men.

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[2] Q 6:149.

[3] Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Māturīdī al-Samarqandī, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm al-musammá Taʾwīlāt Ahl al-sunnah*, ed. Fāṭimah Yūsuf al-Khiyamī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah Nāshirūn, 2004), II, 189 (Q 6:149).

[4] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, II, 189 (Q 6:149).

[5] This view finds its roots in al-Māturīdī's conception of the God-world relation and his critique of the deist philosophers' approach to this relation. See, al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, ed. Bekir Topaloğlu and Muhammed Aruçi (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir & Istanbul: Maktabat al-Irshād, 2007), 108, 184. For a detailed analysis of this subject, see also my recent monograph: Tahir Uluç, *İmâm Mâturîdî'nin Âlemin Ontolojik Yapısı Hakkında Filozofları Eleştirisi* (Konya: Aybil Yayınevi, 2016), 93 and on.

He continues to quote al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī regarding the relationship between angels and human beings: "God made the angels superior [to humans] through the substance and origin [out of which they are created]."[6] However, for al-Māturīdī, the assumption that the angels are superior through their substance is wrong on both rational and scriptural bases. It is wrong rationally because a thing cannot be superior to a substance out of which he is also created because of that very substance.[7] If we understand his words correctly,[8] his argumentation includes the following ambiguity: Al-Baṣrī argues that the substance and origin out of which the angels are created – Muslim and Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal relates a prophetic tradition saying that the substance in question is light – is superior to that out of which man was created – which many Qurʾānic verses specify to be soil – and therefore, angels are superior to human beings. On the other hand, al-Māturīdī considers this argumentation to be problematic, holding that two things formed of the same substance cannot be superior to each other based on their substance. Nevertheless, al-Baṣrī does not clarify that the substance of angels is the same as that of human beings. Neither does al-Māturīdī himself make such a claim. Therefore, al-Māturīdī's argumentation seems to be problematic from this perspective. Alternatively, by the words substance (*jawhar*) and origin (*aṣl*), he may mean the universal and common matter of all beings rather than the specific or particular matter of each thing.

As for the scriptural evidence al-Māturīdī invokes to refute al-Baṣrī's position, this comprises the following verses: "For God says that something is superior by its substance only in connection with nice and good deeds, as it occurs in the following verses: "See you not how God sets forth a parable? – A goodly word like a goodly tree."[9] "From the land that is clean and good, by the will of its Cherisher, springs up produce, rich after its kind."[10] "To Him, mount up all words of purity."[11]

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[6]   Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, II, 189 (Q 6:149).

[7]   *Ibid*.

[8]   The phrase in question reads as follows: ".فلا يَجوزُ أَنْ يكونَ لأَحدٍ بالجَوهَرِ نَفْسِهِ فَضْلٌ على "ذَلكَ الجَوهَرِ

[9]   Q 14:24.

[10]   Q 7:58.

[11]   Q 35:10.

What al-Māturīdī means to establish by these Qurʾānic passages is that the tree, the word, and the land are described as good and beautiful – or conversely, as evil and ugly – on the basis of their certain features and not because of their substance.

Al-Māturīdī holds that the beings with different substances are not superior or inferior to one another purely on the basis of their substance because, in his opinion, God holds no one superior to another in substance; on the contrary, He holds them superior to one another on the basis of their actions.[12]

To recapitulate, the Imām lays down the following three principles in connection with these Qurʾānic verses:

1) Nothing is superior to anything else by its substance because God does not hold anything superior to anything else on such grounds.

2) Beings acquire superiority to each other through their volitionally acquired features, not through their inborn or instinctual qualities.

3) Superiority is acquired through volitional and good deeds.

In a context in which one discusses superiority among beings in general and among human beings in particular, the question of what kind of relationship exists between men and women in these terms may come to mind, attracting particular attention in the present age in which the Western ideology of feminism may resonate with Muslim societies to a certain extent. Thus, one may ask whether al-Māturīdī, who rejects any kind of substantial superiority among beings, rejects also any notion of superiority between the male and female genders. In clearer terms, does he maintain this egalitarian attitude vis-à-vis the thorny issue of gender in Islam? In this context, I shall focus on his interpretations of the following two Qurʾānic verses, which might be relevant in this context:

1) "وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ": And women have rights as they have responsibilities, fairly; but men have a degree [of superiority] to them."[13]

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[12] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, II, 189 (Q 6:149).

[13] Q 2:228.

This passage is part of the Qurʾānic verse laying down the procedure for divorce, clarifying that women have rights as well as responsibilities but that men hold a degree of superiority over women. Al-Māturīdī relates the following five views regarding the nature of that superiority: "The superiority in question is the fact that: 1) men hold the authority of divorcing, not women; 2) men have principality and authority; 3) Allah has made men superior to women through goods and combat; 4) men have the merits of custodianship, testimony, and intelligence that women lack; 5) men are superior to women in rights and through the dowry that they give to women."[14]

Upon citing these five opinions with the modality of *qīla*, alluding to his disapproval of them or at least the neutrality of his position with respect to them, he expresses his own opinion: "The one degree of superiority that belongs to men is the fact that men have authority among women (*al-mulk fīhā*), that they are superior to women in rights, and that men are made custodians over women."[15]

One can hardly ignore the patriarchal tone in al-Māturīdī's discourse on the gender relationship, but his following remarks in interpreting a related Qurʾānic verse add a counterbalancing hue to that tone:

(2" الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ: Men are the custodians of women because Allah has made men superior to women and because men support women from their means."[16]

First, al-Māturīdī specifies that this verse should be viewed within the context of the marital relationship between men and women, clarifying that husbands are specifically the custodians of their wives and not over women absolutely, mentioning as evidence for this opinion the end of the verse, "because men support women from their means." Of special interest to our discussion is that al-Māturīdī maintains that this verse supports the validity of the wedding contract; thus, the marriage of Muslim women without the existence or presence of their legal guardians (*walī*) and custodians lies in clear contradistinction to al-Imām al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/819), who asserts the

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[14]   Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, I, 181 (Q 2:228).

[15]   *Ibid*.

[16]   Q 4:34.

invalidity of such marriages on the basis of the same verse. Al-Māturīdī goes on to say that,

> …[t]he superiority of men as pointed out in the verse is the superiority of creation in that God made men the folk of profit and trade, performing various professions and fulfilling the needs of women. It is in this respect that men are custodians of women. On the other hand, God made women weak and incapable of running businesses and working in the professions and fulfilling their needs; men are custodians of women, caretakers of their affairs, fulfillers of their needs, and their maintainers. It is for this reason that God made it incumbent upon men to take care of the affairs of women. *Though God has made this task incumbent upon men, if women are put in charge of their own affairs and fulfill their own needs, such as trading and buying drinks, these dealings are valid and lawful for them. The matter of the wedding contract is compared to this: Though men are the custodians of women, if the latter are given custodianship regarding the wedding contract and thus exercise their own custodianship [and marry by themselves], this [marriage] is valid and lawful just as their other dealings are valid and lawful.*[17]

We have deliberately italicized these remarks by al-Māturīdī to suggest that one may consider these contradictory to the previous remarks in the same passage because he, on the one hand, describes women as incapable *in creation* of taking care of their affairs and of fulfilling their needs by themselves, and on the other, says that their transactions are valid and lawful as they try to meet their basic needs, validating their wedding contract by analogy with their commercial contracts. In fact, this evident contradiction stems from a deeper tension between the Ḥanafite legal opinion that allows a Muslim woman to exercise her own custodianship regarding marriage and the prevailing patriarchal attitude in Medieval as well as contemporary Muslim societies. Nevertheless, if one says that women are weak and incapable *in creation* of taking care of themselves but that it is lawful for them if they do take care of themselves, we can rightfully take that "incapability in creation" as related to the social roles that have been assigned to women rather than as an "innate incapacity" on their part. Overall, al-Māturīdī's remarks on the gender

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[17]   Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, I, 413 (Q 4:34).

relationship do not contradict his overall egalitarian attitude among beings; on the contrary, he is consistent with his general outlook on this thorny issue.

We will observe, as we proceed, that the three principles above have many ramifications in the Māturīdian theological and anthropological thought. On the other hand, al-Māturīdī revisits the debate over whether human beings or angels are superior in connection with the interpretation of the verse, " وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا : We have honored the sons of Adam above a great part of our creation."[18] However, this time he says that we cannot judge the superiority of one over the other because we have no knowledge about that, nor do we need such knowledge, and this issue exclusively belongs to God and is none of our business.[19]

Once he has said this, he makes the following remarks relying on the last of the three principles mentioned above:

> It is not permissible to put the most wicked and sinful human beings on a par with the angels, who never disobey God even for the blink of an eye, and to say that the former are superior to the latter. Yet if one is to make such a comparison, one can compare the angels only with the prophets, messengers, and pious human beings in general. Thus, one can say that some humans are superior to some angels. However, as we have already pointed out, the verdict regarding this issue pertains solely to God and we have no say about it.[20]

On the other hand, to establish the superiority of Adam to the angels, al-Māturīdī invokes the 31st verse of the Sūrat al-Baqarah, وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا : And He taught Adam all the names," and the 34th verse of the same Sūrah, وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا : And behold, We said to the angels, 'Bow down to Adam!', and they bowed down." Al-Māturīdī takes the Qurʾānic report that God taught Adam the names, and the angels learned the names from him as a means through which he was made superior to the angels. He also cites the second verse for the superiority of Adam to the angels insofar as he is made the locus or direction of the angels' prostration. However, he does not fail to clarify that in this case, Adam was simply acting as a place of prostration, a place on which the Muslims place their

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[18]   Q 17:70.

[19]   Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, III, 179 (Q 17:70).

[20]   *Ibid*.

forehead during the ritual prayer; otherwise, God is the only being to whom the prostration is actually dedicated. He adds, as another conclusion to be derived from this verse, that prostration is not an act of worshipping in itself.[21] We will further examine al-Māturīdī's conception of superiority on the basis of knowledge and function as we proceed.

We have already stated that the *jinn*s in general and Iblīs in particular are another kind of rational being with whom humans are compared in terms of superiority. Al-Māturīdī treats this subject in one of the Qurʾānic contexts mentioning the disobedience of Iblīs to the divine command to bow down to Adam: " قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ: (Iblīs) said, 'I am better than him; You created me from fire, and You created him from clay.'"[22]

I should like to emphasize two points in this passage:

1) Iblīs views himself as superior to Adam.

2) He bases his claim of superiority on the fact that he is created from fire, whereas Adam is created from soil.

Here, Iblīs takes the following two points as certain, although they are in fact in need of being demonstrated: First, the superiority in substance of fire to soil and second, that the superior does not bow down to the inferior. Regarding the first point, al-Māturīdī says the following:

Iblīs – may God damn him – thought that since the nature of fire is ascending and highness and that of soil is descending and lowness, the one that is of the first nature is better than the other that is of the second. Therefore, Iblīs said that he was better than Adam and that God created him from fire and Adam from soil. Alternatively, he said so because all things improve and grow ripe through fire.[23]

However, for al-Māturīdī, this reasoning of Iblīs is erroneous as he goes on to argue,

If Iblīs, the God-damned, considered well, he would come to realize that clay is superior to fire because fire is from soil, which is like the

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21 Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, I, 34 (Q 2:31).

22 Q 38:76.

23 Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, IV, 285 (Q 38:76).

origin and mother of all other things. This is so because the improvement and ripening of things comes true through fire but their first beginning is from soil, just like that of a son from the begetting mother.[24]

In conclusion, to al-Māturīdī, soil is superior to fire. With respect to the origin of fire from soil, I assume that al-Māturīdī means that such sources of fire as wood or coal originate from the earth.

Regarding the second point, al-Māturīdī holds that God may make the superior subordinate to the inferior as a kind of divine testing for both sides and because of a certain wisdom in his knowledge. For this reason, God commanded Iblīs to bow down to Adam; however, the former disobeyed this divine order because he failed to see that the bowing-down to the inferior by the superior contains a wisdom and a truth.[25]

One can recapitulate the discussion that al-Māturīdī has carried on so far regarding the relation of superiority between man and the angels on the one hand and between man and Iblīs on the other as follows: It is not correct to rest the claim that an angel is superior to man on the former's substantial superiority and natural compulsion to obey God because no substance whatsoever is superior to others. Thus, no claim of superiority for the angels can rely on such a reason, and al-Māturīdī makes no decision on whether the angels are superior or inferior to men on these grounds. Nor can their superiority rest on their natural compulsion to obedience because, for al-Māturīdī, the good actions of one who acts in such a way by fighting the opposite powers drenched in its nature and by displaying a free will is superior to the good action of one who acts in such a way simply according to his instinctual nature and cannot do otherwise. Al-Māturīdī goes only that far, shying deliberately away from drawing the logical conclusion that although the angels are possessed of free will (i.e., the power and capacity of disobeying and sinning), they always obey God. However, al-Māturīdī keeps silent about this, saying that we do not have the knowledge to decide upon this.

Overall, al-Māturīdī thinks that a substance is not superior because of its essence but because of the good deeds and actions originating

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24   *Ibid.*

25   *Ibid.*

from it. In addition, God may make the superior subordinate to the inferior for the reason and wisdom of testing both sides.

2. The Relationship of Superiority between Arab and non-Arab Muslims

Writings and discourses whose titles include the words "Islam" and "nationalism" in various combinations discuss the position of nationalism in Islam almost exclusively on the basis of the following Qurʾānic verse and the Prophetic tradition:

> O mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. Verily the most superior of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things.[26]

> O men! Your Lord is one and your father is one. The Arab is not superior to the non-Arab, nor is the non-Arab to the Arab, nor is the black to the red and the red to the black only through the fearing of God.[27]

I should like to add that this tradition occurs in the Farewell Sermon of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) but is not included by al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and Muslim (d. 261/875) in their *Ṣaḥīḥ*s but is by Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) in his *Musnad*.

Al-Māturīdī gives approximately the same explanations of the verse quoted above as the other exegetes do: since all human beings are created from a single pair of a male and a female, they all come from the same ancestry and therefore there is no difference among them in this respect. Therefore, it is vain and meaningless to boast about one's ancestry and seek for superiority to other people based on this.[28]

Nevertheless, one needs to keep in mind that along with the material quoted above, many other Qurʾānic verses and Prophetic

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[26] Q 49:13.

[27] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal al-Shaybānī, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, ed. Shuʿayb al-Arnāʾūṭ et al. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 2001), XXXVIII, 474 (no. 23489).

[28] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, IV, 548 (Q 49:13).

traditions are related or can be legitimately associated with the fact and ideology called "nationalism." For instance, al-Māturīdī sets forth most of his views concerning the issue in connection with the following verse: "وَلَقَدِ اخْتَرْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ: And We chose them above the nations upon knowledge."[29]

I would like to draw attention to two points in this verse:

1) God chose one nation above the others.

2) That nation is the sons of Israel.

As has been clarified by the verse quoted above, if all men are generated from the same ancestors and if there is no superiority or inferiority among them with respect to their genealogy, how and why did God choose one nation above the others? Another issue is that the Qur'ān itself describes the sons of Israel as the group that is most hostile to the Muslims, together with the nonbelievers.[30] In addition, does this not play into the hands of the sons of Israel, especially the Zionist ones, in their claim to be "God's Chosen Nation"?

Classical exegetes of the Qur'ān such as al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272), and Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) are completely aware of the questions and problems which we have mentioned, with the possible difference that they did not raise these issues as clearly as we have done. They generally tend to think that those sons of Israel who were said to be chosen above others were exclusively those who lived in a certain limited period of time and that those above whom the sons of Israel were chosen were also exclusively those who lived in the same limited period; thus the issue is that a certain group of people was chosen above another certain group of people and not that all sons of Israel who are born until the end of time are chosen above all others to come until the same time.

The exegetes certainly alleviated the problem by narrowing down the scope of the verse but could not solve it completely. For in that case, the question rises why God chose *that* generation of the sons of Israel above *those* other people. In an effort to answer this question, al-Māturīdī opens the door for a more recent and contemporary problem. I will first discuss al-Māturīdī's answer and then discuss the problem that I think his answer gives rise to.

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[29]   Q 44:32.

[30]   Q 5:82.

The verse in question writes that the sons of Israel are chosen above *the* other people "upon knowledge," and al-Māturīdī focuses his discussion on the phrase "عَلَى عِلْمٍ (upon knowledge)," which has been, as he reports, interpreted in more ways than one by the exegetes:

1) God chose *the* sons of Israel upon knowledge; that is, because of knowledge. God gave *the* sons of Israel that knowledge which He did not give to *the* others that He might disclose the superiority and honor of *knowledge* to all creatures (*al-ʿālamīn*; literally, the worlds). This is the same as saying that He taught Adam the names of things to establish Adam's superiority over the angels, who were not endowed with the knowledge of the names of things!

2) God held them superior because He *knew* the things and reasons that are possessed by *the* sons of Israel. *The* other people do not have knowledge of such reasons and meanings. Hence, they might have been held superior to *the* other people because of those reasons and meanings.

3) It is upon knowledge (i.e., because of knowledge) that God held *the* sons of Israel superior. He led *the* others to that knowledge and thus *the* sons of Israel were held superior because they taught *the* others those things that they needed.[31]

It is clear that the first and third of these interpretations are similar; God gave the sons of Israel a certain kind of knowledge that He did not give to *the* others, through which the sons of Israel acquire a privileged status and gain superiority over the others. In the second interpretation, God makes the sons of Israel superior to the others because He knows of a property found in the former. Although these three interpretations are somewhat different, all say that the sons of Israel were held superior not because of their race or substance but rather because they were endowed with a property, i.e., knowledge.

Al-Māturīdī finds the third interpretation preferable and defines the relation between Arab and non-Arab Muslims (*mawālī*) on the basis of having knowledge and teaching it to others. As he says that the sons of Israel were held superior to the others because the former taught the latter what the latter needed, he compares this to the

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[31]   Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, IV, 461 (Q 44:32).

superiority of the teacher to the pupil and proceeds to make the remarks that open the door for the problem to which we have already referred:

> As it is said, The Arabs are superior to the non-Arabs because the latter need the former for learning their [Arabic] language and some other things they need. The Arabs required that superiority due to the need of the non-Arabs for them. In the same manner, the tribe of Quraysh is superior to other Arabs because the latter need the former for learning some things, and the Quraysh attains this status because they were held superior to others by means of that knowledge. Thus, Allah made other people need the sons of Israel for accessing the knowledge of some things; it might have been for this reason that they required having superiority and being held superior to *the* others.[32]

In conclusion, al-Māturīdī asserts that the Arabs are superior to the non-Arabs and that the Quraysh are superior to other Arab tribes because of their Arabic knowledge and in this particular respect. To emphasize this point again, this is not an essential superiority; on the contrary, it is contingent on the knowledge of Arabic as a means to knowledge of Islam. Therefore, other nations can acquire the same position if they acquire the same knowledge. Al-Māturīdī makes remarks to this effect in interpreting the following Qurʾānic verse: " وَإِن تَتَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَالَكُمُ :If you turn back from Him, He will substitute in your stead another people; then, they would not be like you!"[33]

This verse includes a divine threat if the Muslims should turn from God, He will substitute in their stead a new people. However, the exegetes disagreed in their identification of the "you" and the "another people" occurring in the verse as well as in interpreting whether this remained just a warning and threat or had occurred as a historical fact. Al-Māturīdī summarizes these views in the following remarks:

1) Some asserted that those who turned back were the Meccans and that God substituted in their stead another people, the Medinans. Al-Māturīdī considers this interpretation to be far-fetched because the

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Sūrat Muḥammad containing this verse was revealed in Medina. Thus, the phrase "if you turn back" cannot address the Meccans.

2) Others said that God threatened the Medinans that if they were to turn back, He would substitute in their stead another people who were more obedient to Him. However, the Medinans did not turn back, neither did God bring another people in their stead.

3) Some also said that the verse could be understood in two ways:

a) The first: "If you turn back from Him, He will substitute in your stead another people;" that is, you did not turn back, neither did He bring another people in your stead.

b) They turned back and God substituted in their stead a group of people from the tribes of al-Nukhaʿ, Aḥmas, and Kindah. Regarding those who turned back, they were the tribes of Ḥanẓalah, Asad, and Ghaṭafān.[34]

Citing the following narrations, al-Māturīdī concludes that

1) God's threat to bring another people materialized.

2) Those in whose stead God brought another people were the Arabs in general.

3) The substitutes were the *ʿAjam*; i.e., the non-Arabs in general or the Persians in particular.

As will be explained in connection with the interpretation of another verse below, the root meaning of the word *ʿAjam* in Arabic is tongueless or dumb. The Arabs called the non-Arab people by this word because they could not speak Arabic at all or well. Thus, the word in its root meaning referred to one who fails to speak Arabic fluently or one who does not speak Arabic as his or her native language. Later, it came to refer to non-Arabs in general and to Persians in particular. In the following narrations, the term seems to be used in both meanings. Al-Māturīdī talks about them in the following way:

1) When the Prophet Muḥammad was asked about the identity of the "another nation" referred to in the verse, "If you turn back from Him, He will substitute in your stead another people," he stroked the

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[34]   Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, IV, 516 (Q 47:38).

thigh of Salmān al-Fārisī (i.e., Salmān of Persia or Salmān the Persian) and said, "I swear by God, who holds my soul in His hand, that if religion were hung to the Pleiades (*Thurayyā*), even then, some men from the Persians would attain it."

2) Abū Hurayrah is said to have related that The Prophet (peace be upon him) recited the verse, "If you turn back from Him, He will substitute in your stead another people." His Companions asked, "Who are they?" The Messenger of God stroked Salmān's shoulder and said: "This one and his people."

3) It is said in another tradition: "I swear by God who holds my soul that if Faith were hung to the Pleiades (*Thurayyā*), a group of men from the Persians would get it."

4) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "I visioned a flock of black sheep, after which a flock of white sheep appeared to mix up with the black one, and they all followed me." The Companions said, "O Messenger of God! (peace be upon him) How did you interpret your vision?" He said, "The ʿ*Ajams* (non-Arabs in general or the Persians) shall share with you in your religion and progeny." They said, "The ʿ*Ajams*, o Messenger of God?!" He said, "If faith were hung to the Pleiades (*Thurayyā*), a group of men from the ʿ*Ajam* would get it. The happiest of the ʿ*Ajam* through faith are the Persians (*ahl Fāris*)."[35]

Regarding the authenticity of these four narrations, I should like to say that the portion with its variants "If religion or faith were hung to the Pleiades (*Thurayyā*), the Persians would get it" occurs in al-Bukhārī's[36] and Muslim's[37] *Ṣaḥīḥ*s and in al-Tirmidhī's[38] (d. 279/892) *Sunan*. Thus, we can say that this narration is authentic according to the standards of the science of *ḥadīth*. As for the fact that al-Māturīdī cites these narrations with all their variants, one should note that almost all classical exegetes of the Qurʾān, including al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, and Ibn Kathīr, quote the first three narrations listed above. However, the part describing the vision in the fourth narration does not occur in other exegetical books. However, al-Ḥākim al-Nīsabūrī

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[35] *Ibid.*

[36] Al-Bukhārī, "al-Tafsīr," 62 (Sūrat al-Jumʿah).

[37] Muslim, "Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥābah," 230.

[38] Al-Tirmidhī, "Tafsīr al-Qurʾān," 63 (Sūrat al-Jumʿah).

(d. 405/1014) cites this narration in his *al-Mustadrak*,[39] which is known among the scholars of *ḥadīth* to include narrations that are excluded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim from their *Ṣaḥīḥ*s even though they meet their standards of authenticity. Thus, one can say that the part in question is also authentic according to the criteria of the *ḥadīth* scholars.

It is now appropriate to ask the following critical question, "What does al-Māturīdī mean by citing the reports praising the Persians in the context of the interpretation of that verse, in almost all variants?" First, as we have already noted, such reports were made before al-Māturīdī, who just cited these. Second, it is not tenable to hold that by mentioning these reports, he might have wished to exalt the Persians out of nationalistic feelings because recent studies about al-Māturīdī's biography, though with some measure of caution, say that he was most likely Turkish, and not Persian.[40] On the other hand, as a scholar who has read al-Māturīdī's *Ta'wīlāt* from the beginning to the end and who has studied his *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* very carefully, I should say that I have encountered no statement by al-Māturīdī about whether he is an Arab, Persian, or Turk. However, in departing from the linguistic characteristics especially of the *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, modern scholars generally assume that Arabic was not his native language.[41] We know that Samarqand, in which he was born and grew up, was heavily populated by the Turks; however, Persians also existed there albeit to a much lesser degree. In addition, recent studies describe al-Māturīdī as a significant representative of the legal, intellectual, and theological tradition, which was strongly related to the Turks in the region as well as to the later Turkish polities in Turkestan, Khurasān,

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[39] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥākim al-Nīsābūrī, *al-Mustadrak ʿalá l-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, ed. Muṣṭafá ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1990), IV, 437 (no. 8194).

[40] For example, see Bekir Topaloğlu, "Ebû Mansûr el-Mâturîdî," in *Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Açıklamalı Tercüme* [Turkish translation of *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*], trans. Bekir Topaloğlu (Ankara: İSAM Yayınları, 2014), 17 and on; Ahmet Ak, *Büyük Türk Âlimi Mâturîdî ve Mâturîdîlik* (Istanbul: Bayrak Matbaası, 2008), 34-36.

[41] Ulrich Rudolph, *al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology in Samarqand*, trans. Rodrigo Adem (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2015), 125 and on.

the Middle East, and Anatolia.[42] Therefore, al-Māturīdī's mention of the reports above must be related to his universalist understanding and interpretation of Islam.

On the other hand, one can observe that al-Māturīdī focuses on the part of the narration informing his readers that the non-Arabs or the Persians share the Arabs' religion and progeny. Then, al-Māturīdī makes the following interesting remarks:

> If this report is authentic, it can be mentioned as evidence equalizing the non-Arabs to the Arabs because the Prophet said, 'they will share with you in your progeny.' Once they shared with the Arabs in their progeny, the non-Arabs became equal to the Arabs. The statement 'they will share with you in your progeny' possibly means that the non-Arabs will share with the Arabs in their progeny because they will marry the Arabs and have children with them.[43]

Al-Māturīdī makes the equality of the non-Arabs to the Arabs conditional upon the authenticity of that report. However, the Qurʾānic verse and the Prophetic tradition quoted at the beginning of this section clarify that all men come from a single set of ancestors, that superiority is obtained through piety, and that the Arab is not superior to the non-Arab except through piety. Furthermore, while this report states that non-Arabs shall share the Arabs' religion and progeny, al-Māturīdī rests the equality of the non-Arabs with the Arabs on the bond of kinship rather than the tie of faith. Thus, he contradicts the principle that he laid down in connection with the interpretation of the verse quoted above and thus clearly contradicts himself.

Nevertheless, one should bear in mind that although the Qurʾānic verses and the Prophetic traditions stipulate the principle that all people have the same ancestry, that superiority is only obtained through the fear of God, and that the Arab is superior to the non-Arab through the fear of God or through God-consciousness (*al-taqwā*)

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[42]   See Sönmez Kutlu, "Bilinen ve Bilinmeyen Yönleriyle İmâm Mâturîdî," in *İmam Mâturîdî ve Maturidilik: Tarihî Arka Plan, Hayatı, Eserleri, Fikirleri ve Maturidilik Mezhebi*, ed. Sönmez Kutlu (Ankara: Kitâbiyât, 2003), 18 and on; Wilferd F. Madelung, "Maturidiliğin Yayılışı ve Türkler," trans. Muzaffer Tan, in *İmam Mâturîdî ve Maturidilik: Tarihî Arka Plan, Hayatı, Eserleri, Fikirleri ve Maturidilik Mezhebi*, ed. Sönmez Kutlu (Ankara: Kitâbiyât, 2003), 305 and on.

