İlahiyat Studies

A Journal on Islamic and Religious Studies

ISSN: 1309-1786

Volume 9 Number 1 Winter / Spring 2018

Bursa İlahiyat Foundation

ILAHIYAT STUDIES

A Journal on Islamic and Religious Studies

www.ilahiyatstudies.org

Volume 9, Number 1, Winter / Spring 2018

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Ilahiyat Studies is published in print (ISSN: 1309-1786) and online (e-ISSN: 1309-1719) biannually by Bursa İlahiyat Foundation, Hacılar Mh. Eceler Sk. Sema Apt. No: 6/5, Osmangazi, Bursa-Turkey.

***Aims and Scope**: Ilahiyat Studies* is an international, peer-reviewed multidisciplinary journal dedicated to publishing scholarly articles on all aspects of Islam and the Muslim peoples and on religious studies. Available in print and online, and published twice a year, the journal aims to become one of the leading platforms in the world for new findings and discussions of all fields of Islamic and religious studies.

***Annual Subscription**:* Annual subscription for each volume of two issues (print edition) is ₺130, $100 (US) for institutions; ₺30, $30 (US) for individuals, and ₺20, $20 (US) for students. An institutional subscription to the print edition includes free access to the online for any number of concurrent users across a local area network.

Abstracting & Indexing: *Ilahiyat Studies* is currently indexed in and abstracted by ***ATLA Religion Database®, Humanities International Index***, ***Humanities Source Ultimate***, ***Index Islamicus***, ***Religious and Theological Abstracts***, ***Scopus***, and ***TR Dizin***.

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FROM THE EDITORS

Greetings and welcome back to *Ilahiyat Studies*.

This issue of *IS* features four articles and two book review essays. Norman K. Swazo's engaging article, "Jihadists Wrong Themselves Morally: An Islamic-Aristotelian Interpretation," evaluates the current status of the so called "radical Islamism" from an ethical perspective as articulated by George Hourani. According to the author, Hourani's work is important because of his philosophical grounding in both Western and Islamic thought and because of his effort to relate an Islamic interpretation to the moral philosophy of Aristotle. Swazo maintains that Hourani's interpretation provides a reasonably defensible account enabling a moral evaluation of jihadist actions. Swazo further articulates his theoretical account by considering a well-known police action in Bangladesh to prove the historical significance and contemporary relevance of this debate.

In the second article, "Finding al-Fārābī in *The Walking Dead*," Ebrar Akdeniz and Özgür Kavak present a thought-provoking analysis of the ways classical thinkers such as al-Fārābī, Ibn Khaldūn, Plato or Aristotle can help us understand the human situation in ever-changing contexts. To illustrate their case, the authors attempt to read the television series *The Walking Dead* (*TWD*) through al-Fārābī's political philosophy that shows convincingly why humans need to live together as social and political agents. Seen from this perspective, the authors seem to refuse to regard *TWD* simply as a zombie show, but a philosophical discourse. Therefore, their work argues that al-Fārābī's understanding of human nature and his identification of virtuous and unvirtuous communities can be read correspondingly with the survivors and communities in *TWD*.

In his article, "The Companions' Understanding of Sunnah: the Example of ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Masʿūd," Serkan Başaran addresses the question of how to understand the Sunnah of the Prophet of Islam in the academic studies. He argues that there are at least two approaches to the subject, which are both misleading, for they tend to focus only

Ilahiyat Studies
Volume 9 Number 1 Winter / Spring 2018
Copyright © Bursa İlahiyat Foundation
p-ISSN: 1309-1786 / e-ISSN: 1309-1719
DOI: 10.12730/13091719.2018.91.171

on one aspect of the problem. According to the author, certain studies treat the Sunnah as consisting of narratives that offer only jurisprudential solutions for secondary problems; while others, which highlights behavior-centered aspect of the Sunnah, transform the latter into a sphere that can be experienced only at the imitative level, falling prey to reductionism. The article attempts to overcome this reductionism by revisiting ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Masʿūd's understanding of Sunnah since he plays a central role in shaping the Classical Islamic Sciences, not least in the early Ḥadīth literature.