[43]   Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, IV, 516 (Q 47:38).

and *vice-versa*, in reality and in practice, the Arabs have always tended to think that they have a privileged status among the Muslim peoples because of the assumption that Arabic is the "language of the Qurʾān." More interestingly, this sense of privileged status is found (sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly but always ironically) among the learned rather than the grassroots. Therefore, al-Māturīdī's recourse to intermarriage as a means of equalizing the non-Arabs to the Arabs shows the existence of such perceptions of superiority even in an area such as Samarqand, which is far from Arab lands. For this reason, al-Māturīdī tries to counterbalance this perception of superiority by mentioning glad-tidings about the non-Arabs from the tongue of the Prophet Muḥammad.

I would like to cite a striking anecdote as example for the perception of superiority by scholars of Arab lineage. The exegete al-Qurṭubī quotes the writer of the famous Arabic lexicon *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, al-Jawharī of Otrar, Turkestan (d. 393/1003), in connection with the interpretation of the word *al-shuʿūb* (الشُّعُوب), which occurs in the following section of the verse quoted above and is translated as "nations."

> We ... made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other:[44] "*Shiʿb* (الشَّعْبُ) are those people who ramified out of the Arab and non-Arab tribes. The plural is *shuʿūb* (الشُّعُوب). And *al-Shuʿūbiyyah* (الشُّعُوبِيَّة) is a sect whose members do not regard the Arabs as superior to the non-Arabs."[45]

It seems that the perception of Arab superiority to non-Arabs was so deeply rooted that one is easily stigmatized as sectarian simply if one refuses to confess – in conformity with the very Qurʾānic principle – that the Arabs are superior to the non-Arabs!

Before proceeding to the next section, I want to note that al-Māturīdī's aim in suggesting that what principally constitutes the Qurʾān is the universal meaning and not the local Arabic wording and that the Qurʾān can therefore be recited in another language, such as

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[44] Q 49:13.

[45] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Farḥ al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān (Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī)*, ed. Aḥmad al-Bardūnī and Ibrāhīm Aṭfīsh (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1964), XVI, 344.

Persian, is to allow Islam to cross the boundaries of Arabs and Arabic and to reveal its universal character.

II. The Possibility of the Qurʾān Being Revealed in a Language Other than Arabic

The Qurʾān describes itself as a book that is revealed by God in Arabic.[46] There is no essential problem with this because the Qurʾān, like any other book, should have and be in a language, a human language, because it addresses human beings. However, some of the verses noting that the Qurʾān is revealed in Arabic continue, "... لَعَلَّهُمْ / *laʿallahum* (it is hoped that they ...)" or "... لَعَلَّكُمْ / *laʿallakum* (it is hoped that you ...)." This phrase, called *adāt al-tarajjī* (i.e., the preposition of hoping or expectation) is used to express the notion that something is desired or expected to happen. The phrase should be translated as "it is hoped ..." according to its context. Thus, the four Qurʾānic verses noting that the Qurʾān is revealed in Arabic should be understood and interpreted in the following way: The Qurʾān is revealed in Arabic, "it is hoped that they may fear God"[47] or "it is hoped that you may understand."[48] Alas, many translations of the Qurʾān in many languages gives this preposition – to me wrongly – a meaning of justification or explanation and render the verse – with small differences and in approximate terms – as "We revealed the Qurʾān in Arabic in order that you may understand."

Now, what is the difference between these two interpretations and what kind of problem does the second interpretation cause? The problem, directly, is the fact that the Qurʾān was given to all people, not to the Arabs alone. When the Qurʾān addresses the Arabs as one of its target audiences, the interpretation "We revealed the Qurʾān in Arabic in order that you may understand" is reasonable, but the interpretation is also problematic when the other nations are at issue because it does not seem to be logical – at least to me – to transmit a book to a person specifically in a foreign language in order that he may understand.

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[46] For the Qurʾānic verses clarifying the Arabic nature of the Qurʾān, see Q 20:113; Q 26:198-199; Q 12:2; Q 39:28; Q 41:1, 41-42; Q 43:1.

[47] Q 20:113; Q 39:28.

[48] Q 12:2; Q 43:1.

Conversely, if we understand the verse as "We sent down the Qurʾān in Arabic, and it is hoped that you may understand," it makes sense for both Arab and non-Arabs – although not in the same manner. This is such that an Arab audience understands the Qurʾān at a linguistic level without an extra lingual effort because Arabic is his native language and the non-Arab audience understands the Qurʾān by learning Arabic or the Arab teaches them the Qurʾān in their own language by learning their language. In brief, while the interpretation "We sent down the Qurʾān in Arabic in order that you may understand" gives the Arabs a special status and discards the non-Arabs as the audience of the Qurʾān, the understanding "We sent down the Qurʾān in Arabic, and it is hoped that you may understand" both conforms and contributes to the universal character of the Qurʾān. Hence, the latter approach allows different nations with different languages to understand the Qurʾān and confirms the fact that the Qurʾān addresses all humanity.

Having noted these debates, I would like to proceed to a more fundamental problem that revolves around the Arabic character of the Qurʾān, and this is the main issue that I shall address in the context of the Māturīdian tradition. The problem is related to the following two verses:

(1) Even if we "وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَاه عَلَى بَعْضِ الْأَعْجَمِينَ فَقَرَأَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ماَ كَانُوا بِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ": had revealed it to any of the non-Arabs and he had recited it to them, they would not have believed in it."[49]

(2) If We had "وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا أَعْجَمِيًّا لَقَالُوا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ أَأَعْجَمِيٌّ وَعَرَبِيٌّ": made it a non-Arabic Qurʾān, they would have said: "Why are its verses not explained in detail? Is it non-Arabic although he is an Arab (Is it non-Arabic although we are Arabs?)"[50]

When one reads these verses, especially the second verse, one may have the following initial impression: If God had sent down the Qurʾān in a language other than Arabic, then the Arabs would have objected and rejected it because they could not have understood it. Therefore, God found their objection rightful and did not send down the Qurʾān in any language other than Arabic but rather revealed it in Arabic. Nevertheless, given the Qurʾān's claim to be a universal book

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[49] Q 26:198-199.

[50] Q 41:44.

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(that is, addressing not only the Arabs but also the non-Arab nations), this "Arabicist" attitude will constitute an excuse or justification for non-Arabs to reject the Qurʾān on the basis of the linguistic barrier that the Qurʾān's Arabic nature poses to them. Therefore, logically, either the possibility that the Qurʾān might be revealed in a language other than Arabic should not constitute an excuse for the Arabs to reject the Qurʾān or the actuality that the Qurʾān is revealed in Arabic should also constitute an excuse for non-Arabs to reject the Qurʾān. In fact, there is a third choice, which reflects the actual Muslim attitude: The Qurʾān's revelation in any language other than Arabic is a rightful excuse for the Arabs but not for the rest of humanity! Thus, non-Arabs should learn Arabic to understand the Qurʾān. In an attempt to solve this problem, al-Māturīdī interprets the following four Qurʾānic verses in a way that is both original and striking:

(1 أَنْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أُنْزِلَ الْكِتَابُ عَلَى الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا وَإِن كُنَّا عَنْ دِرَاسَاتِهِمْ لَغَافِلِينَ أَوْ تَقُولُوا لَوْ أَنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا الْكِتَابُ لَكُنَّا أَهْدَى مِنْهُمْ: Lest you should say, "The Book was sent down to two Peoples (Jews and Christians) before us and we were unaware of their study" or lest you should say, "If the Book had only been sent down to us, we should have followed its guidance better than they."[51]

This verse clarifies that the reason for the revelation of the Qurʾān in Arabic is the elimination of the Arabs' plea and excuse in their words, "God sent down a book to the Jews and the Christians but not to us; if He had sent to us alike, we would be guided better than they." Al-Māturīdī understands this verse in the same way in general, with the following exception: Al-Māturīdī holds that even though God sent down the Qurʾān to put an end to their argumentation and nullify their excuse, they in fact had no evidence and excuse. In this context, al-Māturīdī also cites the verse, "We have sent messengers as the bearers of good news as well as a warning, that mankind, after the coming of the apostles, should have no plea against God."[52] Then, he says that the verse should be understood as "They would not have any plea against God even if He did not send the messengers and the books."[53] Al-Māturīdī adds that the Arabs might present a plea in two

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[51] Q 6:156-157.

[52] Q 4:165.

[53] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, II, 195 (Q 6:156-157).

ways, the first of which concerns us here:[54]

> The book was sent down in their language, not in ours, and we do
> not understand their language and 'we were unaware of their study.'[55]
> If the revelation of the Scripture in a language other than Arabic were
> an argument and excuse for the Arabs, the same would be an
> argument and excuse for non-Arabs in refusing to follow the Qurʾān
> because the Qurʾān is not revealed in non-Arabic, and the non-Arabs
> did not know the language of the Arabs. Yet the non-Arabs have no
> argument and excuse for failing to know Arabic because God created
> the way and means leading them to a knowledge of the Qurʾān. In
> the same manner, the Arabs had no excuse for failing to follow the
> rulings that had been laid down in the Scriptures that were revealed
> in a language other than their own because they had the power and
> capacity to access those Scriptures and to learn therefrom. This
> indicates that God may hold men responsible for those things to
> which men have no direct access but have the means to access.[56]

As one can see, al-Māturīdī is trying to strike a middle ground in
interpreting the verse. On the one hand, he accepts that the Qurʾān is
revealed in Arabic to remove the excuse of the Arabs cited above,
and on the other, he argues that this excuse is invalid and groundless.
For, otherwise, an excuse exists for the non-Arabs to reject the
Qurʾān. With this purpose in mind, he describes the Arabs' excuse as
such. In addition, the Arabs could access the contents of the Torah
and the Gospel by learning the language in which they were
revealed. It is interesting that in this context, al-Māturīdī makes no
reference to the language of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.

2) Al-Māturīdī raises the same issue in the context of the following
verse: "وَكَم مِّن قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا: How many towns have We destroyed?"[57]
For the Imām, by this verse, God threatens to destroy the Meccans
because of their denial of Muḥammad's prophetic mission and office,
just as He destroyed previous nations for their denial of their

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[54] The second excuse is their confusion about which sect of the Jews and Christians
they should follow because they are divided into many opposing sects. See al-
Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, II, 195.

[55] Q 6:156.

[56] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, II, 195 (Q 6:156-157).

[57] Q 7:4.

prophets. Therefore, this verse should be understood as follows: "How many towns have We destroyed, *because of their denial of their prophets?*" Accordingly, you Meccans will also incur the same punishment if you deny the divine mission and office of the Prophet Muḥammad.[58]

However, in order for this interpretation to be meaningful, the Meccan idolators should be aware that previous nations were destroyed because of their denial of their prophets; however, they did not know this because they had no Scriptures. Nevertheless, for al-Māturīdī, a lack of knowledge is also not an excuse in this context because the Meccan idolators can access this knowledge through those who had the Scriptures (in this context, the Jews and the Christians). Hence, the argument and threat in the verse is binding and does apply to the Meccan idolators.[59]

Here, al-Māturīdī cites the relationship between the Arabs and the non-Arabs in terms of their being addressed by the Qurʾān. This is such that the relation of the Arabs to the People of the Book (i.e., the Jews and the Christians) is like that of the non-Arabs to the Arabs.

> Even if the non-Arabs did not know the book that was revealed in the language of the Arabs, the proof still applies to them that their denial of the Prophet shall invoke upon them their destruction because they had the means to access the knowledge of the destruction. In the same manner, even if the Meccans had no knowledge that previous nations had been destroyed by God because of their denial of their prophets, the same proof applies to them because they can learn it from the People of the Book.[60]

(3) "وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَاهُ عَلَى بَعْضِ الْأَعْجَمِينَ فَقَرَأَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ": Even if we had revealed it to any of the non-Arabs and he had recited it to them, they would not have believed in it."[61]

The letter of the verse says that even if the Qurʾān were sent down to a non-Arab person and he recited it to them, they would not believe in it. However, such exegetes as al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, and al-Qurṭubī interpret the verse interestingly as meaning that they did not

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[58] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, II, 207 (Q 7:4).

[59] *Ibid*.

[60] *Ibid*.

[61] Q 26:198-199.

believe in an Arab prophet; if it were to be sent down to a non-Arab, they would not believe in him, either. These exegetes, however, seem to take that as meaning that all Arabs denied the Qurʾān, while in fact at the outset, most of them denied it but a few of them believed it. Alternatively, the verse addresses only the deniers or the non-believers. In clearer terms, the verse suggests that the deniers shall not believe in the Qurʾān, regardless of whether it is revealed in Arabic or in any other language. The exegetes, however, do not understand the verse in this manner, as will be seen in the following lines:

Al-Ṭabarī,[62] Ibn Kathīr,[63] and al-Qurṭubī[64] take the word *aʿjamīn* (أَعْجَمِينَ) occurring in the verse to refer to dumb animals, the non-fluent or inarticulate Arabs or non-native speakers of-Arabic, regardless of whether they speak Arabic well. They also tend to see a miracle in the transmission of the Qurʾān to someone who is either speechless altogether or is an inarticulate speaker of Arabic and his recitation of such highly eloquent a text as the Qurʾān under such linguistically disadvantageous circumstances to the Arabs who are naturally fond of eloquence and especially poetic eloquence, adding that the non-believers would still deny that it was revealed by God.

Al-Māturīdī repeats the same views concerning the interpretation of the verse:

1) Some exegetes interpreted the verse as follows: God transmitted it to one of themselves (that is, an Arab person), but they refused to believe. If He were to transmit it to a non-Arab person, how much worse would their reaction be?

2) Some others asserted, "If we had revealed it to any of the non-Arabs and he had recited it to them," then the Arabs would have been the most miserable people because they could not have understood it. Al-Māturīdī describes this as being similar to the first interpretation.

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[62] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr ibn Yazīd al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Jīzah: Dār Hajr li-l-Ṭibāʿah wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ wa-l-Iʿlān, 2001), XVII, 647.

[63] Abū l-Fidāʾ ʿImād al-Dīn Ismāʿīl ibn Shihāb al-Dīn ʿUmar Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm*, ed. Sāmī ibn Muḥammad al-Salāmah, 2nd ed. (Riyadh: Dār Ṭībah li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 1999), VI, 146-147.

[64] Al-Qurṭubī*, al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, XIII, 139.

3) Still others said, If He had sent it down to one of the dumb beasts and that dumb beast had explained it to them, they would not have accepted it. This suggests their obtuseness and stubbornness.

Afterwards, al-Māturīdī cites his own interpretation:

The verse, "If we had revealed it to any of the non-Arabs and he had recited it to them," might mean the following: If We had revealed it in a language other than Arabic, they would have not understood it and would have said, "Why are its verses not explained in detail? Is it non-Arabic although we are Arabs (or although he is an Arab)?"[65] Yet We transmitted it in Arabic such that they might not say so.[66]

Hence, al-Māturīdī mentions the excuse of the Arabs in the context of the interpretation of this verse but does not say that it is invalid; on the contrary, he quotes it in an affirmative tone.

4) " وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا أَعْجَمِيًّا لَقَالُوا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ أَأَعْجَمِيٌّ وَعَرَبِيٌّ :If We had made it a non-Arabic Qurʾān, they would have said: 'Why are its verses not explained in detail? Is the Qurʾān non-Arabic although he is an Arab? (or although we are Arabs?)'"[67]

Al-Māturīdī takes this verse to mean that even if the Qurʾān were transmitted in an extraordinary manner, the deniers would still refuse to believe in it because of the extremity of their stubbornness. For him, the Qurʾān, which is revealed in Arabic, being transmitted to a non-Arab person – or more generally a Scripture being transmitted to a prophet in a language other than his own – and he reciting it to his people is something more extraordinary than a Qurʾān revealed in Arabic being transmitted to an Arab prophet – or a Scripture being transmitted in his own language –. The deniers, however, would still refuse to believe even if this happened.[68]

I would like to draw attention to the following two points regarding al-Māturīdī's interpretation of this verse:

1) The exegetes disagreed on the meaning of the part of the verse: أَأَعْجَمِيٌّ وَعَرَبِيٌّ. First, the phrase literally just means, "is it/he non-Arab/ic and Arab/ic?." Second, the words *aʿjamī* and *ʿarabī* are used

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[65] Q 41:44.

[66] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, III, 542 (Q 26:198-199).

[67] Q 41:44.

[68] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, IV, 382-383 (Q 41:44).

to refer both to persons (that is, non-Arabs and Arabs) and to language (that is, non-Arabic and Arabic). Accordingly, the verse in theory may mean one of the four alternatives: (1) non-Arab and Arab; (2) non-Arabic and Arab; (3) non-Arab and Arabic; (4) non-Arabic and Arabic.

Provided that the verse talks of a Scripture that is revealed and of a person to whom it is revealed, one of the words *aʿjamī* and *ʿarabī* should refer to the language and the other should refer to a person. Therefore, the first and the fourth choices are automatically discarded. Since the first part of the verse says "وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا أَعْجَمِيًّا": If We had made it a non-Arabic Qurʾān," the language of the Scripture should be certainly non-Arabic. However, who is the "Arab" mentioned in the part writing, "Is it non-Arabic although he is an Arab (or although we are Arabs)?" Does the word refer to the prophet to whom the Scripture was sent down, as I have preferred, or does it refer to the people who are addressed by the Scripture; that is, the Arabs? Al-Māturīdī identifies the reason for the surprise expressed by the audience at a non-Arabic Scripture being transmitted to an Arab prophet. Thus, he understands and interprets the verse in the sense that "what is unusual and weird is that a non-Arabic Scripture was transmitted to an Arab prophet." Otherwise, for him, it is not unusual or strange that a non-Arabic Scripture should be transmitted to the Arabs because this is neither unusual nor strange; on the contrary, this is something reasonable and possible. His concluding words clarify that he understands the verse in this manner:

> This verse provides evidence that if God had transmitted the Qurʾān in a non-Arabic language, it would still have been the Qurʾān, and that the difference in the language would not have changed or desecrated the Qurʾān. Therefore, this verse provides evidence regarding Abū Ḥanīfah's (may Allah have mercy upon him) opinion that if someone recites [the Qurʾān] in Persian during his ritual prayer, his ritual prayer remains valid.[69]

Finally, I should like to say regretfully that although almost all Turkish translators of the Qurʾān are afraid to write that "It is weird that a non-Turkish Qurʾān should be transmitted to the Turks," they

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[69]   Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, IV, 383 (Q 41:44).

did not shy away from interpreting the verse in question as, "It is weird that a non-Arabic Qurʾān should be transmitted to the Arabs."

III. Reading the "Qurʾān" in Languages Other Than Arabic

We know that the Qurʾān relates the same stories and events in different chapters and contexts, sometimes in more detail and at more length, sometimes more briefly, and sometimes in different words. Departing from this fact, the Imām concludes that:

1) The same meaning and truth can be expressed in the same language in different words.

2) The same meaning and truth can also be expressed in different languages.

3) The Qurʾān can be written in different languages. More clearly, translations of the Qurʾān in different languages remain the Qurʾān.

The first of the verses upon which al-Māturīdī relies to support this view is the one narrating that Iblīs disobeyed God's command to bow down to Adam. He first cites the 31st-33rd verses of the Sūrat al-Ḥijr as follows:

> Not so Iblīs: he refused to be among those who prostrated themselves. God said: "O Iblīs! what is your reason for not being among those who prostrated themselves?" Iblīs said: "I am not one to prostrate myself to man, whom You did create from sounding clay, from mud molded into shape."[70]

He then goes on to quote the following:

> God said in another place: "Not so Iblīs: he refused and was haughty: He was of those who reject Faith."[71] "God said to him: 'O Iblīs! what is your reason for not being among those who prostrated themselves?'"[72] God said in another place: "O Iblīs! What prevents you from prostrating yourself?"[73] God also said in another place: "What prevented you from bowing down when I commanded you? He said: 'I am better than he: You created me from fire and him from clay.'"[74]

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[70] Q 15:31-33.

[71] Q 2:34.

[72] Q 15:32.

[73] Q 38:75.

[74] Q 7:12.

After quoting the verses that describe the same subject in different words and phrases, al-Māturīdī concludes:

God related this incident in different words. It is known that His address to Iblīs took place one time and not many times... This proves that the difference and change in words do not alter the ruling nor change the meaning. This also demonstrates that using different words is permissible as long as they express the same meaning. In a similar way, reciting it in a language other than that in which it is revealed is valid as long as it expresses the same meaning.[75]

By his last sentence, al-Māturīdī implies that reciting the Qurʾān in languages other than Arabic is permissible as long as the words in those languages express the same meaning.

In the context of the verses describing the phases of Adam's creation by God, al-Māturīdī revisits the thought that the difference of wording within the same language does not change the meaning but this time noting the following difference:

A difference in wording is permissible if it is intended to indicate different states rather than a single state. For this reason, we can mention as an example the description of different states concerning the story of Adam's creation. God once said, "The state of Jesus before God is like that of Adam. He created him from dust."[76] God also said: "He it is who created you from clay."[77] He again said: "We created man from sounding clay, from mud molded into shape."[78] This is a case of describing different states. It is possible that this may happen in languages other than this. Here, the Qurʾān mentions [the story] in different wording, with accretion and reduction, because the difference in wording does not change the meaning.[79]

Al-Māturīdī corroborates his view using two more groups of verses:

1) For al-Māturīdī, the verses "أُسْلُكْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ": Move (Moses)

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[75] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, III, 49 (Q 15:31-33). Also see *ibid.*, III, 172 (Q 17:61).

[76] Q 3:59.

[77] Q 6:2.

[78] Q 15:26.

[79] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, III, 173 (Q17:61).

your hand into your bosom"[80] and "وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ": Put (Moses) your hand into your bosom,"[81] show that it is permissible the wording to differ and change as long as the same meaning and import is expressed.[82]

(2 "إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى": And this is in the earlier Books, the Books of Abraham and Moses."[83]

Al-Māturīdī notes in interpreting the second group of verses:

> These two verses demonstrate that the difference between languages does not change the truth and reality of things because God bears witness that this point [i.e., the one that is made in the verse] is found in the earlier Scriptures in this language. This furnishes evidence for Abū Ḥanīfah's validation of reading the Qurʾān in Persian.[84]

To recapitulate, al-Māturīdī thinks that the same meaning and truth can be expressed in the same language in different words, that the same meaning and truth can be expressed in different languages, and that it is permissible to recite the Qurʾān in different languages – here in Persian –, including the compulsory recitation during ritual prayer. One should lay a special emphasis upon the fact that al-Māturīdī speaks of the validity and permissibility of reading the Qurʾān during prayer and at other times in a language other than Arabic as a methodologically principal ruling and not as a provisional permission only and solely for those who do not know Arabic until they learn it. It should be emphasized that he says "reading or reciting the Qurʾān in Persian" and not "reading its Persian translation" or "reading its translation in Persian."

In this context, one can assert the following objection: the Qurʾān is a miraculous book and God asserts and establishes this on the basis of its inimitability. If the translations of the Qurʾān are considered to

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[80] Q 28:32.

[81] Q 27:12.

[82] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, III, 595 (Q 28:32).

[83] Q 87:18-19.

[84] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, V, 441 (Q 87:18-19). The Arabic passage reads as the following:

لِأَنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى شَهِدَ بِكَوْنِ هَذَا فِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى بِهَذَا اللِّسَانِ، فَيَكُونُ فِيهِ حُجَّةٌ لِأَبِي حَنِيفَةَ فِي تَجْوِيزِ الْقِرَاءَةِ بِالْفَارِسِيَّةِ.

be like the Qurʾān, this would invalidate God's challenge that none can produce anything like the Qurʾān.

One can take Q 17:88 as an example of one of the Qurʾānic passages that make the point of the Qurʾān's inimitability: "If the whole of mankind and *jinn*s were to gather together to produce the like of this Qurʾān, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed each other up with help and support."[85]

I tend to consider this objection as a clear example of circular reasoning and informal fallacy, termed *muṣādarah ʿalá l-maṭlūb* in the classical Arabic logic or *petitio principii* as its equivalent among the Latin scholastics. This type of fallacy includes the conclusion, which is yet to be proven, within a premise of the argument, often in an indirect way such that its presence within the premise is hidden or at least not easily apparent. I see the objection above as such because it regards the point that the Arabic phraseology of the Qurʾān is exclusively the Qurʾān proper as a proven premise and then describes its translations as distinct and alternative like versions of the Qurʾān. However, that point is the conclusion that is yet to be proven and not the premise that has been already demonstrated. Therefore, the objection is infected with circularity and is invalid logically. Therefore, since the Arabic phraseology of the Qurʾān is not considered by al-Māturīdī as the only Qurʾān proper, its phraseology in other languages shall not be the like of the Qurʾān that incurs the challenge made by God. In addition, al-Māturīdī does not raise in this context the issue of the translation of the Qurʾān as a breach of the inimitable nature of the Qurʾān.[86]

Conclusion

One can mention many contexts and fields in which Islam's claim of universality is tested. In my opinion, one of these important contexts is the possibility that the Qurʾān's message can be expressed in different languages and practiced by different societies. In the first context, the miraculous nature of the Qurʾān should lie in its meaning and not in its wording or should lie first and primarily in its meaning and not in its wording. In other words, when the Qurʾān is translated

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[85]   Q 17:88.

[86]   See al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt*, III, 191-192 (Q 17:88).

into other languages, the translation should be *equally* valuable and meaningful. The second context is the capacity of the Qurʾān to transform any society in any region and in any age who accept it as having been transmitted from God and who follow its commands, carving out a society of the caliber and value of the first society that the Qurʾān produced at the beginning of Islam. This, in the final analysis, means that the same status should be granted to other languages and nations as that granted to Arabic and the Arabs as a result of the Qurʾān being revealed in Arabic and the Arabs' acceptance of it. If this status is denied for other languages and nations, then the Qurʾān shall remain alien with respect to non-Arab Muslims, regardless of how many centuries they have been Muslims, of how much self-sacrifice they have suffered for Islam and of their contributions to Islam.

The Prophet's words of praise, "If religion or faith were hung to the Pleiades, a group of men from the Persians or non-Arabs would get it," referring to non-Arabs in general and the Persians in particular, should be understood within this context. God transmitted a Scripture to the Arabs through a prophet from among themselves and in their language, explaining His religion therein. Therefore, its understanding and acceptance by the Arabs is not the same as that by the non-Arabs; on the contrary, this is more difficult for the latter. In his words, already quoted, the Prophet in a sense noted this difficulty and the reward to be attained in return for accepting it, both in this world and in the hereafter. Regarding this Prophetic tradition, one should note that these Prophetic glad tidings are conditional upon having faith and performing good deeds. Therefore, it goes without saying that the term "good deeds" should be understood as making a contribution to humanity in moral, cultural, civilizational, intellectual, and technological terms. Hence, the glad tidings apply only to those Arabs and non-Arabs who conform to these conditions and not to all Arabs and non-Arabs for all time to come without any limitation.

Al-Māturīdī's attitude toward the relationship between the Arabs and the non-Arabs, his remarks on the possibility of the Qurʾān being revealed and expressed in languages other than Arabic, and his highlighting the Persian language and people all result, I believe, from his universalistic view of Islam rather than from any *Shuʿūbī* tendencies, that is, anti-Arab feelings. As a reflection of the "pure" or "original" Ḥanafī tradition in his discourse, he believed that the miraculous nature of the Qurʾān lies in its meaning rather than its

wording; in other words, the Qurʾān is constituted by its meaning and not necessarily by its wording. Consequently, he argued that the recitation of the Qurʾān's translation in any language – including the compulsory ritual recitation during daily prayers – is the same as the recitation of the Qurʾān in its Arabic original. This attitude of al-Māturīdī results from a methodological understanding of the Qurʾān or Qurʾānic hermeneutics rather than from an anti-Arabist or anti-Arabicist reactivity or from Persian parochialism. Alas, the hermeneutics of Abū Ḥanīfah and al-Māturīdī has not been accepted even within the later Ḥanafī tradition; on the contrary, al-Imām al-Shāfiʿī's Arabicist outlook dominated the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī school. For centuries, this has hindered the Turkish people – as well as other non-Arab Muslims – from accessing the contents of the Qurʾān at an ideal level and has been one of the most important obstacles to understanding the Qurʾān.

I would like to conclude my study with a series of considerations on the relevance of this discussion to the present age. As a natural and sad result of the imposition of Arabic upon non-Arab Muslims as the unique language of the Qurʾān and thus of the religion, the Turkish nation has had no direct access to the contents of the Qurʾān until recently, in the early twentieth century. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, hundreds of Turkish translations of the Qurʾān have been produced, tens of original Qurʾānic exegetical works have been composed by Turkish scholars in the Turkish language, almost all of the classic Arabic exegetical works as well as many modern Qurʾānic commentaries have been translated from various languages into Turkish, numerous classics of Islam from a wide range of fields including *falsafah*, *kalām*, *taṣawwuf*, and *fiqh* have been translated into Turkish, and thousands of academic studies have been written. Thus, the Turkish language has become a language of religion *par excellence*. Therefore, I want to raise the following questions and ponder the answers that we may give to them.

Have the Turkish-centered studies, both original and translations, helped to raise the level of the Islamic scholarship, thought, and culture in Turkey? I think that anyone with common sense and fairness will answer this question positively. Has the fact that Arabic was the only language of religion in Turkish society until recently, when the Turkish language became a language of religion, hindered

the development of Islamic thought and culture in Turkey? I think anybody with fairness should also accept that the Arabicist attitude is one of or the most important obstacle to the Qurʾān in particular and to Islamic religious lore in general.

Turkishism, which is the main factor behind this tremendous increase in the level of Islamic knowledge and culture, is, in the final analysis, a product of Turkish secular nationalism and the Westernization process. This shall also be accepted by those who not only are fair-minded but also possess some knowledge. Is it not thus striking and of course sad that the universal Muslim community in general and the Turkish nation as an indispensable part thereof came in particular to this point only one millennium after the establishment of Islam and as the result of Westernization? The fact that Westernization brought us to this point is important insofar as we have not arrived at it through our own dynamics, as in the case of al-Māturīdī, but through the compelling influence of certain external factors. Are there any other theological, legal, social, moral, and intellectual opinions and interpretations that, although produced and pronounced centuries ago by al-Māturīdī and many other Muslim thinkers who have been obscured by history, we are yet to first realize and then adopt through external factors?

As one local example among many global examples, the present Turkish government and the Turkish Higher Education Council should only be praised for having recently opened over 60 faculties of divinity and Islamic studies in the last decade and for their other support and contributions to Islamic learning and studies in general. However, their increasingly Arabicist educational policies, which call for the teaching of Islamic sciences to Turkish students by Turkish professors in Arabic, seem to be not only unaware of the achievements made in the last century but also to be an attempt to reverse the course of a major historical trend. As a professor of Islamic studies, I am fully aware of the importance of Arabic as well as other Islamic and Western languages such as Persian, Urdu, and Bahasa Indonesia on the one hand and English, French, and German on the other in researching and accessing the classical and modern scholarship in the field. However, knowledge of a foreign language as a means of research is one thing, but conducting education entirely in a foreign language is another. Therefore, the recent noticeable Arabicist tendency by the designers of the new Islamic studies programs and curricula to replace Turkish with Arabic in education,

even at the undergraduate level, is not desirable for the Turkish language as a means of religious learning and culture. Finally, such an Arabicist outlook not only fails to contribute to better teaching of Arabic to Turkish students at the faculties of divinity and Islamic studies but also poses a major obstacle for students as they seek to understand what they are being taught in the classroom.

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SUFFERING FOR THE SAKE OF COSMIC ORDER: TWELVER SHĪʿAH ISLAM'S COPING WITH TRAUMA

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Abstract

The relation established in Shīʿite Islam between suffering, cosmic order, and the position attributed to the Shīʿite community in this cosmic order, is very important in terms of understanding Shīʿite-Islam identity. This article's primary claim is that a deep investigation of Shīʿite-Islam identity should be conducted in the context of its coping with the trauma of the tragedy of Karbalāʾ. Based on Jeffrey Alexander's definition of trauma as a "cultural construction," we claim that the coding, weighting, and narrating of the Karbalāʾ tragedy in the course of the trauma process can provide us with important clues to understand the Shīʿite-Islam identity. This article claims that in the Shīʿite identity, the suffering experienced in Karbalāʾ is considered a guarantee that cosmic order will be maintained. Suffering is interpreted as the cost of the battle between the *ḥaqq* (truth) and *bāṭil* (falsehood) and of preserving the right way; thus, suffering is glorified and transformed into a social activity of continuous character. In this way, the Shīʿite community places itself both as "a subject of history" and as a dynamic social tradition.

Introduction

The sociologist Jeffrey Alexander, who is famous for his studies of cultural traumas, says that "when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event" then cultural trauma occurs (Alexander 2012, 6). He continues as follows: "If the trauma process unfolds inside the religious arena, its concern will be to link trauma to theodicy" (Alexander 2012, 20). Accordingly, it is essential for a religious community, which feels it has been exposed to a terrible event, to approach the subject in the context of theodicy to find a satisfying answer to the question "why has this suffering taken place?" and to make sense of the trauma in question. It becomes possible to cope with a trauma only when that trauma can be interpreted. In this context, after the massacre of Karbalāʾ in 680 AD, the members of Shīʿite community attempted to cope with the pain that they felt over the tragedy by making it meaningful. It seems impossible to sufficiently understand the Shīʿite identity until we thoroughly explore the interpretation of the Karbalāʾ tragedy in Shīʿite Islam. We claim that the relation established in Shīʿite Islam between the suffering, cosmic order, and the position attributed to the Shīʿite community in this cosmic order, is very important in terms of understanding the Shīʿite-Islam identity.

The vast majority of Shīʿite scholars approach Shīʿite identity as a matter of faith (see for example Kāshif al-Ghiṭāʾ 1990, 145-152; al-Subḥānī 1421 AH, 361-364), whereas Sunnī scholars criticize Shīʿah claiming that this identity has unnecessarily kept historical events of suffering alive (Ibn Kathīr 1408 AH, 8:221). For this reason, studies on Shīʿite identity in the Islamic world do not sufficiently investigate the meaning of suffering in Shīʿite Islam and cannot provide us with a sufficient explanation of its dynamics and spirit in terms of Shīʿah identity. With respect to the research studies on the topic in the West, the number of which has relatively increased in the recent period, a significant number of them approach the topic either in doctrinal or/and historical (see Sachedina 1981, 1988; Momen 1987; Arjomand 1988; Halm 1991; Cole 2002; Jafri 1979) contexts or in the context of Shīʿite communities' political identities and attitudes in modern times (see Cole and Keddie 1986; Nakash 2006; Nasr 2007). Some exceptional studies attempt to understand the nature and soul of the

Shīʿite Islamic identity based on an integrated approach. The two works that are the most closely related to our subject are those of Hamid Dabashi (2011) and Mahmoud Ayoub (1978).

Dabashi's (2011) primary claim is that Shīʿism gains its authority and legitimacy from its protesting character. This explanation overlooks the Shīʿah's specific view of cosmic order and more importantly, the construction of this view on a cultural level. If the abovementioned view and its construction on a cultural level were not realized, then the protesting character would not be sufficient for Shīʿah to continue its existence. Al-Khawārij, which was a movement of protest, is a good example of that. In contrast, Dabashi's explanation that Shīʿite Islamic identity is the expression of the guilt feelings of pro-*ahl al-bayt* groups over the murder of al-Ḥusayn represents a reductive approach. Describing such a comprehensive and sophisticated system solely as a compensation for feelings of guilt is an oversimplification.

Mahmoud Ayoub's work (1978), which discusses Shīʿite identity as a holistic body with its historical, doctrinal, cultural, sociological, and other dimensions, can be considered exceptional among Western studies and is a significant guide to understanding that identity. However, this work approaches Shīʿite identity as a culture of passive suffering and thus, is also insufficient to understanding the dynamics of Shīʿite identity.

The socio-political crisis, which was experienced by Muslim society and reached its peak with the Karbalāʾ tragedy, was later represented by the Shīʿite community on a cultural level, and thus was constructed as a cultural trauma within that community. Our claim in this article is that the deep investigation of Shīʿite-Islam identity should be conducted in the contexts of its coping with the trauma in question. Because Jeffrey Alexander defines trauma as a "cultural construction" that is constructed through "coding, weighting, [and] narrating" (Alexander 2012, 35), we also claim that the coding, weighting, and narrating, which were used in the course of the "cultural construction" of the Shīʿite-Islam community after the Karbalāʾ tragedy, can provide us with important clues to understand that identity. In Shīʿite-Islam identity, the interpretation of suffering based on the Karbalāʾ tragedy is a matter of great importance. Although all religions address the problem of suffering and making it "bearable," the interpretations of this problem vary. As Clifford Geertz

says: "As a religious problem, the problem of suffering is, paradoxically, not how to avoid suffering but how to suffer, how to make [it] … something bearable, supportable – something, as we say, sufferable" (Geertz 1973, 104). In the Shīʿite-Islam community, the interpretation of suffering is unique and different from those of other religious traditions. For instance, although Jesus' suffering is consistently remembered in some rituals, it has not been transformed into social suffering in Christian culture.[1] In the Shīʿite-Islam community, however, al-Ḥusayn's suffering has been transformed into a social suffering culture in which Shīʿite devotees actively participate. However, the making sense of the suffering in Shīʿite Islam differs from that of Jewish society, which can be regarded as a "traumatized society." In Jewish religious identity, the sufferings that Jewish society experienced in the time of Moses and other prophets and kings were the result of God's punishment of people's disobedience to His commands. This article's primary claim is that in Shīʿite, experienced suffering is considered a guarantee of maintaining cosmic order. Suffering is interpreted as the cost of the battle between the *ḥaqq* (truth) and *bāṭil* (falsehood) and of preserving the right way; thus, suffering is glorified and further transformed into a social activity of continuous character. In this way, the Shīʿite community places itself both as "a subject of history" and as a dynamic social tradition.

Suffering: From Tragedy to Identity

The building of Shīʿite identity on the cultural level is directly related to the tragedy of Karbalāʾ. The sociopolitical crisis, which had started during the period of the third Caliph, ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, reached its peak with the tragic murder of al-Ḥusayn and his followers in 680 AD by the army of the second Umayyad Caliph Yazīd ibn Muʿāwiyah, in Karbalāʾ. This tragic murder of al-Ḥusayn and his followers caused a great deal of grief and disappointment among pro-*ahl al-bayt* Muslims. This grief and disappointment was so deep that some of them, guilty that they had left al-Ḥusayn alone to face Yazīd's army, initiated a movement called *al-Tawwābūn* (the Penitents), which was organized to avenge the murder. Participants in this movement can be considered the first generation that played a

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[1] Some marginal Christian groups, such as Penitents, can be regarded as exceptional in Christian culture.

significant role in the cultural construction of the Shīʿite identity based on the tragedy of Karbalāʾ. The initial forms of ʿĀshūrāʾ ceremonies, which represent one of the important religious rituals of Twelver Shīʿism, were organized by those who took part in the *Tawwābūn* movement. However, these historical realities should not lead us to claim that Shīʿite tradition and most of its teachings and rituals represent a means of compensating the guilty feelings of a certain group of Muslims over the murders of ʿAlī and al-Ḥusayn, as one researcher claims (see Dabashi 2011, 1-26). Acceptance of Shīʿite culture, which has a sophisticated and comprehensive system of history, time, eschatology, etc., as a system established to compensate for guilt is oversimplifying the subject. Shīʿite identity is the result of the cultural constructive processes with the aim of restoring identity and meaning to the loss of pro-*ahl al-bayt* Muslims over what they have experienced, providing a collective identity, in light of past events, with reinterpretation, and including a worldview and ethos that mutually support one another. To speak of the existence of such a construction process may not always claim that Shīʿite beliefs were later added to Islam. What concerns us here is not entering into endless discussions on the roots of Shīʿism, but the success of Muslims with Shīʿite identity in coping with suffering and making sense of it in a way that elucidates past, present, and future.

It can be seen that in the aftermath of the Karbalāʾ drama, pro-*ahl al-bayt* Muslims entered a "process of making sense of the suffering," or as Jeffrey Alexander says, a "trauma process" (Alexander 2012, 15-19). This process was also the starting point for the representation and construction of Shīʿite identity on the cultural level. What we mean here by "the representation on cultural level" is the transformation of certain beliefs, rituals, and symbols to the shared forms of knowledge, worldview, and practice in a certain community. Even the establishment of the key elements of cultural construction process, which is usually a continuous process, requires a long period of time. In this context, it is seen that the representation of Shīʿite identity's key elements on the cultural level took shape within a period of two and one-half centuries starting at the end of the 7th century.

Certainly, the severity of the incident was not sufficient for the transformation of the Karbalāʾ tragedy into a cultural trauma and for the spread of suffering felt in the aftermath of the tragedy to large masses and transferring it from generation to generation. It was

essential to propagate and disseminate the representation of the experienced social crisis on the cultural level, along with the symbolic representations of the social events that occurred and the past, present, and future of Shīʿite community. Accordingly, the construction of a cultural identity centered on the tragedy of Karbalāʾ was possible only by creating a meaning-making discourse. This function was performed by the Imāms, who were the parties involved in the Karbalāʾ tragedy and excluded from political life; however, because they were descendants of the Prophet, they also held a privileged position in Muslim society. According to Shīʿite ḥadīth sources, Imāms such as al-Ḥusayn's son ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿābidīn, encouraged their followers to engage in activities such as visiting the grave of al-Ḥusayn, weeping for the martyrs of Karbalāʾ, remembering al-Ḥusayn while drinking water and writing poems to reduce people to tears, constantly keeping the memory of the Karbalāʾ tragedy alive. One of the famous Shīʿite scholars, Jaʿfar ibn Qawlawayh al-Qummī (d. in 367 AH/977 AD), in his book *Kāmil al-ziyārāt*, speaks of such ḥadīths in detail (see al-Qummī 1417 AH, 165-496).

The abovementioned cultural construction process, however, has continued up to the present through the "reinterpretation mechanism," and thus the sufferings of the Karbalāʾ tragedy's victims preserve their central position in Shīʿite identity. As the sociologist Bernhard Giesen, who is famous for his works on trauma and identity, says, "The collective identity of victims is, of course, a retrospective one: it is not our own suffering here and now, but the suffering of the past, the suffering of others that is turned into an identity of the present." (Giesen 2013).

Suffering as a Metanarrative

Twelver Shīʿism presents an identity formed around the question "why did the sufferings in Karbalāʾ happen?" and tries to make sense of those sufferings. Otherwise, there would be a loss of meaning on the sociocultural level, if such a great suffering was not carefully interpreted. The Shīʿite community overcame the loss of meaning by means of the cosmic reference. The tragedy of Karbalāʾ and the sufferings experienced there appear, in this context, to be a metanarrative in Shīʿite identity. According to Jeffrey Alexander, constructing a successful cultural representation of a metanarrative is related to making sense of suffering, and it should give persuasive

answers to the questions about four important issues: the nature of pain, the nature of the victim, the relation of the trauma victim to the wider audience, and attribution of responsibility (Alexander 2012, 17-19). It seems that the metanarrative of suffering in Shīʿite culture focuses on giving a comprehensive and persuasive answer to those four questions.

In Shīʿite culture, the sufferings of Karbalāʾ are interpreted in metaphysical terms and by relating them to the cosmic order. According to this metanarrative, although the event of Karbalāʾ is the uprising of al-Ḥusayn and his supporters against Yazīd, it goes beyond a simple revolt. This event is the peak and determinant of the struggle that has been continuing since the outset of human history. This struggle, whose price is suffering and that has been carried by prophets and Imāms, is the fight between just and unjust, oppressor and oppressed, good and bad, and more importantly, between "true religion" and "distorted religion." This struggle has been experienced by *Hābīl* (Abel) and *Qābīl* (Cain), and all prophets, including Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad. Al-Ḥusayn, whose mission was to preserve the "true religion" from distortion, also managed with his followers to preserve it at the expense of their suffering. In other words, history itself is the history of cosmic suffering, and the Karbalāʾ tragedy is the peak of these sufferings.

Shīʿism does not only persuade people of the endurability of the events that occurred but also expresses that all those sufferings served the highest purpose. Accordingly, those who take part, through remembering, in this suffering also serve the same purpose. Thus, suffering is extolled and expressed as a savior of the "true religion." The existence of the "true religion" and salvation becomes dependent on suffering. In one sense, cosmic suffering provides history with meaning. In other words, the sufferers have provided history with meaning. With the appearance of the Twelfth Imām (al-Mahdī), the inevitable end, in which the cosmic sufferers will be rewarded and those who caused them to suffer will be resurrected and punished (the doctrine of *rajʿah*), will come. It is also the end of history and cosmic suffering.

The tragedy of Karbalāʾ and al-Ḥusayn's suffering have always held a central position in the history of suffering. It is believed that throughout history many prophets, including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Salomon, and Jesus, shed tears over al-Ḥusayn's tragedy and

blamed his murderers (see al-Majlisī 1983, 44:242-245). This means that the cause-effect relationship of what happened cannot be always established because inevitably, the former is cause and the latter is effect when the history of suffering is revealed in metanarrative. Those who were provided with divine knowledge had much earlier expressed their grief over what happened in Karbalāʾ.

Another important point in terms of Shīʿite identity is that sufferings are not related to the inevitable divine destiny while they are interpreted. The Karbalāʾ events are not viewed as inevitable predestination. There are people who are responsible for the suffering. Evil does not come from God, but from men's free actions. This feature, which is reflected in the Shīʿite theology of free will, highlights individual *ikhtiyār* (freedom and choice) against *jabr* (divine compulsion). Unlike the doctrine of free will in Ashʿarite-Sunnī theology, which has been criticized for paving the way for compulsion, this approach contains a more active identity potential. By differentiating between the *jabr al-Umawī* (the Umayyad compulsion) and "Shīʿite justice" in terms of free will, Shīʿite circles relate the notion of *jabr* to the efforts of the Umayyad dynasty to legitimize what they had done in Karbalāʾ, and the notion of free choice to *ahl al-bayt* (Muṭahharī 1426 AH, 29). Although Yazīd and his army are the main people liable for the tragedy, all who accepted a religious-political authority out of *ahl al-bayt* are indirectly guilty of it.

The determination of the guilty in metanarrative also determines the stances in practical-religious life: "not to resemble the guilty side." However, the realization of explicit identity disintegration in terms of religious life between the two parties, which existed under a single roof, became possible because sharp borders were drawn. The following ḥadīth ascribed to Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq, who is accepted as the founder of Jaʿfarī *fiqh*, which is considered by Twelver Shīʿites as the only legitimate school of jurisprudence, strikingly shows how these borders were determined:

> I said, "What if both ḥadīth from you would be popular and narrated by the trustworthy people from you?" The Imām replied, "One must study to find out which one agrees with the laws of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah and it does not agree with the laws of the

ʿammah.[2] Such ḥadīth must be accepted and the one that disagree with the laws of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah and coincides the ʿammah must be disregarded." I said, "May Allah take my soul in the service of your cause, what if both *faqīh*s (scholars of the Islamic law) would have deduced and learned their judgment from the Book and the Sunnah and found that one of the ḥadīth agrees with the ʿammah and the other disagrees with the ʿammah which one must be followed?" The Imām replied, "The one which disagrees with the ʿammah must be followed because in it there is guidance." I said, "May Allah take my soul in the service of your cause, what if both ḥadīths would agree with the ʿammah?" The Imām replied, "One must study to find out of the two the one that is more agreeable to their rulers and judges must be disregarded and the other must be followed." I said, "What if both ḥadīths would agree with their rulers?" The Imām replied, "If such would be the case it must be suspended until you meet your Imām. Restraint in confusing cases is better than indulging in destruction" (al-Kulaynī 1388 HS, 1:68; for the English version, see al-Kulaynī 1999).

Because of the common metanarrative and integrating the individual biography into this metanarrative, Shīʿites, who come from different historical backgrounds, possess different ethnic identities, live in different geographical areas and under various regimes, have a strong collective memory and have emotional unity. The Shīʿite metanarrative jogs Shīʿite individuals' memories about a notion that they are members of a community that has been traveling in history from the beginning of creation as the carriers of a sacred heritage, that is, the carriers of the "true religion." This unity is not only a unity of ideal but also a unity of the people whose souls were specially created (for some narratives about this subject in Shīʿite ḥadīth sources, see al-Ṣaffār 1362 AH, 40). This community has a clear opinion about its journey not only from the past to the present but also from the present to the future, to the end of history. Their journey is a part of the cosmic order. Accordingly, a Shīʿite Muslim thinks of himself/herself as united with other Shīʿites and with the cosmic order as a part of a long-term journey. This thought provides

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[2]　The term *ʿammah* (the masses or the general ones), which has a negative meaning in Shīʿite sources, is ascribed to Sunnī Islam, but the term *khāṣṣah* (the special ones) to the Shīʿah.

him with vertical-historical integration and solidarity oriented to the past and future offshoots and with present-oriented horizontal-social integration and solidarity. It could be said that the cement of this integration is suffering. The acceptance of sharing the sufferings experienced in "the sacred journey" as one of the pillars of piety and even faith, which are distinguishing characteristics of Shīʿite faith, produces a communion between the believers and provides Shīʿite communities with solidarity.

Suffering as a Form of Remembering

The transformation of Shīʿite teachings, which are based on the sufferings experienced in Karbalāʾ, to a sociocultural identity, became possible using the symbols of remembering that provide participation in those sufferings. These symbols, which appear sometimes as a place, sometimes as an object, sometimes as a religious ceremony and sometimes as an artistic expression, by their stimulating visual, aural, and emotional characteristics, remind people about Karbalāʾ by reevoking suffering, and thus constantly reproducing Shīʿite identity.

There are many narratives in Shīʿite culture in which feeling sorrow, suffering, weeping, and even reducing people to tears for al-Ḥusayn are good deeds that will be rewarded in the afterlife (al-Ṣadūq 1368 AH, 83; al-Majlisī 1983, 44:293). The glorification of suffering and the acceptance of providing it with continuity and transforming it into a social event as an indispensable feature of piety is one of the distinctive characteristics of Shīʿism. This state is one of continuous remembering, that is, remembering via suffering.

This spiritual state, which is intensely experienced, especially during religious ceremonies, continues to shape the culture after the ritual (for discovering how the moods emerged during rituals shape daily life after rituals, see Geertz 1973, 119-124). The significant part of cultural products, which are produced by the impacts of the mentioned spiritual state, enter basic rituals over time, and this cycle lasts for hundreds of years. What lies at the center of this cycle is, of course, the month of Muḥarram, in which commemoration ceremonies of the Karbalāʾ tragedy are organized, especially the ceremonies on the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ (on the 10th of Muḥarram), when the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn took place. In the first years following the Karbalāʾ tragedy, these activities were initiated by a limited number of people, such as members of *ahl al-bayt* and the

movement of *al-Tawwābūn* (the Penitents), as an activity of shedding tears. Over time, these activities gained prevalence in society, and through the addition of new symbols and rituals over centuries, it not only became a special tradition but also led to the formation of a social culture.

The mourning activities started as commemoration ceremonies of al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom. These ceremonies covered a period of sixty days starting from the beginning of the month of Muḥarram. The common point of all these ceremonies expressed by means of different symbols is keeping al-Ḥusayn's suffering alive and sharing this suffering so that it will not be forgotten. For this purpose, we see that lamentation elegies, which had once been performed at Imāms' and their descendants' shrines, starting with the 3rd century AH, began to be performed by the leadership of professional lamenters, accompanied by professionally written elegies. According to Mahmoud Ayoub, "these leaders contributed much to the growth of *Shīʿī* popular piety, especially to the crystallization of the Muḥarram cultus." (Ayoub 1978, 154).

Attendees at the ceremonies of Muḥarram, by shedding tears for the sufferings of Imāms, al-Ḥusayn's in the first place, and performing rituals such as striking their chests or beating their backs with chains, were able to physically feel suffering as an attempt to experience suffering. Reciting *marsiyah*, *nawḥah* (elegies) in company with poems and music has had a critical importance, as it made spreading and maintaining the elegy tradition easier, making them stick in people's minds more deeply. Over time, there appeared many theatrical drama-plays such as *Shabīh*s (mourning plays) that more effectively bring the tragedy of Karbalāʾ to life. *Shabīh*s, which became widespread starting in the 15th century, theatrically re-enact many concrete symbols of the Karbalāʾ events, including al-Ḥusayn's horse. Both in *marsiyah*s and *shabīh*s, the Karbalāʾ events are narrated in detail from beginning to end, and sometimes these narratives last for days. Accordingly, both these ceremonies and more impressive types and figures of remembering have been developed for centuries.

While talking about the symbols of remembering that keep Shīʿite memory alive in Shīʿite culture, the remembering places, which have an importance position in Shīʿite culture, should not be forgotten. Al-Ḥusayn's shrine in Karbalāʾ, of course, is the most important among

them. Visiting this shrine and sharing al-Ḥusayn's suffering there by shedding tears is accepted by Shīʿites as the most important pilgrimage after *ḥajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca). The visitors to Karbalāʾ enjoy great respect in Shīʿite society and they have a special title, *Karbalāʾī*. It is emphasized in Shīʿite sources that this pilgrimage will be rewarded both in this world and in the afterlife. Shīʿites do not perform a visit only to Karbalāʾ but also to the shrines of Imāms and their relatives that are spread around the Islamic world. These shrines are the places of remembering for Shīʿites. These pilgrimages to the places of remembering are regarded by M. Ayoub "as an act of covenant renewal between the Holy Family and their followers." (Ayoub 1978, 184).

The abovementioned ceremonies and rituals, which evoke sorrow and condolence in attendees, have executed crucial functions in keeping social memory alive and constantly remembering the Karbalāʾ tragedy. As M. Ayoub laconically writes, "Every Muḥarram becomes the month of the tragedy of Karbalāʾ and every ʿĀshūrāʾ the day of the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn" (Ayoub 1978, 149). Accordingly, Shīʿah has managed to make suffering a central element of collective memory through the symbols and ceremonies that enhance empathy and identification with Karbalāʾ victims. In this context, it could be said that the impacts of rituals are not limited to merely the month of Muḥarram. In particular, together with the Iranian Revolution, the common slogan among Shīʿite youth, "Every day is ʿĀshūrāʾ, every place is Karbalāʾ," laconically expresses the impact of the rituals in the spatio-temporal continuum. It could be observed that Karbalāʾ is continuing to shape life and culture both in daily life and in sociopolitical issues.