Tolga S. Altınel's article, "An Evaluation of the Identity of *Sāmirī* in the Qurʾān," is a fine criticism leveled against the infamous Orientalist claim that the Prophet of Islam copied several stories narrated in the Qurʾān from the Bible. According to the author, this understanding is based upon a biased conviction that the Bible is the authentic source of these stories while the Qurʾān is not because there are both similarities and differences among those stories as they were narrated in both of these sacred Scriptures. Against this conviction the author invites us to consider the possibility that the incidents depicted in certain stories such as Golden Calf and the identity of *Sāmirī* might have happened in a different way from what is described in the Bible, thereby considering the Qurʾān an authentic source. He tries to present his case by comparing and contrasting the stories as they were narrated in the Bible and in the Qurʾān.

There are some minor changes in our editorial team that we would like to share with our readers and contributors. We are grateful to Ümmügül Betül Kanburoğlu Ergün for her meticulous work as an assistant editor thus far; we wish her well. On the other hand, we would like to welcome Muhammed Tarakçı, professor of History of Religions, as an associate editor, and Pınar Zararsız and Zeynep Sena Kaya as assistant editors.

As the editorial team, we are thankful to our authors, referees, and readers for their continued support and look forward to being with you in the next issues of *Ilahiyat Studies*.

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ARTICLES

JIHADISTS "WRONG THEMSELVES" MORALLY: AN ISLAMIC-ARISTOTELIAN INTERPRETATION

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Abstract

Transnational terrorism *qua* "radical Islamism" presents questions pertinent to moral philosophy. Aristotelian ethics and Islamic ethics (*ʿilm al-akhlāq*) articulated comparatively by George Hourani are here engaged. Hourani questions whether "jihadists" are morally blameworthy in the Qurʾānic sense of "wronging themselves" (*ẓalamtum anfusakum*). The distinction is important because: (a) religious doctrines supposedly authorizing jihadist violence do not account for the distinction, even though (b) there is reason in Islamic ethics to do so. I then relate Hourani's assessment to Ibn Rushd's discussion of good and evil. I conclude that Hourani's interpretation provides a reasonably defensible account enabling a moral evaluation of jihadist actions. This theoretical account integrating Aristotelian and Islamic ethics is illustrated by an example from recent police action in Bangladesh.

Key Words: Aristotle, Hourani, *jihād*, terrorism, radical Islam, Islamic ethics.

Introduction

Nelly Lahoud (2010) observes that, "Jihadi ideologues mobilize Muslims, especially young Muslims, through an individualist, centered

Ilahiyat Studies
Volume 9 Number 1 Winter / Spring 2018
Copyright © Bursa İlahiyat Foundation
p-ISSN: 1309-1786 / e-ISSN: 1309-1719
DOI: 10.12730/13091719.2018.91.172

Islam. Appealing to a classical defense doctrine, they argue that the mandates of jihad are the individual duty of every Muslim and therefore transcend and undermine both the authority of the state and the power of parental control." At issue is the moral and legal authority of this claim of individual duty (*wājib* or *farḍ*) when related to an Islamic concept of "just war" against infidels and Muslims alleged to be guilty of blasphemy (*riddah*), heresy (*zandaqah*), or apostasy (*irtidād*).[1] John Kelsay (2007) engaged this concept, clarifying the extremist argument ostensibly warranting (both morally and legally) "terrorist" actions that jihadists call "martyrdom operations" (*ʿamaliyyāt istishhādiyyah*). (Nanninga 2014). That argument includes several claims:

> (1) Muslims have a duty to establish a particular kind of government – namely, government by divine law; (2) encroachments on historically Muslim lands by the United States and its allies constitute a failure on the part of Muslims to fulfill this duty; (3) armed force is necessary to rectify the situation; (4) resort to armed force is the right and duty of any and all Muslims, wherever they are situated; and (5) such force may be directed at any and all targets, including those ordinarily considered 'civilian.' (Kelsay 2010).

Bernard K. Freamon (2003) would add: "Classical Islamic juridical-religious doctrine dictates that when non-Muslim adversaries seriously threaten Islam or Muslim communities – because of their Islamic identity – Muslims are entitled to go to war to defend their religion, the community, and the *Dar al-Islam* ["the abode of Islam"]." This view is contraposed by the progressive Muslim view that terrorism (*al-ḥirābah*) is explicitly forbidden, thus illegal and immoral. These acts violate the right of Allah (*ḥaqq Allāh*) and the right(s) of humanity (*ḥaqq al-ādam*), whether occurring in a Muslim (*bilād al-Islām*) or a non-Muslim state (*bilād al-shirk*).[2]

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[1] For an ample discussion of the Islamic conception of just war, see Al-Dawoody (2011), https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230118089.