Many attitudes and behaviors that have become a part of daily life also bring the suffering of Karbalāʾ to mind. In funeral ceremonies for their deceased relatives, Shīʿites also shed tears for Karbalāʾ martyrs; meaning that they remember al-Ḥusayn, Karbalāʾ, and Imāms every time they are sad. Shīʿite scholars also encourage it. It is noteworthy that in Shīʿite societies, for 60 days starting from the 1st Muḥarram, all kinds of entertainment, including wedding and engagement parties, is halted.

Because al-Ḥusayn and his supporters had been deprived of water for days before they were murdered, water reminds people of al-Ḥusayn's suffering and has become one of the most important

symbols of daily life. One popular behavior among Shī'ites is to pray to Allah for Imāms and to curse Yazīd after drinking water. The symbols that bring Karbalā' to mind have even entered into the cuisine of Shī'ite communities. Cooking special food called *iḥsān* in memory of Imāms and distributing them to people is a popular behavior in Shī'ite society. In addition, visual symbols that remind people of the Karbalā' tragedy are widespread. Unlike Sunnī scholars, who categorically forbid drawing pictures of sacred religious figures, Shī'ah scholars allow all means that can keep Karbalā' events in memory, including drawing pictures of Karbalā' victims (for the views of contemporary Shī'ah scholars (*mujtahids*) on this subject, see Sīstānī n.d.; al-Hakeem 2013; Shīrāzī n.d.). Al-Ḥusayn's and other Karbalā' martyrs' imaginary pictures, which remind believers of the suffering, are widely distributed among Shī'ites.

Suffering as a Price of Chosenness

Jan Assmann, who is famous for his studies on social memory, claims that the act of social remembering is closely related to the belief in chosenness and, in parallel, to the sense of obligation: "The principle of memory follows on from that of "being chosen" – being chosen means nothing less than a complex network of rigidly fixed obligations not allowing under any circumstances memory to fade away." (Assmann 2011, 17).

Shī'ite social memory's strong and efficient preservation of its existence for centuries is largely attributable to the principle of chosenness in Shī'ite identity. According to Shī'ah, the twelve Imāms are the final and most important circle of chosen people after the prophets. These people, who possess extraordinary power, shoulder responsibilities related to providing the cosmic order such as the salvation of humanity, the order of universe, and the course of history. The preservation of "true religion" is at the heart of this cosmic order. Their followers and supporters also join the ranks of the chosen people. According to a narrative in the most important Shī'ite ḥadīth sources, the sixth Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq explained the unity of Imāms and their followers and their chosenness as follows:

> ... He [God] created the souls of our followers [Shī'ahs] from our
> clay and their bodies from a hidden clay beneath that clay. Allah
> did not placed anything as a share of that which they are created

in anyone except the prophets. For this reason, we and our
followers became human beings. The rest of the people became
riff-raff for Hell and to Hell (al-Kulaynī 1968, 2:389).

The abovementioned belief is also reflected in other main Shīʿite
sources, which describe Sunnīs as ʿ*āmmah* (the masses) and Shīʿites
as *khāṣṣah* (the special ones). The notion of chosenness in Shīʿite
belief contains two meanings like the two sides of medallion: being
chosen to fulfil a duty and being chosen to be saved. In this sense,
being a Shīʿite Muslim means being chosen as the protector of the
trust that the Imāms inherited from the chain of prophets, that is, the
protector of the "true religion." It also means the only way of
salvation in terms of being the bearer of this "trust." However, there is
a price of this chosenness: suffering. In this context, the existence of
suffering is interpreted and explained within the context of
chosenness. Because the sufferings, which began with *Hābīl* (Abel)
and *Qābīl* (Cain) and continued with the lives of the prophets and
reached its peak in Karbalāʾ, are the manifestations of chosenness,
they should not be forgotten and should be shared and experienced
to join the rank of chosen ones. Accordingly, the belief of chosenness
that plays a significant role in providing memory with continuity
makes it possible to make sense of suffering, which is the central
element of Shīʿite identity, in the relation with the cosmic order.
Being chosen for responsibility in the protection of the cosmic order
makes suffering for the sake of fulfilling this responsibility not only
sufferable but also meaningful and valuable. The bearableness of the
Karbalāʾ tragedy, which is accepted in Shīʿite theology as the peak of
all sufferings borne by the prophets for the sake of protecting the
"true religion," is based on the acceptance of their sufferings as the
price of chosenness. If this price is not paid, the obligations arising
from chosenness cannot be fulfilled and the salvation arising from
chosenness cannot be realized. "The community, inasmuch as it has
shared in the suffering of the Holy Family here on earth, will share in
the great rewards and gift of intercession of the Prophet and the
people of his household *(ahl al-bayt)* on the last day" (Ayoub 1978,
210). For this reason, suffering is not merely a worth-bearing, but
beyond that, it is an act that should be glorified.

Shīʿah Islam as an Indispensable Part of the Cosmic Order

One of the most important beliefs of Shīʿite-Islam is expressed in a
ḥadīth ascribed to the fifth imām of the Twelver Shīʿites Muḥammad

al-Bāqir (95-114/714-732): "By Allah! Since the death of Adam, God has not left the earth without an Imām, who guides people to Allah" (al-Ṣadūq 1966). Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (114-148/732-765) reveals another function of Imāms according to which Earth cannot be without a *ḥujjah* (Imām, proof of God to humanity) who guides people to Allah: "Abū Ḥamzah narrates: I asked Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq: 'Can the earth exist without an Imām.' He replied, 'If the earth was left without an Imām it would collapse'." (see al-Kulaynī 1968, 1:179). Similar narratives have been ascribed to other Imāms as well (see al-Kulaynī 1968, 1:178-179; al-Ṣadūq 1404 AH, 2:246-247; 1405 AH, 201-202). If we combine these two ḥadīths, which have many versions, then it can be said that Shīʿite Islam ascribes to Imāms a special role in maintaining the cosmic order. On the one hand, this cosmic order includes the truth's (the "true religion"'s) undistorted existence, and on the other hand the order of the universe. For this very reason, chapters on the justification of the doctrine of *Imāmate* (spiritual leadership of Muslim community) in Twelver Shīʿite sources are much broader in size than those of other Islamic doctrines, and thousands of volumes have been written on this topic because, in Shīʿite tradition, *Imāms* are the people chosen by God, through which the divine plan is realized. *Risālah* (prophethood) cannot be considered completed without *Imāmate*. According to some Shīʿite sources, the reason for the revelation of the following Qurʾānic verse was the divine appointment of the Imāms: "... Today have I perfected for you your religion and completed my favour upon you and approved Islam for you as a religion." (Q 5:3) For them, only by the appointment of Imāms did God complete religion … (al-Ṣadūq 1361 HS, 96; al-Ṭabarsī 1415 AH, 3:274). Not only *risālah* but also many subjects related to the cosmic order, including the arrival of *qiyāmah* (end of the world), cannot be thought about and understood without *Imāmate*.

Karbalāʾ, in turn, is a place and time of maintaining order, saving religion from distortion and destruction, and separating *ḥaqq* (truth) from *bāṭil* (falsehood), Cosmos from Chaos. Al-Ḥusayn, by courageously and heroically fighting, consciously preferred dying to remaining silent against the distortion of religion and the triumph of falsehood. He sacrificed himself, but managed to maintain the continuation of the order. In other words, al-Ḥusayn, who was charged by God to save the "True Religion" and sacrificed his worldly life for this mission, maintained the continuation of the cosmic order.

In this context, it could be said that the interpretation of history and the notion of universe in Shīʿite identity are based on the tragedy of Karbalāʾ. In particular, Sunnī scholars, who do not view Karbalāʾ from the same perspective, consider the importance of it to Shīʿite identity as exaggerated. For instance, Ibn Kathīr, one of the outstanding Sunnī scholars and historians, in his famous book on Islamic history called *al-Bidāyah wa-l-nihāyah* writes:

> However, it is not good to express sadness and grief [over al-Ḥusayn's tragedy] in the manner in which the Shīʿites mourn, and which mainly consists of hypocrisy. His father, who was more excellent than him, was also martyred. But they [Shīʿites] do not mourn for him, like they mourn for al-Ḥusayn (Ibn Kathīr 1408 AH, 8:221).

In parallel with this central place of *Imāms* and the tragedy of Karbalāʾ in the interpretation of history and the universe, the maintenance of the cosmic order in Shīʿite culture is also grounded on the existence of the Imām's supporters. In this sense, *Imāmate* is the trust of God and His last prophet, and being a Shīʿite Muslim means bearing this trust and protecting it. Belonging to Twelver Shīʿism also means taking part in the implementation of the divine plan into practice, in other words, taking part in maintaining the cosmic order.

In Shīʿite thought, the realization of the divine plan, the realization of the process of cosmic history, and the protection of the abovementioned trust are not separable from one another. The realization of the process of cosmic history, that is, the possibility of the building of a "just society" by al-Mahdī, in which he will punish the enemies of *ahl al-bayt* and will reward their supporters (Shīʿites), will take place at the result of his having enough power against oppression in the days of his *ẓuhūr* (appearance). He was occulted because of his enemies' oppressions and his supporters' inability to protect him against his enemies. Although traditional Shīʿite thought proposes that in the period of appearance, the source of al-Mahdī's power will have a divine character in the modern period, especially in Shīʿite-Islamist circles, who, by means of the principle *wilāyat al-faqīh* (rule of religious leaders), obtained the opportunity to undertake political activities, making the necessary correlation between his appearance and the position of Shīʿite society. This modern interpretation proposes not a passive *intiẓār al-Mahdī*

(expectation of the Mahdī), but the thought of "building a strong Shīʿite society until the *ẓuhūr* of al-Mahdī," and it claims that the position of Shīʿite society is one of the conditions of his appearance (Hassan 2008, 58; Hanson 2006, 55-56). For the supporters of this standpoint, Shīʿites must be worthy of al-Mahdī in terms of their ethical and political power when he appears. Therefore, it could be said that the realization of the process of cosmic history can be possible when the principles of Shīʿite Islam are obeyed.

Shīʿite society has not been left alone during the period in which is advancing toward the final stage of cosmic history. Indeed, the society is indirectly in contact with the divine world by means of the *Imām* of the time (al-Mahdī), who although was occulted by God, is now among people. According to Twelver Shīʿism, although the *waḥy* (divine revelation) was ended by the Prophet Muḥammad, the contact of the Imāms, who are the *ḥāfiẓ li-l-sharʿ* (guardians of the divine law), with the divine world has been continuing. Shīʿah express this connection with the word *muḥaddath*. To avoid being accused by Sunnī scholars of giving the function of the Prophet to Imāms, Shīʿite scholars emphasize the difference between divine revelation and *muḥaddath*ness. A ḥadīth, which is ascribed to Imāms Muḥammad al-Bāqir, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, and ʿAlī al-Riḍā, describes the essential differences between *rasūl*, *nabī*, and *muḥaddath* (imām). According to that ḥadīth, the *Rasūl* (the Messenger) openly sees the angel *Jibrīl* (Gabriel) and speaks to him. *Nabī* (the prophet) sees *Jibrīl* in his dream. He does not see the angel, but hears his voice. *Muḥaddath* (imām), in turn, only hears the voice of the angel, but he does not see the angel, neither openly nor in his dream (al-Ṣaffār 1362 HS, 339-344; al-Kulaynī 1968, 1:176-177). Although Twelver Shīʿite scholars insistently differentiate between *muḥaddath*ness and *waḥy* (revelation), they see it as a continuation of *waḥy* in terms of functionality. The preservation of *waḥy* from distortion becomes possible because of the *muḥaddath* Imāms, who are supported by divine knowledge. According to this thought, God, who sent *waḥy* to the Prophet, protects the *waḥy* using the infallible Imāms, which can be called "the notion of the uninterruptedness of the divine message." Unlike the Sunnī perspective, which does not accept the existence of a special group of men that protects the divine law, the connection with God has not been interrupted in Shīʿite Islam. This connection is in place for the protection and strengthening of the "true religion," for the formation of a just society by al-Mahdī's appearance and then for

the arrival of *qiyāmah* (end of the world), eventually being called to account before God. Because the realization of all these events cannot be possible without "an uncorrupted group of believers" (Shīʿites), the abovementioned connection also functions to maintain a Shīʿite community, which is representative of the truth and balancing factor in the cosmic order. Because of this connection, total deviation from the "true religion" of Shīʿite society is prevented, which means that if Shīʿite scholars united in a wrong decision in a religious matter, then al-Mahdī would not remain silent; he would intervene to correct that decision and prevent the religion's distortion (see Sachedina 1981, 144-146). This intervention means that the Shīʿites' position in the world is protected by al-Mahdī himself.

The connection between al-Mahdī and Shīʿite society is also at the individual level, too. According to Shīʿah, though al-Mahdī does not openly appear to people, he lives on Earth and can help his followers if needed. There are many books in Shīʿite culture that are full of narratives on this matter. Pious Shīʿite Muslims believe that al-Mahdī, God willing, can help and even meet them. The popular practice of writing petitions stating problems and grievances addressed to al-Mahdī and leaving them in holy places or throwing them into flowing rivers is a good example of this belief. There is a special place for leaving notes to the Imām in Jamkaran Mosque of Qom, where it is believed al-Mahdī was seen.

Al-Mahdī, who can be everywhere whenever he wants, continues to receive messages from God by means of *ilhām* (divine inspiration); he can sometimes meet Shīʿite scholars and pious believers and send them messages. The famous Shīʿite scholar al-Ṭabarsī gives a list of those had seen al-Mahdī (see al-Ṭabarsī 1979, 425). Thus, Shīʿite society, albeit indirectly, becomes a living recipient of the divine messages. Although Shīʿite scholars do not accept that in the period of *al-ghaybah al-kubrā* (greater occultation), one can receive messages from al-Mahdī, which can be binding on all Shīʿites, they do not reject the notion that a pious person can meet al-Mahdī and receive personal messages from him. In this context, there is a belief among Shīʿites that even today, many Shīʿites can be in touch with al-Mahdī; this can also be seen in the *tawqīʿāt*, which, according to Shīʿite sources, received letters sent by al-Mahdī to Shīʿite community through his *al-Sufarāʾ al-arbaʿah* (four representatives) during his *al-ghaybah al-ṣughrā* (minor occultation between 874-941 AD) (see al-Īrāwānī 1420 AH, 33-39, 41-43).

Shīʿite society's passion is kept alive by accepting itself as a living interlocutor of Divine messages. Religion for Shīʿite Muslims is not a system lost to the mists of time, but a system that presents the here and now, addressing the Shīʿite community. In this context, if Shīʿite communities are central actors in the cosmic historical process, they are also in the position of forming this cosmic historical process and are at the center of it. The close association of Shīʿite identity with the cosmic order has strengthened that identity.

The Notion of Time and the Doctrine of *Intiẓār*

The Shīʿite notion of time is crucial to understanding and inseparable from Shīʿite identity. In the Shīʿite notion of time, we can see the impact of other components of Shīʿite identity and the traces of the notion of time are clearly noticed in those components. It could be said that there are close connections between the Karbalāʾ events, the belief of Mahdī and the notion of time. In this context, the past in Shīʿite belief is the time of pain, defeat, and oppression, but the future is the time of hope, happiness, triumph, and justice. In brief, the past is the time when imperfectness dominated, but the future is the time when perfection will dominate. The past was full of imperfectness because, including during the time of the Prophet Muḥammad, it was not possible to establish social order, and it witnessed sufferings and oppressions that reached their peak with the Karbalāʾ events. The future is full of hopes because the twelfth Imām, who was occulted because of the despotic regime, will appear before doomsday and will punish the resurrected oppressors (the doctrine of *rajʿah*). In addition, he will reward his supporters and will lead society by establishing a just, ideal social order. Accordingly, justice will take place before the end of the world. What shapes the present are the memories of the past and the expectations and goals related to the future. In this sense, "the present" is the time that keeps in itself the past and the future. The doctrine of *intiẓār* (expectation) is of a great importance in terms of revealing the importance of the past and future in shaping the "today" of Shīʿite identity.

As a possessor of a cosmic time notion, the Shīʿite identity, instead of possessing a notion of time that moves from the past to the future within the framework of cause-effect relation, possesses a concept of time in which the past, present, and future are intertwined with each other. In this concept of time, not only can the future arise from the past but also the past can arise from the future. At the metaphysical

level, the time whose knowledge was available for all eternity has a characteristic of the narrative whose beginning and end were known beforehand and that has internal integrity. However, the source of the narrative taking shape in the course of time is not this metaphysical knowledge; on the contrary, what generates this knowledge is the narrative that will take place in the future. The internal integrity of the narrative in question depends on the consistency between its elements. Accordingly, the latter in the narrative cannot be separable from the former, and the former cannot be separable from the latter in terms of integrity and consistency. More concretely, for example, some prophets, although they lived much earlier in terms of time, could shed tears for the Karbalā' sufferings, or because al-Mahdī will appear and punish the resurrected oppressors and justice will be established under his leadership, the divine intervention in the oppressions towards al-Ḥusayn can be postponed. Accordingly, an event that will happen in the future can shape the course of an event that happened in the past.

The Shī'ite concept of time essentially differs from that of Sunnī Muslims, who constitute the majority of the Islamic world, and this difference forms the cause and effect of the differences between the two Muslim identities. Addressing these differences will more clearly reveal the relationship between the Shī'ite concept of time and other characteristics of Shī'ite identity. According to Sunnīs, *'asr al-sa'ādah* (the golden age), where the ideal society was established, took place in the period of the lifetime of Prophet Muḥammad and the first four caliphs, but for Shī'ites, the Prophet did not have an opportunity to build a model society; instead, he trained model people, *ahl al-bayt* (the people of his household, namely, 'Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn). The past, from the election of the first caliph to the tragedy of Karbalā', was the period that was full of sufferings and injustice towards the Imāms of *ahl al-bayt*.[3] However, this does not mean that the age of happiness will never be established in this world. With the appearance of the twelfth Imām (al-Mahdī) before doomsday, the "true religion," that is, Shī'ism, will gain a victory, a socioeconomic prosperity will dominate and vengeance will be taken on sacred

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[3]   According to Shī'ah, all Imāms, except the occulted Twelfth Imām, were killed, either by sword in the case of 'Alī and al-Ḥusayn or by poisoning in the case of the other Imāms. Sunnī sources usually do not accept that the Imāms were poisoned.

people's oppressors. Thus, the ultimate justice, which did not take place in the past, will be established in the future. In this context because the ideal period in Sunnī tradition took place in the past, it emphasizes "former times" and "lost ones," and looks at the present and future as the times that should be illuminated in light of the past. Accordingly, because the past is idealized in Sunnī Islam, it attempts to carry the past to the present and future. In Shīʿah, however, the illumination itself will take place in the future. In this context, it is meaningful that unlike Sunnī Muslims, Shīʿite Muslims have not usually been inclined toward puritanical movements that try to literally and strictly carry the early period of the Muslim community into the present time. According to the Sunnī approach, degenerations appear when we move away from the past, but in Shīʿah, every passing day brings us nearer to the "ideal period." In this regard, it might not be a coincidence that the philosopher, Mullā Ṣadrā, who proposed the theory of *ḥarakah jawhariyyah* (substantial motion) and claimed that the whole existence is in motion towards perfection, was a Shīʿite Muslim.

Doomsday, in other words, the future in Shīʿite-Islamic culture is a time, which is hoped to come as soon as possible, and what can make it happen is the intense devoutness of Shīʿites. Because Shīʿite identity sees the ideal not in the past but in the future, it could be said that it has a more flexible and dynamic structure in terms of the realization of structural transformations within tradition. One of its significant examples is Khomeinī's theory of *wilāyat al-faqīh* (the doctrine of the authority of Islamic jurists). The significant fraction of Shīʿites, who had for centuries stipulated that a legal state could be established only with the appearance of al-Mahdī, accepted this doctrine and thus achieved a legal Shīʿite state. In addition, with this doctrine, the passive doctrine of *intiẓār* was transformed into an active, operational expectation aimed at preparing the circumstances of al-Mahdī's appearance. However, it should not be understood from all these facts that Shīʿite identity possesses Western-like evolutional time notion. In Shīʿite culture, the past is not accepted as an unwanted one, and getting rid of its values is not considered necessary. In Shīʿism, taking part in an ideal society that will be established with the appearance of al-Mahdī can become possible to the extent of remembering and experiencing the past, or more clearly, the sufferings of the past. Accordingly, although there was not an enviable aspect of the past, which was full of sufferings, it is also a

period that should not be forgotten. Remembering the past does not arise from longing for the past, but from its being part of a moving power that carries the world towards a happy and just order.

Some Modern Sociopolitical Implications of the Tragedy of Karbalāʾ

Throughout history, their notion of time has fortified Shīʿites over pressures and pains, prompting the thought of *intiẓār* (expectation), which keeps them in shape even today. The doctrine of *intiẓār*, which means the state of intense expectation, is at the same time the state of watchfulness and keeping the faith alive. This notion fortified Shīʿism with patience at times when it was in the passive position, and now it has been transformed into an active doctrine of *intiẓār*, especially within political groups of Shīʿite origin. Today, Shīʿite-Islamist circles, which, especially with the opportunity provided by the doctrine of *wilāyat al-faqīh*, have obtained opportunities to undertake active political participation, have already left a passive approach to *intiẓār* and put forward the notion of "establishing a strong Shīʿite society until the appearance of al-Mahdī." According to Shīʿism, al-Mahdī, who was hidden by God because of people's pressure, will have enough strength to withstand all pressures. Unlike traditional Shīʿite thought, which accepts that the source of that strength is divine, *wilāyat al-faqīh*–based modern Shīʿite movements claim that in addition to divine support, al-Mahdī's supporters must be in a powerful position. For them, Shīʿites must ethically and politically be worthy of him when he appears, which means transforming the notion of *intiẓār* from a passive position to an active one, and at the same time, it is a good example of this notion's transformation in Shīʿite memory over the course of time. Although it has some roots in the *akhbār* (narratives) ascribed to Imāms, the idea of transforming the notion of *intiẓār* into a dynamic form is a new idea (see al-Kulaynī 1968, 1:242-243; al-Majlisī 1983, 47:372-373). It is difficult to speak of such a Shīʿite notion of *intiẓār* in the Middle Ages. It has instead appeared as the result of the self-confidence derived from the establishment of the Iranian Islamic Republic, which takes its legitimacy from the doctrine of *wilāyat al-faqīh*. It also reflects the possibility of a future-indexed dynamic notion of history. This notion makes it possible to transform a thought, which has been preserved in the depth of memory, into different forms according to different circumstances.

Time after time, the interpretation of contemporary subjects by influential Shīʿite social figures referring to Karbalāʾ events, and al-Ḥusayn's suffering and struggle have shown the influence of the Karbalāʾ tragedy on sociopolitical issues. The leader of the Iranian Revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeinī, also related the Karbalāʾ events to justice-seeking attempts in today's world, claiming that this event was not limited to a certain period, but to the struggle between oppressors and oppressed in all times. In this sense, for him, the slogan "Every day is *ʿĀshūrāʾ*, every place is Karbalāʾ" carries a great meaning (about the modern meanings ascribed to this slogan, see Khomeinī 1358 HS, 9:57). In a sound recording of the famous Iranian thinker Murtaḍá Muṭahharī (1920-1979), the statement that "All those who want to help al-Ḥusayn should do something for Palestine" (İslami Uyanış, 2012) is very important in this context. In another statement, he said: "The Palestinian issue would fill al-Ḥusayn's heart with sorrow. If al-Ḥusayn lived today, he would say: 'If people want to mourn for me and lament over my death, their slogan should be Palestine (and similar issues)'" (Aytaş 2014). Another Iranian thinker, ʿAlī Sharīʿatī (1933-1977), who was popular among Shīʿite youth before the Iranian Revolution, reminded people of al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom, and called upon them to resist social degeneration at the cost of their lives and like al-Ḥusayn, to come to the help of their people and recall disappearing truths. In this sense, al-Ḥusayn is an ideal embodiment of martyrdom. The *shahīd*, by his death, chooses not to "flee the hard and uncomfortable environment" (Moghadam 2007, 133-134).

It seems that Shīʿite society reacted to these messages, which were issued before the Iranian Islamic Revolution. Accordingly, suffering in Shīʿite culture, rather being a passive peculiarity, becomes a motor of transformation and development, and sometimes provides society with mobilization in terms of different sociopolitical issues. According to Iranian thinker H. Babaei, who attempts to reveal the basics of suffering's contribution to social solidarity in Shīʿite theology, "In the Shīʿite community, the memory of *liberative suffering* constitutes the theological basis of solidarity, resistance, and righteousness." Babaei defines the term of liberative suffering not as "suffering from," which instigates rancor and revenge, but rather "suffering for," which promotes solidarity. He concludes that suffering in Shīʿite belief is "suffering for" which provides people with solidarity to prevent new suffering (see Babaei 2010, 615-631). Thus, the activity of

"remembering through suffering" actually strengthens social solidarity. Its concrete examples can be seen in Shīʿite societies. In this context, one important development is the activities in *ʿĀshūrāʾ* ceremonies, such as beating backs with chains or using cutting tools for bloodletting to sympathize with Karbalāʾ martyrs, have given their place to mass blood donation campaigns in some Shīʿite societies. Accordingly, it seems that the Karbalāʾ events in Shīʿite societies are interpreted and explained differently in different periods and conditions, but at the same time, it has always preserved its feature of being an important reference guide. Thus, on the one hand, it has been constantly re-interpreted and re-explained in terms of current problems, and on the other hand, it has been a reference point for solving current problems, it has continued to shape the present time and culture.

Conclusion

The murder of al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī and many other members of the Prophet's family by the army of the second Umayyad caliph Yazīd I on the 10th of the month of Muḥarram 61/10 October 680 caused deep sorrow among those who sympathized with him. This sorrow later functioned as a major element of the formation of Shīʿite-Islam identity and its preservation. Thus, the constant remembrance of al-Ḥusayn and his followers' suffering in company with some symbols and rituals and keeping them alive did not remain only a memory of a sorrowful incident, but a way to keep Shīʿite identity alive.

After the Karbalāʾ event, the process of making sense of it started. While making sense of it, Shīʿite circles approached it not from a physical-historical perspective, but from a metaphysical-super-historical perspective. On the one hand, this perspective gave Shīʿah an opportunity to differ from the Sunnī perspective, which approached the subject from historical point of view, and thus to form its own identity and preserve it; on this other hand, this enabled an interpretation of the event within a broader frame by carrying it to a super-historical level. Thus, the Karbalāʾ event, which was narrated by historians as a political and tragic event, occurred during a certain historical period, and was carried to a cosmic-divine level and evaluated in a broader frame of meaning. Al-Ḥusayn and his family's sufferings can be interpreted in this context as "Suffering for the sake of the cosmic order." For as one of the Imāms chosen by God to preserve the "true religion," al-Ḥusayn struggled against Umayyad

dynasty, which wanted to corrupt Islam, with the intention of protecting the will of God on Earth, that is, protecting true Islam from distortion. By doing that, he played a key role in preserving the cosmic-divine order and prevented Islamic society, which is the representative of this order, from completely capitulating to chaos.

This interpretation of the Karbalā' event had an impact on Shī'ite identity in some respects. First, the idea that the murder of their Imām was not a simple historical event and that it had a direct connection to the preservation of the cosmic-divine order enabled Shī'ites to gain power by tackling this culturally constructed trauma. Second, this interpretation gave Shī'ites a different identity from that of other Muslims and became a central element of Shī'ite identity. As a central element of Shī'ite identity, it has provided this identity with continuity and re-interpretations. That is why every year, millions of people attend the commemoration ceremonies of the Karbalā' events, and these ceremonies fortify society with an active culture of suffering.

As mentioned above, "the Karbalā' culture" and the principle of *Imām* that includes this culture is the basis of Shī'ite identity and memory. The main characteristics of this identity can be arranged as follows:

1. Because, according to Shī'ite theology, it represents the "true" and "undistorted" Islam, it ascribes to Shī'ite Islam a special role in the preservation of the cosmic-divine order. This order has survived because of the Twelve Imāms who, it is believed, were chosen by God to preserve the religion. The chain of Imāms, which starts with 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, passed an important examination at the time of al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī, and thus, managed to preserve the religion from distortion. Now the divine order is preserved by *al-Mahdī al-muntaẓar* (the expected Mahdī), who, although in occultation, is believed to be alive and will appear when the time comes. However, for the preservation of the religion, not only the existence of Imāms but also the existence of their followers, that is, the existence of Shī'ites, should be necessary. It is believed that they are the only community on Earth living in conformity with the divine will. Moreover, the appearance of al-Mahdī, his provision of justice on Earth and the punishment of the oppressors of *ahl al-bayt*, who played a role in the Karbalā' massacre in the first place, depends on his having a powerful body of supporters. Especially in the recent period, it is observed that this last aspect is driven forward more

explicitly than in the past. It is, rather, related to the self-confidence provided by the Iranian Shīʿite Islamic Revolution to Shīʿite communities from all around the world.

2. The "process of suffering" that emerged with al-Ḥusayn's and his supporters' tragedy at Karbalāʾ paved the way for the cultural establishment of tragedy-based Shīʿite identity. This establishment was achieved by taking the tragedy out of its historical context and interpreting it in the metaphysical context; it was also achieved through the symbols and ceremonies that can keep this interpretation in the minds of people. Thus, suffering was made meaningful and bearable, and it became possible to constantly keep it alive. Because of these meta-narratives, the representation of suffering as a metaphysical value and criterion for piety came with its constant remembrance. At the result, "remembering by means of suffering" became one of the significant characteristics of Shīʿite identity. The "constant remembrance of suffering," which is mostly considered by Muslims other than Shīʿites as incomprehensible, becomes meaningful within this context.

3. One of the characteristics that makes the Shīʿite culture of suffering genuine is that it possesses not a passive, but an active structure. Indeed, it became possible because of the meta-narratives related to Karbalāʾ. According to those metanarrative, a Shīʿite Muslim should not confine his/her commemoration of the Karbalāʾ events to shedding tears for al-Ḥusayn and his relatives; he should also wait for al-Mahdī's appearance and take sides with him when he appears. In this sense, the Karbalāʾ event is not only a completed historical event but also a future event that will happen. According to Shīʿite doctrine of *rajʿah*, both oppressors and oppressed will return to the world, and oppressors will be punished. Accordingly, the battle of Karbalāʾ will end up with the victory of al-Ḥusayn and his supporters. Even according to some Shīʿite sources, al-Ḥusayn will be the first to return to the world (al-Majlisī 1983, 53:39). This shows a special characteristic of Shīʿah's super-historical perception of time. The past, present and future are interlaced with each other in this perception of time.

In conclusion, it can be said that the Karbalāʾ event has been super-historically interpreted by the Twelver Shīʿah, and this interpretation has fortified Shīʿites with an active, bearable and re-

interpretable culture of suffering on social level. It has also preserved its determining role in Shīʿite identity throughout history.

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REFERENTIAL VALUE OF ḤADĪTH TRANSMITTER CRITICISM IN THE 2nd/8th CENTURY: THE CASE OF SHUʿBAH IBN AL-ḤAJJĀJ

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Abstract

Criticism of ḥadīth transmitters is established as a scientific field for ḥadīths in the second quarter of the 8th century (2nd century AH). Research is required to determine how acquisitions of discrediting and commendation (*al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*) were evaluated within the scope of transmitter criticism in the wake of the 2nd/8th century. It is important to identify how the principles and assessments of transmitter criticism, as determined during the establishment period, were perceived in the following era to monitor the progress of discipline of transmitter criticism over time. This paper examines the study of transmitter criticism based on Shuʿbah ibn al-Ḥajjāj, the founder of the discipline, and presents certain findings through a comparison between transmitter assessments by Shuʿbah with conclusions on discrediting and commendation and twelve critics who lived in the 3rd/9th century. Consequently, assessments on transmitters during and after the 3rd/9th century appear to be substantially coherent with those by Shuʿbah.

Key Words: Ḥadīth criticism, transmitter criticism, discrediting (*al-jarḥ*), commendation (*al-taʿdīl*), Shuʿbah ibn al-Ḥajjāj

Introduction

Discrediting and commendation is prominent among ḥadīth-related studies due to its central importance for the determination of the alleged origin of a text, i.e., the Prophet Muḥammad. The discipline began to take on a systematic aspect as of the second quarter of the 2nd/8th century, especially due to efforts by Shuʿbah ibn al-Ḥajjāj (d. 160/776). The discipline continued to progress due to contributions of the disciples of Shuʿbah and enjoyed its peak in the 3rd/9th century, in parallel with the highest point of the ḥadīth classification discipline. Towards the end of the 4th/10th century, original works in this discipline almost entirely faded.

It is crucial to identify how past knowledge and experiences were perceived and utilized in a given period, and to discuss the repercussions of methodological changes in transmitter criticism on its practice in order to track the historical progress of the study of discrediting and commendation, to establish and explain the relationship between the different periods, and note the essential differences between these eras. Thus, we can perform a chronological reading of transmitter assessments that are successively listed in the sources and references about discrediting and commendation.

The first discussion point about the progress of study of discrediting and commendation is the master-disciple relationship between critics. The disciple acquires some of the necessary knowledge about the study of discrediting and commendation from the master before analyzing the qualification of his contemporaneous transmitters either assessed or not by his master, about the ḥadīth narrative and ultimately forms his own opinion. The disciple, in turn, conveys his knowledge to his followers and fosters these scholars, who will play an effective role in transmitter criticism in future generations.

Another important point about the progress of the discipline is that the study of discrediting and commendation has followed a dynamic course throughout each period thanks to ever-present mechanism of independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) and that it is continuously updated via new terminology. At this stage, we should identify the reflections of the situation during the establishment period of study of discrediting and commendation, which was founded in the 2nd/8th

century and essentially progressed pursuant to the structure of each epoch in the subsequent eras.

This paper discusses in a comparative manner how the views of Shuʿbah were perceived from the 3rd/9th century to the 9th/15th century because he was the founder of the study of transmitter criticism and was already an authority in his lifetime. Due to the large scope of the problem, this comparative analysis will only include prominent critics who studied a great number of narrators and mostly declared their justification and preamble in assessments about these narrators. Therefore, the following scholars are mentioned in our study: From the 3rd/9th century, Ibn Maʿīn (d. 233/848), Ibn al-Madīnī (d. 234/848-49), Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), al-ʿIjlī (d. 261/875), Abū Zurʿah al-Rāzī (d. 264/878), Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 277/890), and al-Nasāʾī (d. 303/915); from the 4th/10th century, Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965) and Ibn ʿAdī (d. 365/976); from the 8th/14th century, al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), and from the 9th/15th century, Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449).

Value of Information on Narrators by Shuʿbah as of the 3rd/9th Century

A critic contemporaneous with the narrators was able to determine the opinions of later colleagues, who were able to assess the same narrators exclusively through their respective narratives. Indeed, living in the same era as the narrators, a critic can determine the person's judicial status, civil registry details, dates of birth and death, as well as the actual words of these narrators. Thus, he creates an indispensable reference for the future.

Always aware of its functionality in concluding on the flaws and validity of ḥadīths, the literature on transmitters/narrators and works on the flaws of ḥadīths have given wide coverage to the details of transmitters. These details constitute significant data in writing the biography of a narrator and determining his position in the ḥadīth narrative system. Such information is always considered more sound and reliable when it is provided by specialists who are contemporaneous with the narrator. This is probably why later critics and biographers often referred to Shuʿbah, who collected historical data about the narrative chain (*isnād*) and transmitter. For example, among his contemporaries, Shuʿbah is the only scholar to assert

ʿUbaydah ibn Muʿattib (d. ?) committed *ikhtilāṭ* (confusion);[1] and his report is adopted by al-Nasāʾī and Ibn Ḥibbān.[2] Again, determination by Shuʿbah on commitment of *ikhtilāṭ* by ʿUthmān ibn ʿUmayr (d. ca. 150/767) is included in the works of Ibn Ḥibbān[3] and Ibn Ḥajar.[4] Therefore, Shuʿbah has actually served as a reference for later critics.[5]

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[1]   Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-tārīkh al-kabīr* (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyyah, 1959), VI, 127-128; Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿAmr al-ʿUqaylī, *Kitāb al-ḍuʿafāʾ al-kabīr*, ed. ʿAbd al-Muʿṭī Amīn Qalʿajī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1984), III, 129-130; Abū l-Ḥajjāj Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Yūsuf al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl fī asmāʾ al-rijāl*, ed. Bashshār ʿAwwād Maʿrūf, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 1983), XIX, 274.

[2]   Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī, *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn min al-muḥaddithīn wa-l-ḍuʿafāʾ wa-l-matrūkīn*, ed. Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Zāyed (Aleppo: Dār al-Waʿy, 1975), II, 173; ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī Riḍā, *Nihāyat al-Ightibāṭ bi-man rumiya min al-ruwāt bi-l-ikhtilāṭ: wa-huwa dirāsah wa-taḥqīq wa-ziyādāt fī l-tarājim ʿalá Kitāb al-ightibāṭ bi-man rumiya bi-l-ikhtilāṭ li-l-Imām Burhān al-Dīn Abī Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Khalīl Sibṭ ibn al-ʿAjamī* (along with Sibṭ Ibn al-ʿAjamī's *al-Ightibāṭ bi-man rumiya bi-l-ikhtilāṭ*; Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1988), 236.

[3]   Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn*, II, 95; Abū l-Wafāʾ Burhān al-Dīn Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Khalīl Sibṭ Ibn al-ʿAjamī, *al-Ightibāṭ bi-man rumiya bi-l-ikhtilāṭ*, ed. Alāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī Riḍā (along with Alāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī Riḍā's *Nihāyat al-Ightibāṭ bi-man rumiya min al-ruwāt bi-l-ikhtilāṭ*, Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1988), 503.

[4]   Abū l-Faḍl Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAwwāmah (Aleppo: Dār al-Rashīd, 1986), 386.

[5]   Relevant works include biographical data provided by Shuʿbah about narrators – for example, Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī being older than Abū l-Bakhtarī and Abū l-Bakhtarī having never seen ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib; see Abū Zakariyyāʾ Yaḥyá ibn Maʿīn ibn ʿAwn al-Baghdādī, *Yaḥyá ibn Maʿīn wa-kitābuhū al-Tārīkh* (narrative via al-Dūrī), ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Nūr Sayf (Mecca: Markaz al-Baḥth al-ʿIlmī wa-Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1979), III, 395; for use of this information prior to any reference to Shuʿbah, see ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAmr ibn ʿAbd Allāh Abū Zurʿah al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh Abī Zurʿah al-Dimashqī*, ed. Shukr Allāh ibn Niʿmat Allāh al-Qūjānī (n.p., n.d.), I, 669; about al-Shaʿbī being one or two years older than him, see Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Saʿd ibn Manīʿ al-Zuhrī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrá* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1968), VI, 254; Abū Zurʿah al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh*, I, 669; for Ḥumayd ibn Abī Ḥumayd al-Ṭawīl having heard only twenty-four ḥadīths from Anas while he actually heard others from al-Thābit, see Ibn Maʿīn, *al-*

Nevertheless, certain information provided by Shuʿbah about academic/scientific status of a narrator is not accepted by some scholars. For example, according to relevant sources,[6] the report that "ʿAlī narrated us before he committed *ikhtilāṭ*" by Shuʿbah, and his assertion[7] that even though ʿAlī ibn Zayd ibn Judʿān (d. 131/749) of Basra has become erroneous over time he narrated from ʿAlī when he was trustworthy and reliable in terms of memorization is not well accepted by Ibn Maʿīn.

Nevertheless, information about the confusion (*ikhtilāṭ*) of ʿAlī ibn Zayd, which is not accepted by Ibn Maʿīn, has been adopted by authors of works on transmitters such as al-Fasawī,[8] Ibn Qāniʿ[9] (d. 351/962), and Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449)[10], as well as authors on the

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Tārīkh, IV, 318; about Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī not having heard any ḥadīths from ʿAlqamah, see Abū Nuʿaym Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Isḥāq al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyāʾ* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Saʿādah, 1979 → Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1985), VII, 152; For allegations that Muḥammad ibn Ziyād was Abū l-Ḥārith, Yazīd ibn Ḥumayr was Abū ʿUmar; Abū l-Muhazzim was Yazīd ibn Sufyān, and Wāthilah ibn al-Asqaʿ was Abū Qirṣāfah, see Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Idrīs Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Yaḥyá al-Muʿallimī al-Yamānī (Hyderabad: Maṭbaʿat Majlis Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyyah, 1952), I, 159; about the claim there were 100 days between deaths of Ibn Sīrīn and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, see Abū ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal al-Shaybānī, *Kitāb al-ʿilal wa-maʿrifat al-rijāl*, ed. Waṣī Allāh ibn Muḥammad ʿAbbās (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1988), III, 491.

6   Ibn Maʿīn, *Suʾālāt Ibn al-Junayd li-Yaḥyá ibn Maʿīn*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Nūr Sayf (Medina: Maktabat al-Dār, 1988), 456; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (Hyderabad: Maṭbaʿat Majlis Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-Niẓāmiyyah, 1325-1327 → Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1984), VII, 284.

7   Al-ʿUqaylī, *Kitāb al-ḍuʿafāʾ*, III, 230; Abū Aḥmad ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿAdī al-Jurjānī, *al-Kāmil fī ḍuʿafāʾ al-rijāl*, ed. Yaḥyá Mukhtār Ghazzāwī, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1988), V, 196.

8   Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb ibn Sufyān al-Fasawī, *Kitāb al-maʿrifah wa-l-tārīkh*, ed. Akram Ḍiyāʾ al-ʿUmarī (Medina: Maktabat al-Dār, 1410), II, 741.

9   Abū ʿAbd Allāh ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Mughalṭāy ibn Qilīj al-Bakjarī, *Ikmāl Tahdhīb al-Kamāl fī asmāʾ al-rijāl*, ed. Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAdil ibn Muḥammad and Abū Muḥammad Usāmah ibn Ibrāhīm (Cairo: al-Fārūq al-Ḥadīthah li-l-Ṭibāʿah wa-l-Nashr, 2001), IX, 323.

10   Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, 379.

ikhtilāṭ of narrators, such as Sibṭ Ibn al-ʿAjamī (d. 841/1438)[11] and ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī Riḍā, who published a revised version of *al-Ightibāṭ bi-man rumiya bi-l-ikhtilāṭ*.[12] Apparently, Shuʿbah was the first person to mention the subsequent deterioration in the records of the narrator. Such information can exclusively be acquired in case one is closely acquainted with the narrator or follows him; accordingly, the determination of Shuʿbah was taken into account by the foregoing scholars. Therefore, despite certain individual objections, the information that is provided by Shuʿbah and had a decisive role in the criticism of the narrator has been accepted by the majority. The view of Ibn Maʿīn probably did not gain recognition since a long period of time passed between his life and that of ʿAlī ibn Zayd, compared to Shuʿbah. In fact, Ibn Maʿīn was born approximately twenty-seven years after the death of ʿAlī ibn Zayd.

Even though the information provided by Shuʿbah about the narrators is widely accepted, various scholars, including Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal,[13] Abū Zurʿah al-Rāzī,[14] and Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī[15] assert that Shuʿbah made mistakes regarding the names of narrators in narrative chains. However, as far as we can see, Shuʿbah was often criticized not for incorrectly determining the name or identity of a person[16] but

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[11]   Sibṭ Ibn al-ʿAjamī, *al-Ightibāṭ bi-man rumiya bi-l-ikhtilāṭ*, 264.

[12]   ʿAlī Riḍā, *Nihāyat al-Ightibāṭ*, 264.

[13]   For example, see Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Kitāb al-ʿilal*, I, 515-516; II, 156, 157, and 160.

[14]   Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-ʿilal*, ed. Saʿd ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥumayyid and Khālid ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Juraysī (Riyadh: n.p., 2006), I, 465-466.

[15]   Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-ʿilal*, I, 466.

[16]   Shuʿbah was also subject to criticism for wrongly determining the name or identity of a narrator. For example, al-Bukhārī, al-Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, al-Nasāʾī, Abū Zurʿah al-Rāzī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī assert that Shuʿbah erred in naming Mālik ibn ʿUrfuṭah and his father and claim that the name of this narrator and his father was Khālid ibn ʿAlqamah (al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-tārīkh al-kabīr*, III, 163; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, III, 343; id., *Kitāb al-ʿilal*, I, 614; Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Thābit al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Muwaḍḍiḥ awhām al-jamʿ wa-l-tafrīq*, ed. ʿAbd al-Muʿṭī Amīn Qalʿajī [Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1987], II, 61). According to Ibn Maʿīn and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, he incorrectly identified Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Qurashī as Abū l-Thawwār, since the true name of the narrator was Abū l-Thawrayn (Ibn Maʿīn, *al-Tārīkh* [narrative via al-Dūrī], III, 102; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Kitāb al-ʿilal*, I, 516).

quoting a ḥadīth from a specific narrator as being from a different person.[17] Nevertheless, such mistakes cannot prejudice the scientific nature of Shuʿbah.

Shuʿbah as a Source of Transmitter Criticism after the 2nd/8th Century

Shuʿbah processed information about biographical histories using a critical methodology and determined the position of narrators with regard to their narrative capabilities. Therefore, can we claim that all assessments by Shuʿbah were adopted as *unquestionable truths* based on the view that "as a critic of narrators, he was more

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Nevertheless, Ibn Mahdī argues that the identity of this narrator was correctly expressed by Shuʿbah (Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Kitāb al-ʿilal*, I, 516). Al-Fasawī is cautious in refusing the information provided by Shuʿbah about the identity of the mentioned narrator. According to al-Fasawī, the narrator may have had an epithet in line with the identification or may have even had two monikers (*Kitāb al-maʿrifah wa-l-tārīkh*, II, 211). Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī and Ibn Ḥajar relate debates about the identity of the narrator before adopting a cautious approach, also quoting the view of al-Fasawī (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Muwaḍḍiḥ*, II, 390; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, IX, 261). Regarding mistakes by Shuʿbah regarding the names of narrators, see Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Kitāb al-ʿilal*, I, 515-517.

17 For example, Abū Zurʿah al-Rāzī criticizes Shuʿbah for his mistakes in the ḥadīth that the latter transmits through "Manṣūr → al-Fayḍ → Ibn Abī Ḥathmah → Abū Dharr," saying "most his mistakes are about transmitter names." Then, Abū Zurʿah al-Rāzī claims that the authentic chain was given by al-Thawrī as follows: "Manṣūr → Abū ʿAlī ʿUbayd ibn ʿAlī → Abū Dharr." Abū Ḥātim states that only Allah will know which chain is authentic, refraining from expressing a precise opinion: "Al-Thawrī is the best memorizer (*ḥāfiẓ*) of ḥadīths. Shuʿbah, on the other hand, has made some mistakes about names of transmitters." Thus, he indicates the possibility of Shuʿbah's mistake, albeit not being sure about it. (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-ʿilal*, I, 465-466). Abū Ḥātim finds that Shuʿbah erred in a paper, presenting the chain as "Yazīd ibn Khumayr → ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Musa → Āʾishah," and corrects it as follows: "Yazīd ibn Khumayr → ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Qays → Āʾishah" (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-ʿilal*, II, 101). Another narrative chain, where Shuʿbah made a mistake, was the following: "Muslim ibn Abī Maryam → ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAlī → Ibn ʿUmar." Abū Zurʿah and Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī recall a mistake due to introduction of the name "ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAlī," before correcting it as "ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Muʿāwī" (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-ʿilal*, II, 171).

knowledgeable about his contemporaries than any of us"? Data by Shuʿbah concerning the biographies of narrators are considered a significant asset in the system, where he is seen as an authority of the discipline. However, is he in a position where he is *immune from criticism* in the history of discrediting and commendation? Indeed, such a question can be reversed, considering the development of the discipline of discrediting and commendation over time, as in every other study. Did independent reasoning during the golden era of study of discrediting and commendation revise previous reasoning in the early stages of the discipline in accordance with the common logic of development?

Before answering these questions, one should determine whether Shuʿbah was really considered an authority on transmitter criticism in upcoming periods. Indeed, it is illogical to discuss the different views of a person who is not considered an expert of discrediting and commendation or to refer to him in the evaluation of transmitters. Many scholars, including al-Shāfiʿī[18] (150-204/767-820), Ibn al-Madīnī[19] (161-234/777-848), Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal[20] (164-241/780-855), al-Tirmidhī[21] (209-279/824-892), Abū Ḥātim[22] (195-277/810-890), Ṣāliḥ Jazarah[23] (205-293/820-905), Ibn Abī Ḥātim[24] (240-327/854-938), Ibn Ḥibbān[25] (277-354/890-965), Ibn ʿAdī[26] (277-365/891-976), al-

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[18] Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, I, 127; IV, 370; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-akhlāq al-rāwī wa-ādāb al-sāmiʿ*, ed. Maḥmūd Aḥmad al-Ṭaḥḥān (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Maʿārif li-l-Nashr, 1983), II, 170; Abū Zakariyyāʾ Yaḥyá ibn Sharaf ibn Mūrī al-Nawawī, *Tahdhīb al-asmāʾ wa-l-lughāt* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, n.d.), I, 245.

[19] Abū l-Faraj Zayn al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, *Sharḥ ʿIlal al-Tirmidhī*, ed. Nūr al-Dīn ʿItr (Damascus: Dār al-Mallāḥ, 1978), I, 52.

[20] Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Kitāb al-ʿilal*, II, 539.

[21] Abū ʿĪsá Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsá al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Muḥammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, Ibrāhīm ʿAṭwah ʿIwaḍ (Cairo: Maktabat Muṣṭafá al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1975/1395), V, 738 (Kitāb al-ʿilal).

[22] Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, I, 128-129.

[23] Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, II, 201.

[24] Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, I, 10.

[25] Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn*, I, 40.

[26] Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 150 ff.

Dhahabī[27] (673-748/1274-1348), Ibn Rajab[28] (736-795/1335-1393), and al-Sakhāwī[29] (831-902/1428-1497) either implicitly or explicitly state that they consider Shuʿbah an authority on the criticism of ḥadīth transmitters.

Efforts by Shuʿbah for the authorisation of certain apparently weak or rejected narrators point to his authority in the field. For example, Ghulām Khalīl[30] asserts that al-Ḥasan ibn Dīnār and Ismāʿīl ibn Yaʿlā, who are widely considered unreliable, are seen as reliable by Shuʿbah.[31] Indeed, this is an example of how the power of Shuʿbah in transmitter criticism has been abused.

Such data show that Shuʿbah has always been considered a significant authority in the study of discrediting and commendation. Accordingly, the data can constitute the essential argument that subsequent transmitter criticisms took shape based on the views of Shuʿbah. Nevertheless, such a conclusion can only be attained pursuant to information obtained through large-scale reading of the relevant literature.

Reference to Views of Shuʿbah

Studying the existence and number of references to Shuʿbah in transmitter evaluations after the 2nd/8th century is important when

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[27] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿUthmān al-Dhahabī, *Dhikr man yuʿtamadᵘ qawluhū* in *Arbaʿ rasāʾil fī ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah (Aleppo: Maktab al-Maṭbūʿāt al-Islāmiyyah, n.d.), 175-184.

[28] Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿulūm wa-l-ḥikam*, ed. Shuʿayb al-Arnāʾūṭ and Ibrāhīm Bājis, 8th ed. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 1999), II, 107.

[29] Abū l-Khayr Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *al-Mutakallimūn fī l-rijāl* in *Arbaʿ rasāʾil fī ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah (Aleppo: Maktab al-Maṭbūʿāt al-Islāmiyyah, n.d.), 97.

[30] For severe criticisms about him, see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-Mīzān* (Hyderabad: Maṭbaʿat Majlis Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-Niẓāmiyyah, 1911), I, 272-273.

[31] Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān ibn al-Ashʿath ibn Isḥāq al-Azdī al-Sijistānī, *Suʾālāt Abī ʿUbayd al-Ājurrī Abā Dāwūd al-Sijistānī fī l-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAlī Qāsim al-ʿUmarī (Medina: al-Jāmiʿat al-Islāmiyyah bi-l-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, 1979), 367. For detailed information about transmissions by Ghulām Khalīl, see Halil İbrahim Turhan, *Ricâl Tenkidinin Doğuşu ve Gelişimi -Hicrî İlk İki Asır-* (Istanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlâhiyat Fakültesi Vakfı [İFAV] Yayınları, 2015), 144-150.

observing the practical repercussions of a critic who became a type of authority in his field. Critics after the 2nd/8th century indeed refer to Shuʿbah in their assessments. For example, in a comparison between ʿĀṣim ibn Sulaymān al-Aḥwal and Qatādah ibn Diʿāmah in terms of the power of memorization (ḍabṭ), Ibn Maʿīn refers to Shuʿbah.[32] Again, by reporting that narratives quoted by Ṭalḥah ibn Nāfiʿ from Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh are reliable, Ibn Maʿīn bases his assessment on the work of Shuʿbah.[33]

Ibn al-Madīnī reaches Shuʿbah's assessments through Yaḥyá al-Qaṭṭān. Ibn al-Madīnī asks his master Yaḥyá al-Qaṭṭān about the reliability of Ibrāhīm al-Saksakī and al-Qāsim ibn ʿAwf al-Shaybānī;[34] in response, his master relates not his own convictions and opinions but also assessments by Shuʿbah about these scholars. Such an answer by Yaḥyá al-Qaṭṭān demonstrates that he agrees with Shuʿbah about the mentioned narrators. Ibn al-Madīnī, who does not evaluate Ibrāhīm al-Saksakī and al-Qāsim ibn ʿAwf, has apparently adopted what his master Yaḥyá said and was satisfied with the information by Shuʿbah, at least in these two examples.

There is another notable indication to prove that Ibn al-Madīnī referred to Shuʿbah as a relevant source in his assessment of transmitters. Analyzing the status of al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah with regard to the ḥadīth narrative, Ibn al-Madīnī says: "I do not need Shuʿbah to know his status. Indeed, the situation of Ibn ʿUmārah is too clear to apply to Shuʿbah."[35] Therefore, people asked, "Does he relate erroneous narratives?" and Ibn al-Madīnī said that Ibn ʿUmārah fabricates ḥadīths. This example shows that Ibn al-Madīnī accepted Shuʿbah as the decisive actor in the evaluation of many individuals, narrators above all, about whom there is a difficulty in determining reliability. Indeed, by advising his people to maintain a distance from al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah, Shuʿbah already discredited him as a liar.[36]

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[32] Ibn Maʿīn, *al-Tārīkh*, IV, 182.

[33] *Ibid.*, II, 395, 396.

[34] Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, I, 150; VII, 115; Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, VI, 37.

[35] Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, VI, 265 ff.; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, II, 263-266.