[2] ElSayed Amin (2015, 133) clarifies "the lexical meaning of *ḥirābah*" as used in classical and modern Islamic jurisprudence to include "striking terror among the passers-by…" and counts *stricto sensu* as a crime with fixed penalty (*ḥudūd*). Thus, "terrorizing of innocents is a common element in all the Sunni definitions of *ḥirabāh*…" even as Sherman Jackson (2001, 295) notes the Mālikī jurist Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr construes someone guilty of *ḥirabāh* if s/he "disturbs free passage in the

Unavoidably, these are matters of interpretation (*ijtihād*) among Muslims relative to the diversity of beliefs of Sunnīs, Shīʿī, and Ṣūfī traditions as well as "conservative"/"traditionalist" versus more "reform-oriented"/"progressivist-adaptive" positions in the exegesis (*tafsīr*) of Islamic foundational sources. The Islamist argument represents an unsettled question about "right authority," i.e., who has the authority to decide doctrinal claims are true or defensible relative to Islamic law (*sharīʿah*). (Abū Zayd 2006; El Fadl 2007; Ramadan 2009) As Michael Cook (2003) observes, because of "distinct heritages of tradition," they tend "to regard each other, with some qualification, as infidels; truth [is] a zero-sum game, and only one sect could possess it." This sectarian stance is also articulated in legal traditions (e.g., Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfiʿī, and Ḥanbalī schools), in schools of theology (*ʿilm al-kalām)*,[3] and in all interpretions of the concept, *jihād*. Islamists conceive *jihād* supposedly warranting doing harm to others through terrorist acts (again, which they construe as acts of martyrdom), whether against non-Muslim "infidels" (*kuffār*) or Muslims denigrated as blasphemers, heretics, or apostates, and no matter whether combatant or innocent civilian non-combatant is targeted.

Many contemporary Islamic scholars assess the jihadist's interpretation of *jihād* to be inaccurate. (Freamon 2003; El Fadl 2007;

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streets and renders them unsafe to travel…" Wajis (1996) remarks, "The Māliki school view that the act of terrorizing people is the most important element in *ḥirābah*." Walaa Hawari (2009) reminds, Saudi legal scholar Hady al-Yamy argues for construal of terrorism as *ḥirābah*, i.e., "waging war against society." This view is consistent with the definition of terrorism adopted in "The Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism: A Serious Threat to Human Rights" (2002): "Any act or threat of violence, whatever its motives or purposes, that occurs in the advancement of an individual or collective criminal agenda and seeking to sow panic among people, causing fear by harming them, or placing their lives, liberty or security in danger, or seeking to cause damage to the environment or to public or private installations or property or to occupying or seizing them, or seeking to jeopardize national resources."

3 Cook (2003, 6) remarks, "The fundamental division here was between those who espoused the use of systematic reasoning in matters of theology and those who rejected it in favour of an exclusive reliance on Koran and tradition." Traditionalist/conservative positions are adopted chiefly by the Ḥanbalī sect, itself at the base of the contemporary Salafist perspective expressed in radical Islamist views.

García Sanjuán 2014; Kilani 2015; Amin 2015) Islamists err in their failure to distinguish properly the two senses of (1) 'greater' *jihād* (*al-jihād al-akbar*) and (2) 'lesser' *jihād* (*al-jihād al-aṣghar)*. The former has to do with struggle for self-enlightenment, i.e., achieving an "enlightened" and "tranquil" soul (*al-nafs al-muṭmaʾinnah*), thus the "struggle" of the soul (*jihād al-nafs*) in its transition from a soul inciting one to evil (*al-nafs al-ammārah*) to one capable of self-reproach in personal conflict about good and evil (*al-nafs al-lawwāmah*). The "lesser" *jihād* concerns reform of society, i.e., struggle for social justice, which *may* include (i.e., permits, but does not obligate) "military struggle collectively seeking to defend the religion or the community" (Freamon 2003, 301). "Military struggle" is not *jihād* as such but *qitāl*, "actual combat" authorized by legal authority. (Shah 2011)