[36] About al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah, see al-Bukhārī, *al-Ḍuʿafāʾ al-ṣaghīr*, ed. Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Zāyed (Aleppo: Dār al-Waʿy, 1975), 30; al-ʿIjlī, Abū l-Ḥasan Aḥmad ibn

In his *al-Ḍuʿafāʾ al-ṣaghīr*, al-Bukhārī cites criticisms by Shuʿbah about Abān ibn Abī ʿAyyāsh,[37] Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān,[38] Ḥākim ibn Jubayr,[39] Ziyād ibn Abī Ḥassān,[40] Yaḥyá ibn ʿUbayd Allāh,[41] and Yazīd ibn Sufyān[42] without expressing his own views. Following this method in a brief work, al-Bukhārī probably wanted to state his own conclusions after his own studies from the perspective of an expert. In *al-Ḍuʿafāʾ al-ṣaghīr*, al-Bukhārī says the following regarding Ziyād ibn Abī Ḥassān: "Shuʿbah used to criticize him." In his *Kitāb al-tārīkh al-kabīr* [43] and *al-Tārīkh al-awsaṭ*,[44] al-Bukhārī also declares that there is no follow-up (*mutābiʿ*) to the ḥadīth narrated by Ziyād through Anas. According to *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn* by Ibn Ḥibbān, the foregoing narrator was considered weak by al-Bukhārī.[45] These data reveal that al-Bukhārī did examine the mentioned person and criticized him in his own words. Another similar example is observable in the assessment of Ḥākim ibn Jubayr. In his *al-Ḍuʿafāʾ al-ṣaghīr*,[46] *Kitāb al-tārīkh al-kabīr*,[47] and *al-Tārīkh al-awsaṭ*,[48] al-Bukhārī discredits Ḥākim ibn Jubayr, saying "Shuʿbah used to criticize him." Nevertheless, in *ʿIlal al-Tirmidhī al-kabīr*,[49] which is an

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ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṣāliḥ, *Maʿrifat al-thiqāt min rijāl ahl al-ʿilm wa-l-ḥadīth wa-min al-ḍuʿafāʾ wa-dhikr madhāhibihim wa-akhbārihim*, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿAlīm ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm al-Bastawī (Medina: Maktabat al-Dār, 1985), I, 299; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, III, 27; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn*, I, 229, 230; Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, II, 283-296; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, VI, 265 ff.; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, II, 263-266; id., *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, 162.

[37] Al-Bukhārī, *al-Ḍuʿafāʾ al-ṣaghīr*, 24.

[38] *Ibid.*, 35.

[39] *Ibid.*, 38.

[40] *Ibid.*, 49.

[41] *Ibid.*, 125.

[42] *Ibid.*, 126.

[43] III, 350.

[44] [mistakenly published as *al-Tārīkh al-ṣaghīr*] ed. Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Zāyed (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1986), II, 101.

[45] Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn*, I, 305.

[46] p. 49.

[47] p. 16.

[48] II, 20.

[49] Abū Ṭālib al-Qāḍī, *ʿIlal al-Tirmidhī al-kabīr*, ed. Ṣubḥī al-Sāmarrāʾī, Abū l-Maʿāṭī al-Nūrī, and Maḥmūd Muḥammad Khalīl al-Saʿīdī (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub & Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-ʿArabiyyah, 1989), 390.

important work with regard to assessments of narrators by al-Bukhārī, the mentioned narrator is criticized by al-Bukhārī without any reference to Shuʿbah and with the following phrase: "لنا فيه نظر" (For us, he is abandoned)."[50]

Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 277/890) is another critic who refers to Shuʿbah in transmitter criticisms, albeit more rarely. Before commending Warqāʾ ibn ʿUmar with the expression *ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth*, he says Shuʿbah used to praise him.[51]

Ibn ʿAdī is another scholar on the biographies of narrators who refer to Shuʿbah and even approves of his views in the wake of relevant studies. There are three different views about the competence of Qays ibn Rabīʿ with regard to the ḥadīth narrative;[52] in this regard, Ibn ʿAdī relates the following: "We can only say what Shuʿbah said about him; there is no problem of reliability about Qays,"[53] and confirms the conviction via reference to Shuʿbah. Following his studies, Ibn ʿAdī suppressed controversial opinions about Qays with respect to discrediting and commendation and reinforced his argument with the perspectives of Shuʿbah. Indeed, after relating several narratives by Qays, expression by Ibn ʿAdī, "Most of his narratives are reliable,"[54] apparently supports this approach. Ibn ʿAdī adopted a similar method[55] in evaluating Abān ibn

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[50]   Al-Bukhārī uses this expression to signify that a narrator was abandoned.

[51]   Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, IX, 50.

[52]   Qays is considered trustworthy (*thiqah*) by Shuʿbah, al-ʿIjlī, Ibn Ḥibbān, and Ibn ʿAdī; weak by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Abū Ḥātim, and al-Dhahabī; and abandoned according to Ibn Maʿīn, Ibn al-Madīnī, al-Bukhārī, and al-Nasāʾī (al-ʿIjlī, *Maʿrifat al-thiqāt*, II, 220; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, VII, 96-97; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn*, II, 216-219; Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, VI, 39-47; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, XXIV, 25 ff.; al-Dhahabī, *al-Kāshif fī maʿrifat man la-hū riwāyah fī l-Kutub al-sittah*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAwwāmah and Aḥmad Muḥammad Namr al-Khaṭīb (Jeddah: Dār al-Qiblah li-l-Thaqāfah al-Islāmiyyah & Muʾassasat ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān, 1992), II, 139; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, VIII, 350 ff.; id., *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, 457.

[53]   Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, VI, 46.

[54]   *Ibid.*

[55]   For reflections of this method on Mughalṭāy ibn Qilīj, see *Ikmāl Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, III, 213.

Abī ʿAyyāsh[56] and Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Laylá.[57,]

In the wake of our analysis on 120 narrators evaluated by Shuʿbah, we can conclude that there is limited inclination in transmitter criticism to determine the position of a narrator in a ḥadīth narrative by exclusively referencing Shuʿbah as of the 3rd/9th century. For us, the essential reason behind this critical fact is that critics in general aim to share information with their disciples and write about their conclusions in line with previous assessments about narrators and their adopted principles on transmitter criticism. Especially during the first centuries AH, critics prioritize the individual evaluation of narrators pursuant to the obtained data and expression of conclusions in their respective terminology; accordingly, they refer to former critics only to the extent to which they serve this purpose.

Criticisms of Shuʿbah by Critics after the 2nd/8th Century and Analysis of These Criticisms

For a sound analysis on the relationship between Shuʿbah and later periods, it is necessary to determine whether his criticisms on transmitters are observed through a critical approach as of the 3rd/9th century and to identify the value of such comments, if any. According to a quotation by al-ʿUqaylī, when Ibn Maʿīn reported his view about the weakness of Jābir al-Juʿfī, the people around Ibn Maʿīn responded that Shuʿbah already narrated the ḥadīth through al-Juʿfī. Nevertheless, such a recollection does not dissuade Ibn Maʿīn from his convictions; he, even more insistently, said, "He is weak, weak."[58] The following phrase is ascribed to Ibn Maʿīn: "During the lifetime of Jābir al-Juʿfī, Zāʾidah (ibn Qudāmah) was his only contemporary who did not transmit ḥadīths from him. Nevertheless, al-Juʿfī is a liar."[59] Therefore, Ibn Maʿīn is apparently aware of the positive opinions of other critics, such as al-Thawrī, about the mentioned narrator. Interestingly, before stating his conviction, which is different from two authorities of discrediting and commendation in the 2nd/8th century, Shuʿbah and al-Thawrī, Ibn Maʿīn bases his view on someone who knows Jābir al-Juʿfī in person and cites the following words about the latter from Abū Ḥanīfah: "I have never seen a greater

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[56] *Ibid.*, I, 386.

[57] *Ibid.*, VI, 186.

[58] Al-ʿUqaylī, *Kitāb al-ḍuʿafāʾ*, I, 195.

[59] Ibn Maʿīn, *al-Tārīkh*, III, 296; Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, II, 115.

liar than Jābir al-Juʿfī."[60] With this method, Ibn Maʿīn clearly wishes to stress the basis of his opinion. In other words, the assessment by Ibn Maʿīn on Jābir al-Juʿfī that "he is a liar and believes in the return of ʿAlī to Earth (rajʿah)" is based on the adversarial critics of al-Juʿfī, particularly Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī (d. 131/749), al-Layth ibn Abī Sulaym (d. 148/765), Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150/767), and Zāʾidah ibn Qudāmah (d. 161/777).[61] It is important to remember that the position of Ibn Maʿīn is in line with the prevalent approach that Jābir al-Juʿfī was no longer considered qualified to transmit ḥadīth narratives as of the second quarter of the 2nd century AH. In fact, Jābir had been discredited by prominent critics of the late 2nd century AH such as Ibn ʿUyaynah, Yaḥyá al-Qaṭṭān, and Ibn Mahdī. Apparently, Wakīʿ defends the reliability of Jābir al-Juʿfī based on a similar approach by Shuʿbah and Sufyān al-Thawrī;[62] in later periods, however, there were almost no followers of this opinion.[63] Additionally, in the 4th/10th century, Ibn Ḥibbān claimed that Jābir was weak also in the eyes of Shuʿbah and al-Thawrī, taking sides with the dominant opinion of the day. Ibn Ḥibbān relates views of Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī, Abū Ḥanīfah, Zāʾidah ibn Qudāmah, Ibn ʿUyaynah, and Ibn Maʿīn about Jābir.[64] He adds that Shuʿbah could not disregard Jābir and narrated ḥadīths from him that he was required to, even though he did not think Jābir was reliable. To justify such an interpretation, Ibn Ḥibbān recalls the words of Shuʿbah from a question by Wakīʿ about why he narrated the ḥadīth from Jābir: "He transmitted narratives that we cannot

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[60] Ibn Maʿīn, al-Tārīkh, III, 296.

[61] For evaluations about Jābir, see al-Bukhārī, al-Ḍuʿafāʾ al-ṣaghīr, 25; id., Kitāb al-tārīkh al-kabīr, II, 210; al-ʿIjlī, Maʿrifat al-thiqāt, I, 264; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl, II, 497; Ibn Ḥibbān, Kitāb al-majrūḥīn, I, 208-209; Ibn ʿAdī, al-Kāmil, II, 119; al-Dhahabī, al-Kāshif, I, 288.

[62] Wakīʿ proves the reliability of Jābir al-Juʿfī as follows: "Who can ever criticize Jābir al-Juʿfī once Sufyān (al-Thawrī) and Shuʿbah have narrated ḥadīth through him?;" Ibn ʿAdī, al-Kāmil, II, 118.

[63] Analyzing narratives by Jābir al-Juʿfī, who had transmitted many ḥadīths according to several scholars from al-Kūfah such as Shuʿbah and Sufyān al-Thawrī, Ibn ʿAdī makes the following assessment: "I do not see any defect that can be defined as deniable in his ḥadīths." Nevertheless, probably under influence of the common negative opinion about Jābir, Ibn ʿAdī also said, "However, he is closer to weakness than veracity (al-ṣidq);" al-Kāmil, II, 120.

[64] Ibn Ḥibbān, Kitāb al-majrūḥīn, I, 208-209.

renounce."[65] According to this comment, Jābir al-Juʿfī is actually a weak narrator for Shuʿbah, and there is no controversy between the dominant view about Jābir and Shuʿbah's transmitting of narratives through him. A comprehensive analysis about evaluations by Shuʿbah on Jābir shows the inaccuracy of the argument of Ibn Ḥibbān.[66] Consequently, Ibn Maʿīn and Ibn Ḥibbān stated opinions in line with the common view of critics about Jābir al-Juʿfī.

Salm al-ʿAlawī was another person about whom Ibn Maʿīn disagreed with Shuʿbah. Shuʿbah criticized the narrator, saying "He saw the crescent two days before anyone else;" while Ibn Maʿīn responds to this comment as follows: "There is nothing wrong with this. As he had a sharp eye compared to others, he saw the crescent before anyone."[67]

ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Abī Sulaymān is another narrator subject to disagreement between Ibn Maʿīn and Shuʿbah. Asked about the authenticity of the ḥadīth on pre-emption (*shufʿah*) narrated by ʿAbd al-Malik through Aṭāʾ, Ibn Maʿīn states the following: "This ḥadīth is a narrative transmitted by no narrator except for ʿAbd al-Malik through Aṭāʾ. Therefore, scholars have criticized him; nonetheless, ʿAbd al-Malik is a reliable (*thiqah*) and sincere (*ṣadūq*) narrator. Such a person cannot be denied." One of his disciples then asks, "Did Shuʿbah criticize him?" Ibn Maʿīn responds, "Yes (he did). 'If ʿAbd al-Malik transmitted another ḥadīth like this one, I would reject it as well,' he said."[68] Pursuant to the response by Ibn Maʿīn to the second question, he was clearly aware that Shuʿbah discredited the mentioned narrator and opposed him, saying "Such a person cannot be denied."

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[65] *Ibid.*, I, 209.

[66] For praisings by Shuʿbah about Jābir, see Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, I, 136; II, 497; Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, II, 117, 118.

[67] Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿUthmān Ibn Shāhīn al-Baghdādī, *Dhikr man ikhtalafa l-ʿulāmāʾ wa-nuqqād al-ḥadīth fīhi*, ed. Ḥammād ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣārī (Riyadh: Maktabat Aḍwāʾ al-Salaf, 1999), 90. There are also some indications through Ibn Maʿīn that Salm al-ʿAlawī was weak (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, IV, 263).

[68] Bashshār ʿAwwād Maʿrūf, Jihād Maḥmūd Khalīl, and Maḥmūd Muḥammad Khalīl, *Mawsūʿat aqwāl Yaḥyá ibn Maʿīn fī rijāl al-ḥadīth wa-ʿilalihī* (Tunis: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2009), III, 278.

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal also disagrees with Shuʿbah in regard to the reliability of Salm al-ʿAlawī. Ibn Ḥanbal validates Salm al-ʿAlawī, "I know him as a good person" before stating "Shuʿbah, however, has discredited him." This information shows that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was aware of Shuʿbah discrediting al-ʿAlawī. Asked about whether Shuʿbah discredited the mentioned narrator due to the "story of the crescent," Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal affirms this.[69] The story of the crescent is the previously mentioned narrative where Salm al-ʿAlawī saw the crescent two days before everyone else, for which Shuʿbah criticizes him. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal has no negative opinion about the narrator and probably does not consider such a story an acceptable motive for discrediting.

Abū Dāwūd is another traditionist/ḥadīth specialist (*muḥaddith*) who disagreed with Shuʿbah regarding his evaluations. Abū Dāwūd accuses ʿAbd al-Ghaffār ibn al-Qāsim of "fabricating ḥadīths" and claims that Shuʿbah is wrong to commend him.[70] However, before commenting on criticism by Abū Dāwūd about Shuʿbah, we should discuss the opinion of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, who discredits ʿAbd al-Ghaffār as "unreliable," in that the opinion of Shuʿbah about the narrator changed over time.[71] When Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Hāniʾ (Abū Bakr al-Athram), disciple of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, learns from the latter that Shuʿbah transmitted a narrative through ʿAbd al-Ghaffār, he probably cannot reconcile such a fact with the sensitivity of Shuʿbah in relating ḥadīth through reliable persons. He is surprised and asks his master, "Does Shuʿbah narrate ḥadīth from him?" In response, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal indicates that Shuʿbah transmitted narratives from ʿAbd al-Ghaffār before the latter became a heretic. When asked whether ʿAbd al-Ghaffār was considered weak due to ḥadīths or his personal views, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal responded "He abused ʿUthmān." Therefore, according to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, this narrator was commended by Shuʿbah before he spoke ill of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān.[72]

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[69]   Mughalṭāy ibn Qilīj, *Ikmāl Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, V, 433.

[70]   Al-ʿUqaylī, *Kitāb al-ḍuʿafāʾ*, III, 100; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Taʿjīl al-manfaʿah bi-zawāʾid rijāl al-aiʾmmah al-arbaʿah*, ed. Ikrām Allāh Imdād al-Ḥaqq (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāʾir al-Islāmiyyah, 1996), I, 825.

[71]   Al-ʿUqaylī, *Kitāb al-ḍuʿafāʾ*, III, 100.

[72]   Probably based on explanations by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, al-Dhahabī indicates that Shuʿbah stopped transmitting ḥadīths from ʿAbd al-Ghaffār once he was

As for al-Dāraquṭnī, he tends toward commendation of the mentioned narrator by Shuʿbah on other grounds. More precisely, according to him, Shuʿbah was not wrong in his attitude because ʿAbd al-Ghaffār was criticized for confusion only after the demise of Shuʿbah. As far as we can see, al-Dāraquṭnī is the first scholar to declare the confusion (*ikhtilāṭ*) of ʿAbd al-Ghaffār. Nevertheless, we should adopt a cautious attitude towards such a determination by al-Dāraquṭnī about the personality of the narrator since the former lived some two centuries later than ʿAbd al-Ghaffār.[73] This is probably why the authors, who wrote about narrators who committed confusion,[74] did not include Abd al-Ghaffār in their works because they did not agree with al-Dāraquṭnī. Additionally, later critics such as al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar made no statements in line with the view of al-Dāraquṭnī, probably for the same reasons. In all likelihood, al-Dāraquṭnī, unaware of the explanation by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal about the problem, attempted to eliminate the apparent controversy with the one of the first arguments to spring to mind because he could not associate the expertise of Shuʿbah in transmitter criticism with his commendation of such a narrator. The fact that Shuʿbah transmitted only two ḥadīths from Abd al-Ghaffār[75] is also in line with the information by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal that Shuʿbah changed his mind about the previously mentioned narrator. After all, criticism by Abū Dāwūd on Shuʿbah for commending such a narrator is apparently due to lack of information.

Ibn Ḥibbān is one of a number of scholars who criticize Shuʿbah for his discrediting and commendations. He anonymously criticizes

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convinced of his weakness. Al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl fī naqd al-rijāl*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1963), IV, 380.

[73] It is assumed that al-Dāraqutnī obtained information about the *ikhtilāṭ* of the mentioned narrator from a source "whose name he did not need to mention." Nevertheless, such possibility is very weak, considering that any information that directly affects the reliability of a narrator from the 2nd/8th century is never mentioned in any source until 4th/10th century.

[74] See Sibṭ Ibn al-ʿAjamī, *al-Ightibāṭ bi-man rumiya bi-l-ikhtilāṭ*; ʿAlī Riḍā, *Nihāyat al-Ightibāṭ bi-man rumiya min al-ruwāt bi-l-ikhtilāṭ*; Abū l-Barakāt Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Khaṭib Ibn al-Kayyāl, *al-Kawākib al-nayyirāt fī maʿrifat man ikhtalaṭa min al-ruwāt al-thiqāt*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qayyūm ʿAbd Rabb al-Nabī (Beirut: Dār al-Maʾmūn, 1981).

[75] Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, V, 327.

Shuʿbah[76] for accusing Abū l-Zubayr Muḥammad ibn Muslim of demanding increases in the product or price in trade (istirjāḥ):[77] "The person who criticized Ibn Muslim did not behave mercifully; indeed, the (narratives of) a person who opted for istirjāḥ on scales does not deserve abandonment for such a reason."[78] Clearly enough, for Ibn Ḥibbān, the discrediting grounds of Shuʿbah are not valid. In later periods, there is no significant objection to this argument by Ibn Ḥibbān.[79] It is also indicated that Shuʿbah discredited Abū l-Zubayr for performing prayers (ṣalāh) imprecisely (isāʾah).[80] However, according to Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d. 463/1071), this criticism by Shuʿbah

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[76]   For discrediting by Shuʿbah, see al-ʿUqaylī, Kitāb al-ḍuʿafāʾ, IV, 131.

[77]   "رأيته يزن فاسترجح في الميزان فتركته." Eerik Dickinson and Cemal Ağırman hear "istirjāḥ on scales" as defrauding (Eerik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite ḥadīth Criticism: The Taqdima of Ibn Abi ḥātim al-Rāzī (240/854-327/938)* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001], 91, 92; Cemal Ağırman, "Rivâyetlerin Değerlendirilmesinde Hz. Peygamber'in Şahsiyet ve Konumundan Yararlanmanın Rolü," *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 7, no. 1 [2003], 40). In dictionaries or *fiqh* books, we did not find any information about the specific meaning of *istirjāḥ*. The concept, which is explained in dictionaries, is *irjāḥ*. *Irjāḥ* means giving more than necessary of sold goods or the paid price; Abū Naṣr Ismāʿīl ibn Ḥammād al-Jawharī, *al-Ṣiḥāḥ tāj al-lughah wa-ṣiḥāḥ al-ʿArabiyyah*, ed. Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Ghafūr ʿAṭṭār, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm li-l-Malāyīn, 1979), I, 364; Abū l-Faḍl Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram ibn ʿAlī Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), II, 445; Abū l-Fayḍ al-Murtaḍá Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs min jāwahir al-Qāmūs*, ed. ʿAbd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj (Beirut: Dār al-Hidāyah li-l-Ṭibāʿah wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 1986), VI, 384.

[78]   Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-thiqāt*, ed. al-Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn Aḥmad (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1975), V, 351-352.

[79]   Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, VI, 121-125; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, XXVI, 402 ff.; al-Dhahabī, *al-Kāshif*, II, 216; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, IX, 390 ff.; id., *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, 506.

[80]   Derived from the same root as "*sayyiʾah*," "*isāʾah*" signifies "commitment of evil or wrongdoing, abusing;" in *fiqh*, it is a general concept that is used for acts evoking disapproval; Mustafa Çağrıcı, "Seyyie," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, XXXVII, 79. Therefore, "*isāʾah* of *ṣalāh*" means committing a deed, which is not approved by *fiqh* during *ṣalāh*.

is also void.[81] In the same regard, Ibn al-Qaṭṭān (d. 628/1231) indicates: "Performing *ṣalāh* imprecisely varies depending on *madhhab*; imprecisely performing, according to Shāfiʿī School, may not be considered so for another school," and rejects the discrediting by Shuʿbah.[82]

Ibn Ḥibbān also criticizes Shuʿbah for accusing al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah of fabricating ḥadīths. According to Ibn Ḥibbān, Shuʿbah discredits al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah as a "liar" because the latter misrepresents (*tadlīs*)[83] ḥadīths narrated by certain fabricators such as Mūsá ibn Muṭayr[84] or weak persons such as Abān ibn Abī ʿAyyāsh.[85] In other words, al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah transmitted ḥadīths from mendacious or weak narrators by indicating their names and thus became responsible for such narratives. Unaware of this fact, Shuʿbah discredited al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah by mistake. Once these findings by Ibn Ḥibbān are taken for granted, we can conclude that Shuʿbah made incorrect assessments about the mentioned narrator due to erroneous determinations. Nevertheless, when calling the narrator a liar, Shuʿbah means that he was a misrepresenter (*mudallis*); therefore, there is no controversy between comments by Shuʿbah and Ibn Ḥibbān. In contrast, the same fact is conceptualized in two unique ways by these two critics. Shuʿbah has always had severe opinions about misrepresentation (*tadlīs*): "Misrepresentation of ḥadīths is worse than adultery, and I prefer falling from heaven to earth to misrepresenting," "For me, adultery is not as bad as misrepresentation," and "Misrepresentation is the brother of lies." Accordingly, he might have forbidden relating ḥadīths through al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah, who was known for misrepresentation. However, Ibn al-Madīnī, who was closer to al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah (d. 153/768) than Ibn Ḥibbān with regard to history, also asserts that Ibn ʿUmārah fabricated ḥadīths. Therefore, such a possibility and the

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[81] Abū ʿUmar Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr al-Namarī, *al-Tamhīd li-mā fī l-Muwaṭṭaʾ min al-maʿānī wa-l-asānīd*, ed. Saʿīd Aḥmad Aʿrāb et al. (Maghreb: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-l-Shuʾūn al-Islāmiyyah, 1992), XII, 143.

[82] Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn al-Qaṭṭān al-Maghribī, *Bayān al-wahm wa-l-īhām al-wāqiʿayn fī kitāb al-Aḥkām*, ed. Ḥusayn Āyt Saʿīd (Riyadh: Dār Ṭībah li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 1997), IV, 322.

[83] Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn*, I, 229,230.

[84] Ibn Ḥibbān calls him a liar; *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn*, II, 242.

[85] Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, II, 295.

finding by Ibn Ḥibbān become questionable. We can claim Ibn al-Madīnī made such an evaluation pursuant to arguments by Shuʿbah — in other words, under the influence of Shuʿbah; therefore, such discrediting should not be used for approving of the finding by Shuʿbah. Nonetheless, Ibn al-Madīnī says, "I do not need Shuʿbah for his status. Indeed, the situation of Ibn ʿUmārah is too clear to apply to Shuʿbah."[86] Therefore, Ibn al-Madīnī should have reached this conclusion from his own assessments. Moreover, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal agrees with Shuʿbah and Ibn al-Madīnī. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal calls al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah "abandoned in ḥadīth (*matrūk al-ḥadīth*)." When asked by his disciples whether Ibn ʿUmārah is a man practicing heresy (*bidʿah*), Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal responds as follows: "No. However, his ḥadīths are rejected (*munkar al-ḥadīth*). His ḥadīths are fabrications and cannot be written down."[87] Therefore, he also discredits al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah for fabricating ḥadīths. Despite occasional objections against Shuʿbah, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal agrees with him in this respect. Therefore, Shuʿbah is not alone in his opinion about this narrator, and Ibn Ḥibbān does not appear correct in his criticism.

To clarify the discrediting of al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah by Shuʿbah, we need to use our own expressions of the latter to prove whether he was deceived by misrepresentation indicated by Ibn Ḥibbān or al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah was a true fabricator of ḥadīths in his eyes. The response to this question will also reveal the soundness of the arguments of Shuʿbah while commenting on the mentioned narrator. As far as we can determine, the first ever justified discrediting of al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah by Shuʿbah is as follows: "al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah — I guess[88] — narrated seventy ḥadīths from al-Ḥakam bin ʿUtaybah. Nevertheless, they are groundless."[89] It is unclear whether al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah heard these narratives from al-Ḥakam in person or transmitted them directly through al-Ḥakam, disregarding or identifying mendacious and weak narrators in between. Therefore,

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[86] Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, VI, 265 ff.; al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, II, 66; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, II, 263-266.

[87] Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, II, 296.

[88] This parenthetical expression is attributed to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, who was unsure of the actual number.

[89] Al-Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-ṣaghīr*, II, 109; id., *Kitāb al-tārīkh al-kabīr*, II, 303; al-ʿUqaylī, *Kitāb al-ḍuʿafāʾ*, I, 237; Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, II, 283.

this transmission does not provide absolute criteria on whether the argument by Ibn Ḥibbān is right or wrong. In this report, the method employed by Shuʿbah in determining the groundlessness of narratives through al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah is unclear.

Shuʿbah reports another justification for discrediting al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah as follows: "Al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah narrated seven ḥadīths through the chain of al-Ḥakam → Yaḥyá ibn al-Jazzār → ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. I asked al-Ḥakam about these narratives, and he responded: 'I did not narrate any of these.'"[90] Pursuant to this explanation, Shuʿbah directly went to al-Ḥakam to verify the ḥadīth allegedly narrated via al-Ḥakam by al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah. Nevertheless, the comments for the foregoing narrative are applicable for this issue too; more precisely, al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah had taken ḥadīths from fabricating narrators who ascribe these ḥadīths to al-Ḥakam. In the process, he probably deduced the names of these fabricators and is involved in misrepresentation. When Shuʿbah visited al-Ḥakam to verify the ḥadīths, he found they were not transmitted by al-Ḥakam. Since Shuʿbah heard these narratives from al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah, he sees the latter as responsible for the transmission and accuses him of fabrication. In this respect, the findings by Ibn Ḥibbān appear appropriate. However, considering the possibility that Shuʿbah discredited al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah for fabrication, this information remains insufficient for comprehending the argument in which criticism is pertinent.

Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī (d. 204/819) provides another explanation for the method employed by Shuʿbah in determining the falsity of al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah. A question was asked: "How can you conclude al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah is lying?" Shuʿbah gives the following answer: "Al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah narrated us certain things from al-Ḥakam (*ḥaddathanā ʿan al-Ḥakam*), but we could not find their basis. I asked al-Ḥakam whether the Prophet performed funeral *ṣalāh* for the martyrs of Uḥud. 'He did not,' responded al-Ḥakam. Al-Ḥasan, however, narrated through the chain of al-Ḥakam → Miqsam → Ibn ʿAbbās that the Prophet performed their funeral prayers and participated in their burial. I then asked al-Ḥakam his opinion about the performance of funeral prayers for children born of adultery. 'Their funeral prayers are performed,' said al-Ḥakam. When I asked

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[90] Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn Yaʿqūb ibn Isḥāq al-Saʿdī al-Jūzjānī, *Aḥwāl al-rijāl*, ed. Ṣubḥī al-Badrī al-Sāmarrāʾī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 1985), 53.

him from whom this was narrated, he gave the name of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. However, al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah gives the following chain: [ḥaddathanī] al-Ḥakam → Yaḥyá ibn al-Jazzār → ʿAlī."[91] This narrative includes significant clues about whether criticisms by Shuʿbah on al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah as a liar is based on misrepresentations by the latter. Evidently, a person who commits a misrepresentation does not transmit a narrative with wording that is merely based on hearing. If he were to transmit it via wording merely based on hearing, he would become a liar, not a misrepresenter, since he would have "transmitted a ḥadīth that he never heard with wording that signifies hearing." A misrepresenter cannot employ expressions such as "he reported to us (ḥaddathanā, ḥaddathanī)" since the entire use of this wordings signifies hearing. In the foregoing narrative, Shuʿbah criticizes al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah about narratives that the latter claims to have heard from al-Ḥakam. In other words, Shuʿbah asked al-Ḥakam in person about the ḥadīths that al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmārah transmitted with wording that note he had heard them from al-Ḥakam. As al-Ḥakam said he never transmitted such a ḥadīth, Shuʿbah accused al-Ḥasan of fabrication. In consideration of this conclusion by Shuʿbah about the narrative, as well as of accusations of the previously mentioned narrator by other critics regarding ḥadīth fabrication, Ibn Ḥibbān's criticisms on Shuʿbah do not appear appropriate.

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī criticizes Shuʿbah for not narrating ḥadīths through ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Abī Sulaymān while transmitting them from Muḥammad ibn ʿUbayd Allāh al-ʿArzamī (d. ca. 155/772).[92] Criticisms by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī are based on validations by other critics about the mentioned narrators. Indeed, ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Abī Sulaymān is honoured with praise by other critics, while everyone, except for Shuʿbah, agrees that narrations transmitted by Muḥammad al-ʿArzamī be abandoned.[93]

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[91] Muslim, "Muqaddimah," 71. For comparison, see also al-ʿUqaylī, *Kitāb al-ḍuʿafāʾ*, I, 238; Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrá*, ed. Yūsuf ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Marʿashlī (along with Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn ʿUthmān Ibn al-Turkmānī's *al-Jawhar al-naqī fī l-radd ʿalá l-Bayhaqī;* Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1996), IV, 13.

[92] Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād aw-Madīnat al-salām* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, n.d.), X, 395.

[93] Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, X, 395.

Later Ḥanbalī scholars, such as Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī (d. 744/1343) and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 751/1350), also criticize Shuʿbah for his discrediting of ʿAbd al-Malik. According to Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī, because Shuʿbah is not an expert in the field of *fiqh*, he could not reconcile between the pre-emption ḥadīth transmitted by ʿAbd al-Malik and the authenticated narratives about pre-emption that appears to contradict the one transmitted by ʿAbd al-Malik; consequently, Shuʾbah concludes that one cannot obtain ḥadīths from him.[94] Nevertheless, Muslim considers and uses narratives transmitted by ʿAbd al-Malik as evidence or proof, and al-Bukhārī uses them to bear witness (*istishhād*), therefore, ḥadīths on pre-emption transmitted by ʿAbd al-Malik are not rejected. In the end, Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī asserts that critics such as Sufyān al-Thawrī, Ibn Maʿīn, Ibn Ḥanbal, and al-Nasāʾī authenticated the mentioned narrator and that al-Khaṭīb criticizes Shuʿbah for this discrediting. Indeed, Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī points out that the criticism by Shuʿbah was not respected by other scholars and that he underwent criticisms due to previous discrediting.[95] According to Ibn Qayyim, ʿAbd al-Malik was discredited exclusively by Shuʿbah; thus, this discrediting was void before making the following explanation:

> Only because of this ḥadīth did Shuʿbah conclude that ʿAbd al-Malik was weak; nevertheless, such a deduction signifies a vicious circle. You cannot decide on the weakness of a ḥadīth before you determine that ʿAbd al-Malik is weak. Therefore, a ḥadīth, the weakness of which can only be known through the position of ʿAbd al-Malik, cannot be sufficient to claim that ʿAbd al-Malik is weak just in consideration of the weakness of such a ḥadīth. Indeed, the weakness of ʿAbd al-Malik is claimed merely through this ḥadīth. Therefore, such an assessment is inapplicable, and this narrator is among

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[94] Ḥadīth on pre-emption, narrated by ʿAbd al-Malik, reads as follows: "The neighbour has more right to his pre-emption. He is to be waited for even if he is absent, when their paths are the same." Al-Tirmidhī, "al-Aḥkām," 32; Abū Dāwūd, "al-Buyūʿ," 73.

[95] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī, *Tanqīḥ al-Taḥqīq fī aḥādīth al-Taʿlīq*, ed. Ayman Ṣāliḥ Shaʿbān (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1998), III, 58-59.

reliable, authorized narrators about whom such discreditings should be disregarded.[96]

For Ibn Qayyim, the evidence for the reliability of ʿAbd al-Malik is his being utilized by Muslim for *iḥtijāj* and by al-Bukhārī for *istishhād*, in line with arguments by Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī. In addition, Ibn Qayyim reconciles the mentioned ḥadīth via ʿAbd al-Malik with other narratives, believing that a contradiction between them may have pushed Shuʿbah to discredit ʿAbd al-Malik.[97]

The finding, indicated explicitly by Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī and implicitly by Ibn Qayyim, that Shuʿbah discredits ʿAbd al-Malik since he (the former) is not a prominent *fiqh* figure is not accurate. To our understanding, al-Imām al-Shāfiʿī and al-Bukhārī, a figure known for his wisdom about ḥadīth knowledge, are also among those who criticize the pre-emption ḥadīth narrated by ʿAbd al-Malik on the grounds of its irreconcilability with the authenticated narratives.[98] Al-Imām al-Shāfiʿī is not grounded on narratives via ʿAbd al-Malik due to contradictions between the narrative transmitted by the latter from Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh and ḥadīths narrated by Abū l-Zubayr Muḥammad ibn Muslim and Abū Salāmah ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān from Jābir.[99] Furthermore, al-Khaṭṭābī relates that al-Shāfiʿī said the following about the matter: "There is concern that (the narrative through ʿAbd al-Malik) may not be well-memorized (*maḥfūẓ*). Similar to Abū Salamah, Abū l-Zubayr is also a memorizer (*ḥāfiẓ*) of ḥadīths. Thus, the narrative by ʿAbd al-Malik cannot be used for disputing narratives by these two narrators." In other words, al-Shāfiʿī considers the narrative by ʿAbd al-Malik erroneous and does not perceive him as qualified enough to yield a counterargument against

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[96] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Tahdhīb al-Sunan*, ed. Ismāʿīl ibn Ghāzī Marḥabā (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Maʿārif li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 2007), II, 1730.

[97] *Ibid.*, II, 1730 ff.

[98] Al-Qāḍī, *ʿIlal al-Tirmidhī al-kabīr*, 216; al-Bayhaqī, *Maʿrifat al-sunan wa-l-āthār*, ed. ʿAbd al-Muʿṭī Amīn Qalʿajī (Cairo: Dār al-Waʿy, 1991), VIII, 316. According to al-Bukhārī, a ḥadīth that was inconsistent with this narrative was transmitted through Jābir, the companion narrator of the ḥadīth quoted from ʿAbd al-Malik about pre-emption.

[99] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Idrīs ibn ʿAbbās al-Shāfiʿī, *al-Umm*, ed. Rifʿat Fawzī ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (al-Manṣūrah: Dār al-Wafāʾ, 2001), VIII, 249.

other narratives.[100] We also think that for two reasons, it is inaccurate to base the attitudes of Muslim and al-Bukhārī about narratives via ʿAbd al-Malik on claims about his reliability by Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī and Ibn Qayyim. Ḥadīth authorities such as al-Bukhārī and Muslim classify their works to include exclusively authenticated ḥadīths; if they record the narrative by a narrator as "primary (*aṣl*)," this can signify that its narrator is reliable and that the recorded narrative is authentic according to the classifier. However, this does not mean that the classifier necessarily considers all ḥadīths transmitted by such a narrator as authentic. The foregoing explanation by al-Bukhārī about the defective quality of the pre-emption ḥadīth through ʿAbd al-Malik means the narrative is weak in the eyes of al-Bukhārī; this is probably why he did not include the mentioned ḥadīth in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.[101] It is important to remember that it is indicated that in *Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Bukhārī recorded the narratives through ʿAbd al-Malik for *istishhād* and not for *iḥtijāj*. This attitude of al-Bukhārī shows his hesitation and concerns about narratives transmitted by ʿAbd al-Malik.

As for criticisms of Shuʿbah, he notably abandoned all ḥadīths of the narrator because of his one isolated ḥadīth (*al-ḥadīth al-fard*). However, the common approach among ḥadīth scholars on isolated ḥadīths is as follows: If the narrator transmitting an isolated ḥadīth is trustworthy and reliable in terms of memorization, the narrative is considered authentic; if he has a poor memory (*sayyiʾ al-ḥifẓ*), the ḥadīth is declared weak.[102] Therefore, Shuʿbah must have, above all,

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[100] Abū Sulaymān Ḥamd (Aḥmad) ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Khaṭṭābī, *Maʿālim al-Sunan*, ed. Muḥammad Rāghib al-Ṭabbākh (Aleppo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-ʿIlmiyyah al-Ḥalabiyyah, 1932), III, 155; Abū Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Yūsuf al-Zaylaʿī, *Naṣb al-rāyah li-aḥādīth al-Hidāyah*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAwwāmah (along with *Bughyat al-almaʿī fī takhrīj al-Zaylaʿī*; Jeddah: Dār al-Qiblah li-l-Thaqāfah al-Islāmiyyah & Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Rayyān, 1997), IV, 174.

[101] According to al-Munāwī (d. 1031/1622), neither al-Bukhārī nor Muslim prefer the mentioned narrative in their respective *Ṣaḥīḥ*s because of the isolation (*tafarrud*; his being the only narrator in one *ṭabaqah* [generation]) of ʿAbd al-Malik and because scholars generally did not accept this narrative; Zayn al-Dīn Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raʾūf ibn Tāj al-ʿārifīn ibn ʿAlī al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadīr sharḥ al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaghīr*, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1972), III, 353.

[102] Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, *Sharḥ ʿIlal al-Tirmidhī*, II, 837, 841; Aḥmad al-Ṭāhir, "Sūʾ al-ḥifẓ wa-atharuhū fī qabūl al-ḥadīth: Dirāsah taʾṣīliyyah taṭbīqiyyah" (master's thesis, Damascus: Jāmiʿat Dimashq, 2009), 132. In consideration of the systematic

determined the accuracy of the memorization of the narrator within the frame of assessment criteria before assessing the isolated ḥadīth pursuant to these criteria. However, Shuʿbah apparently applied the procedure in reverse order and reached a conclusion about the narrator based on his isolated ḥadīth. In other words, Shuʿbah is convinced that the narrative of an isolated ḥadīth constitutes the basis for discrediting. The argument "an exceptional ḥadīth can only come from an exceptional narrator," appears to support this view.[103] For us, Shuʿbah is alone in discrediting ʿAbd al-Malik due to this methodological error.

Another criticism by al-Khaṭīb of Shuʿbah is that the latter is transmitted through Muḥammad al-ʿArzamī. Even though there is no direct commending of al-ʿArzamī, Shuʿbah was subject to negative comments by al-Khaṭīb pursuant to the view that no narrative should be transmitted through an unreliable person. Analyses on al-ʿArzamī before al-Khaṭīb reveal that critics mostly disagree with Shuʿbah about this narrator, but they neither directly nor indirectly criticize Shuʿbah for his opinion about him.[104] At this stage, it was not common among critics to criticize a scholar for a different opinion because of his assessment. Unlike other critics, Shuʿbah obtained a

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progress of the narrative chain, al-Dhahabī says the following about the isolated ḥadīth: "If a person among Followers (Tābiʿūn) narrates a ḥadīth on his own, his ḥadīth is authentic. If one among the next generation of tābiʿūn (atbāʿ al-tābiʿīn, i.e., Followers of the Followers) narrates a ḥadīth on his own, his narrative is rare (ṣaḥīḥ gharīb). On the other hand, a ḥadīth in the same manner narrated by only one of the atbāʿ al-tābiʿīn is referred to as isolated (gharīb fard). Nevertheless, they are seldom isolated in a ḥadīth narrative;" al-Dhahabī, al-Mūqiẓah fī ʿilm muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīth, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah (Aleppo: Maktabat al-Maṭbūʿāt al-Islāmiyyah, 1985), 77. Pursuant to this classification by al-Dhahabī, some narrators whose narratives Shuʿbah considers gharīb should at least be grouped as ṣaḥīḥ gharīb if there is no defect in their trustworthiness (ʿadālah) or ability for memorization (ḍabṭ).

103 Ibn ʿAdī, al-Kāmil, I, 68; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, al-Kifāyah fī ʿilm al-riwāyah (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyyah, 1357 [1937]), 141.

104 See Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā, IV, 368; al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-tārīkh al-kabīr, I, 171; al-ʿIjlī, Maʿrifat al-thiqāt, II, 247; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl, VIII, 1; Ibn ʿAdī, al-Kāmil, VI, 97-101; Ibn Ḥibbān, Kitāb al-majrūḥīn, II, 246-247; al-Mizzī, Tahdhīb al-Kamāl, XXVI, 42 ff.; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb, 494.

narrative from the mentioned narrator; we have to identify whether this fact is related to the criteria of transmitter criticism of Shuʿbah, the status of narrator is subject to assessment or a mistake in the evaluation by Shuʿbah. First, explanations by other critics about the narrator should be examined to uncover how to comprehend the quotation of ḥadīths by Shuʿbah from al-ʿArzamī. Pursuant to the explanation "He was a pious person. His books were lost and he came to narrate via his memory. This is the reason behind the mistakes in his narratives" by Wakīʿ,[105] al-ʿArzamī was criticized due to erroneous narratives that he remembered incorrectly since his books were lost. Ibn Saʿd indicates "He heard and wrote down many ḥadīths; he buried his books in the ground. As he narrated ḥadīths after burying his books, people (critics) considered him weak,"[106] providing information about how he lost his books before coming to same conclusion with Wakīʿ. Ibn Ḥibbān, who talks about the weak memory of al-ʿArzamī,[107] puts forth a similar explanation. Relevant sources include no information about when this incident, which had a negative effect on the qualification of al-ʿArzamī about the ḥadīth, occurred. Nonetheless, any criticism about narratives through al-ʿArzamī may be classified into two groups: Those he transmitted through written material and those transmitted by memory. Pursuant to such a division, we can assume that the quotations by Shuʿbah were based on the book by al-ʿArzamī, while other critics invalidated his work because of narratives that he narrated via his weak memory.

Shuʿbah is also criticized for wrongly discrediting another narrator, al-Minhāl ibn ʿAmr. Reportedly, Shuʿbah did not quote ḥadīth from al-Minhāl since he recited the Qurʾān in a melodious voice (*taghannī*) or the sound of tambour was heard from his house; according to Ibn al-Qaṭṭān (d. 628/1231), *taghannī* cannot be a reason for discrediting unless it exceeds the limits of *ḥarām* and al-Minhāl, according to reports, never trespassed these limits. Ibn al-Qaṭṭān also reviews criticisms for the sound of the tambour from the home of al-Minhāl, saying "The injustice and arbitrariness in such an assessment is clear."[108] Because of the criticism by Shuʿbah, al-Dhahabī allows for al-Minhāl in his *Dhikr asmāʾ man tukullima fīhi wa-huwa*

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[105] Al-ʿUqaylī, *Kitāb al-ḍuʿafāʾ*, IV, 105.

[106] Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrá*, VI, 368.

[107] Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn*, II, 246.

[108] Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, *Bayān al-wahm wa-l-īhām*, IV, 322.

muwaththaq[109] and criticizes Shuʿbah in *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*.[110] Criticising Shuʿbah for discrediting al-Minhāl because of "overhearing songs from his house," al-Dhahabī states that "such a reason does not necessitate the discrediting of a narrator." Ibn Ḥajar agrees al-Dhahabī.[111] We cannot assume that other critics agree with Shuʿbah in this respect because he was not criticized for discrediting until the 7th/13th century. Indeed, former critics such as al-ʿIjlī, al-Nasāʾī, and al-Dāraquṭnī also consider al-Minhāl reliable.[112] Traditionally, critics prefer not to make any evaluations of former experts who invalidated or rectified a narrator.

There are interesting examples of implicit criticisms against Shuʿbah. For instance, according to Shuʿbah, Muḥammad ibn Rāshid is a truthful man, but no ḥadīth should be transmitted through him due to his Qadarī and Shīʿī inclinations. Ibn Maʿīn and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal do not agree with him. According to them, "even though [Ibn Rāshid] is a Qadarī, there is no problem about him with regard to ḥadīth transmission. Thus, they do not consider the affiliation of Ibn Rāshid with Qadariyyah, which is the essential argument for discrediting by Shuʿbah, as a problem. Until the 3rd/9th century, Shuʿbah was the only person to criticize Muḥammad ibn Rāshid because of Qadarī tendencies. Ibn Maʿīn and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's commendation of Rāshid can be interpreted as an objection against his discrediting by Shuʿbah, even though the latter is not mentioned by name.

Before a general assessment on eventual criticisms about Shuʿbah's opinions, it is important to remember that the basis for arguments against Shuʿbah is often not clarified by these scholars. To our understanding, among 120 assessments by Shuʿbah,

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[109] Al-Dhahabī, *Dhikr asmāʾ man tukullima fīhi wa-huwa muwaththaq*, ed. Muḥammad Shakūr el-Ḥājjī Amrīr al-Mayādīnī (al-Zarqāʾ: Maktabat al-Manār, 1986), 182.

[110] Al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, IV, 192.

[111] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Hady al-sārī Muqaddimat Fatḥ al-bārī sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Imām Abī ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1379), 446.

[112] Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-tārīkh al-kabīr*, VIII, 12; al-ʿIjlī, *Maʿrifat al-thiqāt*, II, 300; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, VIII, 356; Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, VI, 330; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, XXVIII, 568 ff.; al-Dhahabī, *al-Kāshif*, II, 298; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, X, 283; id., *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, 547.

approximately 10 have been subject to criticism. Pursuant to foregoing data and analyses, the objections against Shuʿbah as of the 3rd/9th century are mostly based on the refusal of his criteria for discrediting and commendation. For instance, certain discrediting reasons adopted by Shuʿbah are not deemed acceptable in the eyes of many scholars. It is likely that the subjective elements in transmitter criticism, which was still in the establishment stage during the early 2nd century AH, was abandoned in favor of an objective approach over time through a revision of its maxims and principles. In addition, the principles adopted by Shuʿbah in determining the status of narrators, who were adherents to innovations, with regard to study of ḥadīth, underwent questioning and refusal by other critics. Additionally, in their criticisms about Shuʿbah, scholars as of the 3rd/9th century grounded on discreditings and commendations by critics who lived in the 2nd/8th century. In other words, scholars as of the 3rd/9th century referred to other authorities of transmitter criticism from the 2nd/8th century to gather and evaluate information about narrators.

Criticisms about discrediting and commendations of Shuʿbah should be categorized in terms of pertinence. Certain critics after the 2nd/8th century objected to him for incorrect reasons or under erroneous deductions since they did not have a complete grasp of his work. Nevertheless, we can assert that the objections against Shuʿbah in the analyses with this title are mostly accurate.

Comparison between Discreditings and Commendations by Shuʿbah and Critics after the 2nd/8th Century

For a comparison between transmitter evaluations by Shuʿbah and discreditings-commendations by later critics as of the 2nd/8th century, we prefer scholars with more assessments of narrators: Ibn Maʿīn, Ibn al-Madīnī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, al-Bukhārī, al-ʿIjlī, Abū Zurʿah al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, and al-Nasāʾī from the 3rd/9th century; Ibn Ḥibbān and Ibn ʿAdī from the 4th/10th century; al-Dhahabī from the 8th/14th century and Ibn Ḥajar from the 9th/15th century. This study includes more scholars from the 3rd/9th century, principally because the discipline of transmitter criticism reached its climax in this period. Additionally, the period provides detailed reflections of opinions in the 2nd/8th century for the subsequent era. From the 4th/10th century, Ibn Ḥibbān and Ibn ʿAdī are particularly preferred since they, in no small measure, articulate the reasons and rules for the assessment of

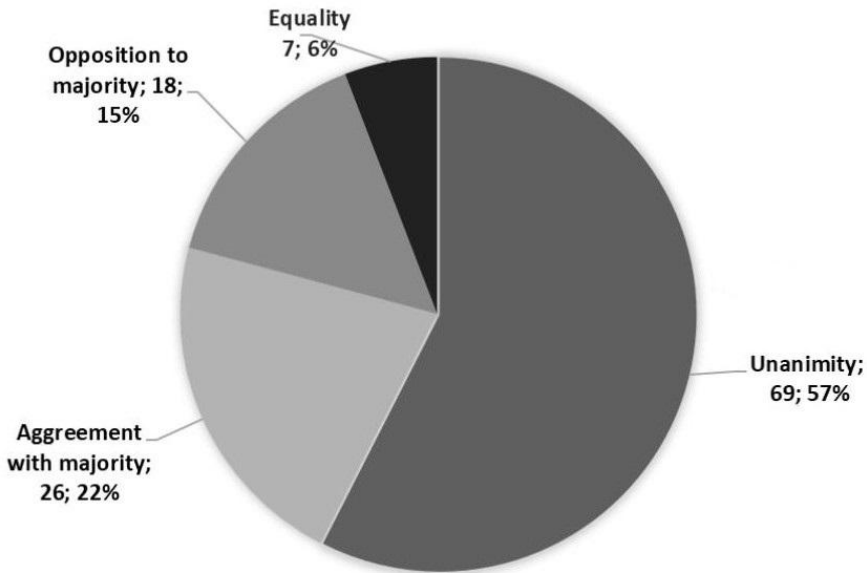narrators. The following diagram may help us compare the views of the previous critics with those of Shuʿbah:

Diagram 1: Comparison between transmitter assessments by Shuʿbah and other critics

In *Diagram 1*, "unanimity" signifies the percentage of narrators about whom Shuʿbah agrees with other critics; "Agreement with majority" shows the proportion where he agrees with most critics, if not all; "Opposition to majority" signifies the proportion where Shuʿbah is alone or mostly abandoned in terms of narrator evaluation. For comments about the narrative qualification of a narrator, the critics are divided into two groups, and in some cases, these groups are equal (6-6) or almost equal (5-7) in number. To avoid erroneous conclusions, this item is shown in the diagram under a different category called "Equality." In light of these data, the rate of cases where Shuʿbah makes an assessment entirely or mostly different from 12 other critics is 15%.

The rates in *Diagram 1* overrule the argument by Eerik Dickinson that "transmitter criticisms by Shuʿbah are entirely inconsistent with the findings of later critics."[113] The rate of opposition by Shuʿbah against most critics is 15%. At this stage, we should underline another fact. This rate of 15% does not mean that Shuʿbah opposed all foregoing critics; in other words, it is not the percentage of views for which he was abandoned or alone in his criticisms. For this data, the following diagram may help:
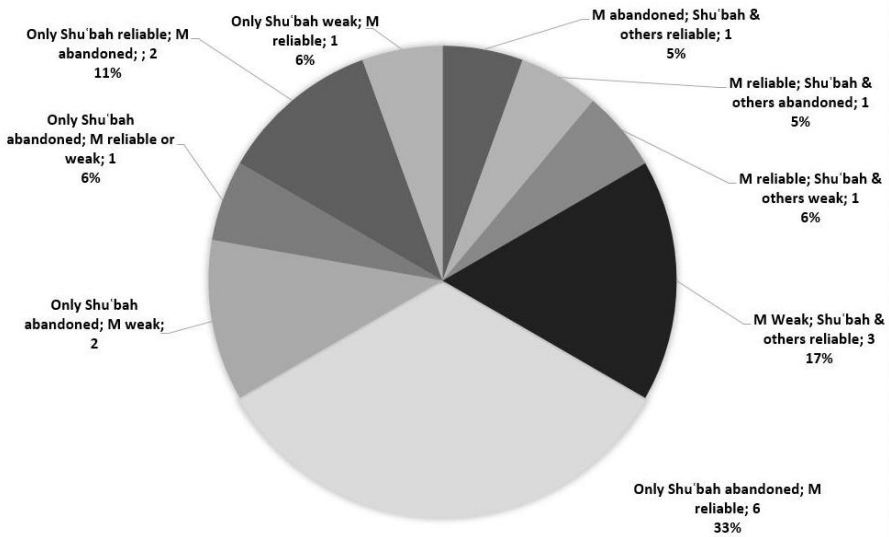

Diagram 2: Quantities and proportions with regard to transmitter assessments where Shuʿbah opposes the majority[114]

As shown in *Diagram 2*, Shuʿbah was abandoned in 67% of the group of assessments where he opposed the majority. For all assessments attributed to Shuʿbah, this rate is 10%. This rate, which is attained through a comparison with scholars as of the $2^{nd}/8^{th}$ century, is foreseeable. Indeed, even during $2^{nd}/8^{th}$ century, the rate of opposition against Shuʿbah by his own disciples was higher than this figure.[115] Pursuant to Diagrams 1 and 2, a significant number of

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[113] Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite ḥadīth Criticism*, 92-93, 128.

[114] "M" in the diagram signifies the majority.

[115] Among disciples of Shuʿbah, the opposition rates are as follows: thirty percent (30%) by Ibn al-Mubārak, twenty-one percent (21%) by Yaḥyá al-Qaṭṭan, and seventeen (17%) by Ibn Mahdī. The average opposition by these three disciples

transmitter evaluations as of the $2^{nd}/8^{th}$ century are in line with Shuʿbah's views, while the latter was found entirely faulty by 10% of scholars. Therefore, since the $2^{nd}/8^{th}$ century, most experts in transmitter criticism have come to the same conclusions as Shuʿbah.