Oliver Leaman (2009) observes that if a Muslim believes the message of Islam is obstructed, i.e., the intended "audience [is] prevented from hearing, or appreciating, the message through the activities of their infidel rulers or just through ignorance, then it might well be thought to be acceptable to intervene militarily to bring about the truth more speedily before the minds of unbelievers." Such a Muslim sees his/her action as *al-jihād fī sabīl Allāh*, i.e., "struggling/striving for the sake of God" (Afsaruddin 2007, 97). Freamon (2003, 301) clarifies that, "It is the notion of the 'greater *jihād*, with its emphasis on justice, rectitude, fidelity, integrity, and truth that gives the concept of *jihād* its profound meaning in Islamic theology and law." The problem, however, is for the individual Muslim to understand the difference of the two senses and to practice *jihād* accordingly, without rationalizing acts of terrorism to be acts of martyrdom acceptably undertaken "for the sake of Allah." Understanding terrorism as *ḥirabāh*, agents of terrorism (*muḥāribūn*) carry out actions that are juridically in error *per se*.

Islamists err in their appeal to *sharīʿah* also insofar as (1) the Qurʾān specifically proscribes murder (*qatl*) of the innocent or "protected soul" (*al-nafs al-muḥtaram*) (e.g., Q 4:29-30; 4:93; Q 5:32) and (2) there are specified conditions of law (e.g., retaliation, *qiṣāṣ*) that make killing (not murder) permissible. (Al-Marzouki 2005, 411-417; Pervin 2016[4]) Murder is a crime against the rights of Allah, i.e., *ḥudūd*. But,

[4] Interpolating the text of the Qurʾān (17:3) in the context of criminal law, e.g., Pervin interprets: "And do not kill anyone which Allah has forbidden, except for just cause. And who is killed (intentionally with hostility and oppression and not

even so, there remains the issue of the logic of motivation, whatever the occasion, on the basis of which a jihadist acts and chooses to commit an act of terror that stakes his own life while taking the life of others. Partly, this depends on the definition of "innocent" and "just cause," terms subject to rationalization (distinguishing "rationalization" as prejudicial false belief from 'justification' in the sense of justified true belief). For example, Q 17:33 commands, "*And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right. And whoever is killed unjustly – We have given his heir authority, but let him not exceed limits [in the matter of] taking life, indeed, he has been supported [by the law].*" (وَلاَ تَقْتُلُواْ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللّهُ إِلاَّ بِالْحَقِّ وَمَن قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لِوَلِيِّهِ سُلْطَانًا فَلاَ يُسْرِف فِّي الْقَتْلِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنْصُورًا). The interpretation is problematic; it is debatable who causes "corruption" (*fasād*) or "mischief" "in the land." The jihadist believes (falsely) that an individual is not an innocent if s/he is declared an infidel, blasphemer, heretic, or apostate and, thereby, declared one causing corruption/mischief in the land. The jihadist believes (falsely) s/he has "just cause" to "kill" without this being an act of "murder" as defined by law.

The foregoing concept links inevitably to assorted interpretation about a fundamental Muslim duty, stipulated in the Qurʾān (3:104; 3:110; 9:71), of "commanding right" and "forbidding wrong" (*al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-l-nahy ʿan al-munkar*), "roughly speaking, [meaning] the duty of one Muslim to intervene when another is acting wrongly" (Cook 2003, 3). One unavoidably says "interpretation" here because, as Cook (2003, 3) observes, "There is no certainty that the Koranic phrase originally meant what the later Muslim scholars took it to mean. The Koranic uses of the phrase are vague and general, and give no indication of the concrete character of the duty, if any." Nonetheless there is ample room for decision as to acceptable practice, in light of "the familiar saying of the Prophet with its three modes: 'Whoever sees a wrong, and is able to put it right with his hand, let him do so; if he can't, then with his tongue; and if he can't, then in his heart, and that is the bare minimum of faith.'" (Cook 2003, 12) Here there is also no specification of priority of mode – whether by one's own hand, by one's tongue, by one's heart – or when to defer to authority.

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by mistake), We have given his heirs (*walī*) the authority to demand *qiṣāṣ* (Law of Equality in punishment) or to forgive, or to take *diyah* (blood money). But let him not exceed limits in the matter of taking life (i.e., he should not kill except the killer only); for he is helped (by the Law)."

K. M. Fierke (2009, 156) rightly asks: "How is the meaning of an act of self-destruction packaged, such that individuals who choose this path may understand themselves to be making a rational or even an heroic choice?" The operative assumption is that the jihadist makes a "rational" choice in favor of self-destruction viewed as a heroic act. From his/her Islamist perspective, s/he chooses to be a "martyr" (*shahīd*), although s/he has the option of self-preservation. For the jihadist, "martyr" is a rational signifier of a (presumably) morally legitimate action, an act of martyrdom deliberately contrasted from an act of suicide (*qatl nafsihī*), given Islamic injunctions prohibiting suicide. The jihadist does not say s/he commits suicide or even "suicide operations" (*ʿamaliyyāt intiḥāriyyah*) (Hafez 2007; Cook 2009; Moghadam 2011; Lohlker 2012). The jihadist believes s/he is doing what is morally and legally permissible (*ḥalāl*), even obligatory (*wājib*), under the circumstances of "defense" of Islam, especially when the jihadist distinguishes "the land of Islam" (*dār al-Islām*) and "the land of war" (*dār al-ḥarb*). However, it may be argued that the jihadist's choice of self-destruction so interpreted violates the Islamic understanding given in the Qurʾān (e.g., 5:32) – a counsel in this text consonant with an acknowledged historically prior Jewish/rabbinic understanding of the same point, given in the Talmud (*Mishnah Sanhedrin* 4:5), that when one slays one human life it is as if he slays the whole of humanity. The jihadist produces "reasons" for his/her destructive act; so, at least in that minimal sense, s/he deliberates about and chooses the act of terror, either as an act of defense of the faith or, when emotion overcomes reason, as a non-rational act of aggression.

In general, it may be argued then that, one who makes a defensible choice presumably acts on the basis of some rational principle. S/he is expected to deliberate about a specific *means* relative to a given *end* (goal, purpose) s/he has in view. The fact of deliberation does not assure the reasoning (explicit or implicit) is indeed rationally defensible when subjected to critical review. Notable contemporary Islamic scholars argue the jihadist's actions represent error in judgment, misunderstanding and misinterpreting referenced sources. Furthermore, there is emotive content present in the moment of decision: It seems, "... the emotional pull of the sacrifice is greater than the emotional resistance to death." (Fierke 2009, 156) This emotional element, influencing the jihadist's disposition, does not remove the fact of a choice being made. The jihadist claims a rational ground to his/her

act of terror. At issue, then, is to distinguish a justified true belief from an unwarranted false belief in the jihadist's choice of action.

Fierke (2009, 167-168) observes, "The martyr gives up earthly life with the promise of continuing life in paradise. It is the dignity of Allah (God) that is the ultimate justice to be restored, but this dignity also resides in the potential for justice toward the *ummah* (Islamic community)." Fierke (2009, 171-172) adds, "the [one might say, "more proximate"] objective of the human bomb is to guarantee that the enemy population will be traumatized ..." The jihadist's motivating factors are many:

> "Most [...] have experienced trauma, arising from an on-going experience of loss, of watching the death of neighbors and loved ones, of witnessing countless acts of violence, of losing self-value, given frequent experiences of humiliation and lost opportunities, either of education or employment, thus a loss of those features of life that constitute a sense of human dignity" (Fierke 2009, 172).

"Dignity" here includes a threefold conception, what Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd (2006, 61) calls "individual dignity" (*karāmah fardiyyah*), "collective dignity" (*karāmah ijtimāʿiyyah*), and "political dignity" (*karāmah siyāsiyyah*).

The foregoing observations elicit two moral questions of concern:

(1) Do jihadists also "*do (moral) harm" to themselves* when they perpetrate acts of terror against others?

(2) Do they "*wrong" themselves morally* when they engage in these acts of terror?