Conclusion

Three arguments can be put forth about the consideration of transmitter evaluations in the $2^{nd}/8^{th}$ century: 1. Thanks to the advantage of personal acquaintance, a critic is thought to know his contemporaneous narrators better than everyone, whereupon his judgments about discrediting and commendation are accepted as unquestionable final conclusions. 2. As the period of establishment is still in process and the principles have yet to be clarified, Shuʿbah's judgments of discrediting and commendation are seen to be rather primitive and lacking referential value. 3. These assessments have been reviewed and partially criticized by other critics. According to the comparison between transmitter criticisms by Shuʿbah and evaluations by scholars as of the $3^{rd}/9^{th}$ century, the abovementioned third argument appears more appropriate. Such methodology by critics has enabled not only the appraisal of accurate assessments by Shuʿbah but also detection of his inaccurate judgments. Additionally, this approach has provided the discipline of transmitter criticism with dynamic progress.

According to these results, critics as of the $3^{rd}/9^{th}$ century made referential use of discrediting and commendations by Shuʿbah only to a limited extent. Some scholars referred to studies by Shuʿbah only in cases where they reach similar conclusions about the reliability of a narrator.

Information obtained and used by Shuʿbah in narrator assessments was considered and employed as notable data by later critics. Data such as *ikhtilāṭ*, used in the determination of the narrative qualification of a narrator and determined by Shuʿbah through personal observation, are often adopted by others. Consequently, the presence of transmitter criticisms, which contradict Shuʿbah as of the $2^{nd}/8^{th}$ century, appears essentially unrelated to this fact.

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against Shuʿbah is twenty-three percent (23%); see Turhan, *Ricâl Tenkidinin Doğuşu ve Gelişimi*, 285, 337, and 399.

There is a significant reason about why different evaluations emerged as of the 2ⁿᵈ/8ᵗʰ century: Some rules, adopted by Shuʿbah, are no longer considered universal or applicable, and they were no longer among the common standards of transmitter criticism. Once a critical maxim adopted by Shuʿbah is not accepted by other critics, there is a tendency to validate or rectify the related narrator. In the natural progress of a scientific discipline, a criterion imposed during establishment period undergoes a review over time, and new benchmarks are stipulated. Another reason behind the dispute between Shuʿbah and later critics in the 2ⁿᵈ/8ᵗʰ century is the change of approach in issues such as the acceptance of transmissions through narrators among heretics (*ahl al-bidʿah*). During the 2ⁿᵈ/8ᵗʰ century and future eras, it was a point of debate concerning whether ḥadīths through *ahl al-bidʿah* should be accepted. In this respect, those who disagree with Shuʿbah have evidently yielded dissimilar assessments about narrators.

Pursuant to the analysis on the accuracy of criticisms about Shuʿbah, some critics occasionally criticized him on unjust grounds, probably due to lack of sufficient knowledge about his assessments. Nevertheless, most critics did have correct reasons to criticize Shuʿbah.

According to a comparison between 120 assessments by Shuʿbah and evaluations by 12 critics as of the 2ⁿᵈ/8ᵗʰ century, he was abandoned in 10% of his judgments. In this respect, the discipline of transmitter criticism appears to have attained a certain standard in principle as early as the establishment period, which is why later critics mostly agree with the experts in the era of establishment.

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BOOK REVIEWS

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***The Rebellion of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya in 145/762:
Ṭālibīs and Early ʿAbbāsīs in Conflict***, by Amikam Elad
(Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, 118) (Leiden &
Boston: Brill, 2016), xi+527 pp., ISBN: 978-90-04-22989-1 (hb) &
978-90-04-29622-0 (e-book), €176.00 / $245.00 (hb)

The history of the revolutionary movement of the ʿAlid
Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan with his
messianic claim of Mahdīship has long attracted the interest of
Amikam Elad, and he has published a number of scholarly studies on
aspects of it. In the present book, he presents a comprehensive and
wide-ranging examination of what he portrays as a rebellion of one
branch of the Prophet Muḥammad's Hāshimī kinship, the ʿAlids,
against another branch, the ʿAbbāsids, who had recently established
their rule of the Muslim world as caliphs by overthrowing the
Umayyad caliphate. Elad bases his history on a collection of the vast
amount of relevant Muslim historical reports of both backers and
opponents of the rebellion and meticulous analysis of their chains of
transmission as well as their contents. Although he rejects many of
them as outright forgery or tendentious invention, he accepts some as
reliable source material that can be used to reconstruct the course of
the events leading up to the bloody conflict and failure of the
rebellion.

From the perspective of Elad and many western historians,
rebellion against established government, in the case of Islam the
caliphate, is inevitably reprehensible. The justice of government,
ruler, or caliph, must not be questioned. Power, military might,
establishes right that all subjects should unconditionally support and
foster, not oppose. Only superior might can justify resistance and
challenge to the established state. While a century ago most western
scholarship condemned the overthrow of the Umayyad caliphate, the
first dynastic caliphate that was viewed as the golden age of Islam, by
the ʿAbbāsids, now most western historians rather admire the
ʿAbbāsid revolutionary movement's success in destroying the
Umayyad caliphate by the superior military power of their
Khurāsānian army. The proclaimed goal of the revolution had been
revenge for ʿAlī, the fourth caliph overthrown by the Umayyad

Muʿāwiyah, and ʿAlī's descendants killed by the Umayyads. Yet the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Manṣūr was to kill the descendants of ʿAlī on a much larger scale than the Umayyads had done. Elad portrays the caliph al-Manṣūr with much sympathy as a capable and responsible ruler faced by an incompetent, conceited ʿAlid rebel with Messianic dreams. Al-Manṣūr himself acknowledged that the goal of the ʿAbbasid revolution was to avenge ʿAlī, not his own ancestors al-ʿAbbās and his son ʿAbd Allāh, the cousin of the Prophet who, after having vigorously supported the caliphate of ʿAlī and his son al-Ḥasan, had eventually recognized the caliphate of the Umayyad ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān without ever claiming any right to rule in succession to the Prophet. Surely the evidence is strong and credible that al-Manṣūr did swear allegiance to the ʿAlid Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh before the success of the ʿAbbāsid revolution and later dishonestly denied having done so. Yet Elad rejects reports to that effect as outright lies with the aim "to undermine the Caliph's credibility and besmirch him." (p. 75)

The Mahdī, according to the most widely accepted *ḥadīth*, was to be a descendant and a namesake of the Prophet, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh, who would appear before the end of time to restore the justice and equity that had prevailed in the age of the Prophet and to put an end to the injustice and oppression that have prevailed thereafter. Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan was a perfect namesake of the Prophet and descendant of his through his daughter Fāṭimah and his elder grandson al-Ḥasan. It is crucial to realize that according to the Qurʾānic law of succession the Prophet's only surviving daughter Fāṭimah was his primary heir and should have succeeded him as a queen of the Muslim Community. This was prevented by the military *coup d'état* staged by ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. Ever since his conversion to Islam, before which he had been a fierce opponent of Muḥammad, ʿUmar had been determined to succeed the Prophet in order to promote his own concept of Islam that differed profoundly from Muḥammad's. It was ʿUmar who first persuaded Muḥammad not to name his cousin ʿAlī executor of his will (*waṣī*) and then threatened to burn the house of Fāṭimah with her and her children inside in order to establish the caliphate of Abū Bakr. He was obviously restrained from carrying out his threat, perhaps by Abū Bakr, but he was powerful enough to force Abū Bakr to declare that the Prophet had disinherited his own daughter and had indeed asserted that prophets in general have no heirs, against the clear

statements of the Qurʾān to the contrary. A great majority of early Muslims appreciated his decisive actions and called him the Fārūq, the Savior of Islam from the potential danger of the rule of a woman. Yet they did not accept his claim that Muḥammad had no descendants since only male descent was legally effective descent. Later Muslims, Sunnīs as well as Shīʿīs, commonly greeted descendants of Fāṭimah as *Yā Ibn Rasūl Allāh*, Son of the Messenger of God.

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan lost his credibility of potentially becoming the expected Mahdī only when he, instead of remaining in hiding, rose in rebellion and distributed two camel-loads of swords he had stored to his followers for them fight and kill his opponents.

He now became al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah, the Pure Soul killed at Aḥjār al-zayt. The true Mahdī, as later Shīʿīs have generally realized, must remain forever in hiding until humankind is prepared for him and longing for his advent to bring peace and non-violence to earth as the one Blessed who comes in the name of the Lord.

Elad's new book is to be welcomed as an exhaustive collection and thorough analysis of the relevant literary sources for the history of the rebellion of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah. The soundness of his judgment on the reliability or distortion and fictitiousness of these sources must at times be questioned.

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Reading the Qur'an in the Twenty-first Century: A Contextualist Approach, by Abdullah Saeed (London & New York: Routledge, 2013), vi+196 pp., ISBN: 978-0-415-67750-9, £85.00 (hb)

> "Meaning" is attained through
> context, and not wording.

The "contextual" approach is among the most significant elements to consider when trying to comprehend verses (*āyah*) in Qurʾānic studies. Indeed, the address of the Qurʾān presents the text's first, original, and historical meaning in its context. The descent of the Qurʾān began in 610 AD in Mecca; therefore, we need to consider what the addressees, who witnessed the process of revelation, understood from the Qurʾān if we are to discover its original and historical meaning.

During the last century, according to the common sociological approach to exegesis (*tafsīr*) in the Muslim world, it has been suggested that the Qurʾān should be read as if it were revealed on the day one reads it; accordingly, it became commonplace to understand and interpret the Qurʾān exclusively through the book, namely, the text. This approach brought about several problems, which we can call the "modern reproduction of the Qurʾān." Abdullah Saeed's *Reading the Qur'an in the Twenty-first Century: A Contextualist Approach*, may help to resolve this problem.

Saeed's work consists of three chapters. In the first, the author touches upon the background of the contextualist approach. According to hard-textualism, new ideas regarding the interpretation of the Qurʾān are either non-Islamic or even anti-Islamic. For Saeed however, the contextualist approach is very much Islamic, with deep roots in the tradition (p. 4). At this point, he indicates that contextualism dates back to earlier periods and cites examples of reconciliations (*muwāfaqāt*) by ʿUmar (p. 26-36). He also notes interpretations of the Qurʾān by female authors as a modern form of contextualism (p. 38-48). In this respect, Muslim scholars, primarily women, offer readings of the Qurʾān in a gender-neutral manner. In doing so, they rely, in part, on the works of a number of Muslim scholars, such as Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Fazlur Rahman, who provided a range of tools with which to think about Qurʾānic interpretation today. In turn, these women scholars contributed their

own ideas and made a significant contributions to the field. These scholars emphasize that the Qur'ān was revealed in a specific socio-historical context that differs from the context of today. They note that readings of the Qur'ān must be historically contextual, and they recognize that the Qur'ān speaks to all Muslims equally and advocates justice and equality, compassion and fairness, and has promoted many positive changes for women (p. 47).

According to Saeed, two essential keys to the comprehension of divine discourse – namely, the existence of Muḥammad and his political, economic, social, cultural, and intellectual context – melt away upon the demise of Muḥammad (p. 14). In his second and – for him – most important chapter, Saeed touches upon key ideas about contextualist interpretation. This chapter addresses issues such as the content of the relationship between revelation and context; the hierarchy of values in the Qur'ān (obligatory, fundamental, protectional, implementational, and instructional values [p. 64]); criteria for the use of ḥadīth in interpretation; and semantic fluidity and ways of ensuring a certain level of consistency in interpretation. In this chapter, the author also discusses the steps of the contextual approach, which can be summarized as follows: (1) Preliminary considerations, comprehension of the subjectivity of the exegete; (2) Beginning with the task of interpretation; (3) Identifying the meaning of the text; (4) Relating the interpretation of the text to the current context (p. 94-107).

For Saeed, context is a comprehensive concept that includes both linguistic and macro context (p. 5). He divides the macro-context into categories. The macro context is the context during the period in which the Qur'ān was revealed. The macro context includes issues such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, the positions of men and women in society, slaves and slavery, and the status of non-Muslims in Muslim societies (p. 6-7). Such texts are directly related to the context in which the Qur'ān descended (p. 6-7, 58-59). The macro context also signifies conditions during the lifetime of the exegete, as well as social functions and contemporary religious and cultural norms. Pursuant to the contextualist approach, it is appropriate to primarily comprehend and explain the provisions of the Qur'ān on its own historical ground, before interpreting the actual value of these provisions in today's world by leaning on the original, determinate meaning.

In later chapters of his work, Saeed presents, through four problems, examples of the evolution of Qurʾānic interpretation in the classical and modern eras: male custody/men's "authority" over women and equality between the sexes; the crucifixion and death of Jesus; council/*shūrá* and democracy; and usury (*ribā*) and interest. Saeed touches upon various classical and modern interpretations for explaining the problem of the authority of men over women. He adds that today, women receive education and participate in business life; therefore, "If the Qurʾān was revealed in the twenty first century, it would most likely approach this topic in a different way." (p. 125)

In *Reading the Qur'an*, Saeed names authors such as Fazlur Rahman and Amina Wadud among contextualist thinkers. Fazlur Rahman and Amina Wadud might be called contextualist; nevertheless, please bear in mind that these authors associate discourses about human rights, democracy, and the equality of men and women directly with the text of the Qurʾān.

As is known, the interpretative method adopted by Fazlur Rahman is defined as "historicism." According to historicism, Qurʾānic revelation should, above all, be evaluated within the context of the historical conditions of its day. For Fazlur Rahman, divine revelation descended within a certain context. Therefore, the revelation (*waḥy*) includes elements specific to the era of revelation and to the context of that era's society. Nevertheless, Fazlur Rahman's opinions, articulated through the historicist perspective, on the equality of men and women, usury, and slavery seem problematic with regard to the time of revelation. Indeed, asserting that the Qurʾān's acceptances of gender inequality and/or slavery are temporary, Fazlur Rahman grounds his arguments in acceptances of modern opinions rather than what these verses actually expressed in their time. The same goes for contemporaneous women thinkers such as Amina Wadud. In her interpretation of the term "*wa-ḍribūhunna*" in Q 4:34, Amina Wadud takes the term out of its context and opts for an anachronic interpretation. However, such interpretations correspond to what Ömer Özsoy calls the "contemporary reproduction of Qurʾān(s)."[1] For us, it would be a populist, modernist, and apologist view to compel the Qurʾān to express contemporary interpretations in the name of "context."

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[1] Özsoy, Ömer, "Çağdaş Kur'an(lar) Üretimi Üzerine," *İslâmiyât* 5, no. 1 (2002), 111.

Then again, in the third chapter, Saeed brings forward the crucifixion and death of Jesus, *shūrā* and democracy, and *ribā* and interest. Under the title of the crucifixion and death of Jesus, he compares relevant verses with various translations and briefly reports how Jesus is perceived among Muslims. Moreover, he explains how the term *shubbiha lahum* was understood in classical exegeses and gives modern interpretations of this expression. As for *shūrā* and democracy, Saeed discusses interpretations of the classical and contemporary eras. He indicates that in modern times, the concept of *shūrā* was adopted as something prone to democracy (p. 157). He also treats verses and exegeses about *ribā* and interest and analyzes the prohibition of *ribā* in the Qur'ān under titles such as moral context, rationality, and legal and illegal usury (p. 160-173).

According to Saeed, many chapters of the Qur'ān do not require contextualist readings because they are related to different contexts. Consequently, only certain texts require contextualist readings, and each verse does not require a separate context. Stories of Adam and Moses-Pharaoh are examples of this (p. 6). However, once they are read in consideration of their historical contexts, these stories include messages pursuant to compliance between biography-descent (*siyar-nuzūl*). In our opinion, Qur'ānic stories should not be interpreted merely on the axis of wording-meaning, indifferent to the historical experience of Muḥammad. If we are to explain the story of Moses and Pharaoh via context, the battle of Moses against Pharaoh and his men seems to correspond to the struggle of Muḥammad against the polytheists of Mecca. Indeed, the style of narration of the stories in the Qur'ān is quite compliant with the actual situation during the time of descent.

At this point, it seems that biographical information and the times of the descent of verses should have been stressed more in the book. Indeed, the importance of biographical information is inevitable if we are to comprehend the context of the Qur'ān. The process of the descent of the Qur'ān is not independent from the life of Muḥammad; on the contrary, they are nested within one another. Historical, social, and cultural grounds and life experience during the period of descent should definitely be taken into account for accurate comprehension and interpretation of the Qur'ān. In this regard, in Turkey there are also some studies that take the context of revelation into consideration. Nevertheless, these studies will not become known to

world literature because they are in Turkish.[2] This is why the author does not refer to Turkish studies compliant with the contextualist approach.

Finally, in terms of language and style, the author offers a fluid work of about two hundred pages, without ever sacrificing scientific or academic diligence.

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[2]   The following works bear traces of the contextualist approach: Mustafa Öztürk, *Kur'an'ı Kendi Tarihinde Okumak* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2004); Öztürk, *Kur'an Kıssalarının Mahiyeti* (İstanbul: Kuramer, 2016); Ömer Özsoy, *Kur'an ve Tarihsellik Yazıları* (Ankara: Kitâbiyât, 2004); Adil Çiftçi, *Bilgi Sosyolojisi ve İslâm Araştırmaları* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2015).

***Accusations of Unbelief in Islam: A Diachronic Perspective on* Takfīr**, edited by Camilla Adang, Hassan Ansari, Maribel Fierro, and Sabine Schmidtke (Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, 123) (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2016), xviii+534 pp., ISBN: 978-90-04-30473-4 (hb) & 978-90-04-30783-4 (e-book), €172.00 / $223.00 (hb)

This volume takes its readers in a journey of the subject of *takfīr* (generally rendered "accusation of unbelief") in Islam. It begins with an introduction that is generous with references to sources on various aspects of *takfīr*. Despite, or perhaps because of, the "long history" of *takfīr* in Islam (p. 2), the Editors emphasize from the outset that many of the traditions, Prophetic and otherwise, from early and medieval Islamic history condemned the practice of *takfīr* that was regarded as a "dangerous instrument" (p. 12). In an overview of events from early Islam and the emergence of early Muslim sects, the Editors touch on issues that were closely associated with the rise of *takfīr*, mainly, the definition of faith and the status of miscreants (*fussāq*). Here, we find a tendency among some Muslim sects (such as the Muʿtazilīs and the Sunnīs) to condemn certain views as constituting unbelief while abstaining from accusing individuals holding them of *takfīr*.

Noting the distinction that some Sunnī scholars made between various kinds and degrees of *kufr* (unbelief), the Editors discuss the various conditions that these scholars stipulated for accusing someone (presumably Muslim) of unbelief, including *ʿilm* (knowledge), *qaṣd* (intention), and *ikhtiyār* (choice). Only when it has been ascertained that a person accused of unbelief is aware that what he has said or done constitutes unbelief, had both the intention to do or say it, and was not coerced to do that, he can be punished (in no specific way) but only by a person with authority (supposedly the ruler). In the actual practice, "mainstream Muslims" refrained from practicing *takfīr* even against sects that practiced it against them (such as the Khārijīs and more recently members of the so-called ISIS, p. 14). This approach was confirmed in a 2005 conference in Jordan where hundreds of Muslim scholars belonging to various sects agreed to "forbid *takfīr*." (p. 15)

Contributors to this volume may regard this overview of both the theory and practice of *takfīr* in Islam too idealistic, as evident in their contributions. The chapters in this volume are grouped in two sections, the first of which presents chronologically various cases of *takfīr* in different places and periods of Islamic history, while the second section is more thematic in nature. The first chapter, by Ercilia Francesca, in the volume discusses Ibāḍī Khārijī notions of *walāyah* and *barāʾah* (association and dissociation), two notions that were shaped by Ibāḍī interpretation of events from early Islamic history (notably the schisms in which the Companions participated), and shaped the Ibāḍī relationship with other Muslims. Next, Steven Judd examines whether Qadarīs (those who deny *qadar*, or predestination) were accused of unbelief in medieval heresiographical and biographical works. Other chapters (by István T. Kristó-Nagy and Daniel De Smet, respectively) deal with how the Manicheans were regarded by Muslim scholars, and how some Ismāʿīlīs regarded other Muslim sects (such as Sunnīs, other Shīʿīs, and even some extremist Ismāʿīlīs). In chapter five, Sonja Brentjes demonstrates that religious scholars were generally tolerable of specialists in non-religious sciences (such as philosophy, astronomy, geometry, etc.) and did not readily accuse them of unbelief.

Next, Amalia Levanoni presents 60 cases of *takfīr* in Mamlūk Egypt and Syria. Most of the victims in these cases (some of which ended up with public execution) were Sufis, Coptic converts to Islam, and at times Mamlūk *amīr*s. Levanoni discusses how relationships among Mamlūk leaders, among judges belonging to different Sunnī *madhhab*s, and between the Mamlūk Sultan and the "religious establishment" influenced the course and outcomes of some of these trials. Chapter seven presents the case of the 8th/14th-century Ḥurūfī movement as example of what Orkhan Mir-Kasimov calls the "renovational" as opposed to the "abrogational" trends that he argues have existed since early Islam. Whereas the former trend accepts Islam's religious texts and can thus be tolerated by the traditional *ʿulamāʾ*, the latter is based on the notion of the "continuation of the prophecy" and is therefore regarded as sheer *kufr*. Chapter eight, on the other hand, presents a case of a group – the 11th/17th "revivalist" Qāḍīzādeli movement in the Ottoman Empire – that practiced *takfīr* against others. As Simeon Evstativ argues here, the boundaries between accusations of *bidʿah* (innovation) and of *takfīr* were sometimes blurred.

The next chapter discusses *takfīr* in Ṣafavid Iran. Although it makes specific reference to Mullā Ṣadrā, the discussion deals with *takfīr* of philosophers and Sufis more generally, which Sajjad Rizvi argues was a reaction to the increasing influence of philosophy and Sufism in the 11th/17th-century Iran, but also and primarily to their seeking sources of knowledge other than the rightful Imāms. The next, rather long chapter on heresy and *takfīr* in a South Indian community, also capitalizes on the idea that *takfīr* often involves more than a mere conflict between orthodoxy and heresy and relates to issues of authority and prerogatives of traditional religious scholars. At the time of a perceived challenge (from the state, a certain group of people, or certain ideas), these scholars may become less tolerable to beliefs and practices that they may otherwise ignore.

Chapter eleven presents the case of three Saudi scholars whose criticism of the policies of the "state" suggests that they considered the rulers of the Kingdom unbelievers. These specific rulers, however, are not guilty of democracy, which is the subject and source of *takfīr* in the next chapter, where Joas Wagemakers seeks to demonstrate that denouncing democracy as a heretical system does not necessarily mean that those who participate in it (members of parliament and voters) are unbelievers. He points out, however, that this general acceptance of democracy changes when it is associated with factors such as foreign invasion or bringing non-orthodox lawmakers to the parliament (such as the Shīʿīs in Iraq for the Sunnīs). This part of the volume ends with a chapter on three Arab women accused of unbelief in recent decades, and another on a case of *takfīr* in Sweden. In this latter case, some Somali migrants accused of unbelief other migrants who had converted to Christianity. Göran Larsson states here that our understanding of these cases is based on "impressionistic knowledge" and lacks enough data on many relevant questions (p. 390).

In the thematic part of the volume, Hussein Modarressi presents various views on the "minimum" that a person needs to believe and practice to be considered a Muslim. Views vary from the mere belief in the oneness of God and the messengership of the Prophet Muḥammad, to a long list of other theological beliefs and commitment to certain practices. Next, Robert Gleave discusses how failure to exercise one such practice – saying one's prayers – is tantamount to abandoning Islam in Shīʿī jurisprudence. Examining *al-*

Fatāwá l-ʿĀlamgīriyyah from 17th-century India, Intisar Rabb discusses how and why, unlike other Muslim scholars, Ḥanafī jurists regarded both defamatory and blasphemous statements to be violations of God's, rather than man's, rights that cannot therefore be pardoned because of their crucial connection to public values and social order. In chapter 18, Zoltan Szombathy discusses *takfīr* that is based on literary writings, focusing on how "intent" divided Muslim scholars into formalists insisting that intent was irrelevant in statements and motifs deemed to constitute unbelief, and interpretativists for whom it was crucial in condemning littérateurs as unbelievers. Finally, Michael Ebstein seeks to demonstrate how the writings of *Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ* and Ibn ʿArabī illustrate a feature of many mystic traditions, namely, their acceptance of alternative spiritual paths to their ultimate goal, proximity to God.

An immediate impression that readers of this volume would get is that the sources available on the issue of *takfīr* in early and medieval Islam are generally indeterminate and insufficient. This in itself is a contribution to our knowledge of the subject, but this rather long volume would be more valuable if only chapters were included that add to our knowledge, use new primary sources, or present original arguments (e.g. chapters 17 & 18). More consistency among the chapters in their use of primary vs. secondary sources and improvement of chapters that make strong or multiple arguments on thin evidence would have been appreciated. The organization of the volume may have been improved by placing Modarressi's chapter in the beginning, for his discussion would lay the foundation for some other discussions on *takfīr* in the rest of the volume.

Some of the chapters in this volume read just as they originally were, conference papers. The published version of these papers does not seem to have been improved and enriched by discussions that likely followed each set of presentations. A case in point is István T. Kristó-Nagy, "Denouncing the Damning *Zindiq*! Struggle and Interaction between Monotheism and Dualism." Reading at times as polemics against Islam and at other times as preaching for dualism, the chapter does not seem to have been revised properly to make it more suitable for a scholarly volume. It is not even consistent with the theme of the book, which presumable focuses on *al-kufr al-ṭāriʾ* (acquired unbelief, i.e. *takfīr* of Muslims by Muslims), while Kristó-Nagy's chapter deals with Muslim *takfīr* of Manicheans whose *kufr* is *aṣlī* ("original and inveterate unbelief," as the Editors translate it, p.

11). (Kristó-Nagy does mention that some of the *zindīq*s were professed Muslims, but most of his chapter deals with Manicheans.) This confusion over the focus of the volume is again evident in Brian J. Didier reference to the use of the terms *kufr* and *kāfir*s in the Qurʾān (which, as is well known, is not used to describe Muslims, including even the hypocrites of Medina) to demonstrate that *takfīr* has a long history in Islam, starting with its foundational texts (p. 273). Similarly problematic is chapter 13 on Arab women accused of unbelief, which reads more like a manifesto than a scholarly piece of writing.

There are some issues with the translation and transliteration of some terms (in some chapters more than others) and some typos and perhaps errors here and there in the volume. *Takfīr al-sayyiʾāt* ([seeking] God's forgiveness of our sins), for instance, is explained as "the need of pious believes to accuse of unbelief those Muslims who are performing 'bad things'" (p. 229). *lā zalatu* (sic.) *ukaffiru l-dawla* (I still consider [the rulers of?] the state unbeliever) is rendered "I have not committed any mistake in accusing the state of unbelief" (p. 306). An example of a possible typo that went unnoticed is the "second/seventh century" in page 155.

In short, some chapters in this volume will disappoint serious readers who would nonetheless be able to identify other useful chapters that do exist in the volume. General readers and students will need some guidance to identify some obvious biases and to get a coherent view of the subject of *takfīr* in Islamic law and history from this long volume.

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Book

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Michot, Yahya M. *Ibn Sīnā: Lettre au Vizir Abū Saʿd: Editio princeps d'après le manuscrit de Bursa, traduction de l'arabe, introduction, notes et lexique.* Beirut: al-Burāq, 2000.

Book Chapter

Janssens, Jules. "The Reception of Avicenna's *Physics* in the Latin Middle Ages." In *O ye Gentlemen*: *Arabic Studies on Science and Literary Culture in honour of Remke Kruk,* edited by I. Vrolijk and J. P. Hogendijk, 55-64. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

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Page references to works referred to in the text should take the following form: (Touraine, 1995: 9-10). The verses of the Qurʾān should be referred to as follows: Q 2:23; Q 17:108; the references from the Old and New Testament should carry chapter name and number, and verse number.

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