These are pertinent questions, to be understood in the context of contemporary moral philosophical understanding and ethics in international affairs such as must be clarified in national and international security policy vis-à-vis transnational terrorism. Such assessment is important if there is to be some scope of independent reasoning (in the Islamic philosophical sense of *ijtihād*) in such matters, without automatically deferring to a "traditionalist" perspective.[5] I propose to engage these two questions in the context

[5] By 'traditionalist' I mean the term as used by Oliver Leaman (2004, 147): "It is difficult to overemphasize the significance of legal discussions in the origination of controversies concerning the nature of ethics in Islam. The traditional view of the

of a discussion articulated by George F. Hourani. I select Hourani here because of his philosophical grounding in both Western and Islamic thought and, in present case, because of his effort to relate an Islamic interpretation to the moral philosophy of Aristotle.[6] In this respect, Hourani follows the example of Ibn Rushd (Averroës). Accordingly, I will then relate Hourani's thought to that of Ibn Rushd in his commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. This choice of Ibn Rushd is relevant insofar as: (1) Ibn Rushd has the status of "the Commentator" par excellence on Aristotle's corpus; (2) Hourani published a translation of Ibn Rushd's *On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy* (*Kitāb faṣl al-maqāl*) [Ibn Rushd 1961/2012]; and (3) Hourani has also commented on Ibn Rushd's thought about the distinction of good and evil, clearly pertinent to sorting out jihadist rationalizations of their actions as "good" when others construe them as "evil" done to others, not to mention evil done to themselves. (Hourani 1962)

I. Hourani's Philosophical Question

In *Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics* (1985) Hourani asks what it means to 'injure oneself,' as expressed in various passages of the Qurʾān, but in the light of what Aristotle says in his *Nicomachean Ethics* about whether it is meaningful to say that an individual "wrongs himself" in a given situation of action. (Hourani 1985) The Qurʾān (e.g., 2:52-55) seems to state that sinners "wrong themselves" (*anfusahum yaẓlimūn; fa-qtulū anfusakum*). Hourani doubts this is a correct meaning, given his reading of Aristotle, hence the conceptual distinction of "wronging oneself" and "harming oneself."

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divine law held that legal judgments must be based on nothing but the law, and if necessary derived indirectly from that law by some approved technique such as analogy, often interpreted in rather a restricted sense. The more innovatory position of those who adhered to opinion (*raʾy*) argued that in cases where the law provides no obvious guidance one must use one's own rational judgments alone in arriving at conclusions to disputes in law and ethics ... [Thus, 'rationalists' insisted] that we can know much of what is right and obligatory by independent reasoning, while the 'traditionalists' acknowledged only revelation as an appropriate source for such knowledge."

6 For an overview of Aristotle's philosophy in historical relation to Islamic thought, see Francis Edwards Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs: the Aristotelian Tradition in Islam* (New York: New York University Press, 1968).

The comparative philosophical task is to have (at the least) a meaningful *clarification* or (better) an *integration* of morally pertinent concepts from the two traditions of practical rationality. This task may be characterized as an interpretive exercise in "Islamic Aristotelianism."[7] In this way, it is hoped, one may find a resolution in meaning that allows one to answer the moral-philosophical question whether the jihadist is morally blameworthy for his/her act(s) of terror, not in the rather obvious sense that he harms/wrongs others but in the sense of whether s/he harms/wrongs him/herself. The assumption is that if s/he wrongs himself/herself, then s/he does what Allah deems an act of injustice. I begin this effort at clarification first by accounting for Aristotle's extended argument given in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Then, I consider Hourani's elaboration of the general conceptual issue vis-à-vis the text of the Qurʾān, this in relation to the practical rationality upheld by Ibn Rushd. Finally, I elaborate an "applied" assessment that, by way of illustration of jihadist action, is jointly Aristotelian/Qurʾānic in the sense articulated by Hourani.

II. What Does Aristotle Say?

In his *Nicomachean Ethics (*Bk. 2. Ch. 4, §3; 1105a20 ff.*)*, Aristotle clarifies that a person *qua* agent of an action acts in accordance with the virtues (e.g., justice, *dikē*, *dikaiosunē*) if: (1) he acts with knowledge ("interpreted as meaning both knowledge of what he is doing (the act must not be unconscious or accidental), and knowledge of moral principle (he must know that the act is a right one)"; (2) he deliberately chooses the act for its own sake; and (3) his action proceeds from a fixed and permanent disposition of character (*ēthos*) (Aristotle 1934). What matters here is the good achieved by action (*to prakton agathon*) (1097a22-24). Such action is differentiated from what Aristotle (Bk. 3, Ch. 1, 1110a1 ff.) calls actions that are "involuntary" (*akousion*), i.e., either (a) "'unwilling' or 'against the will'" or (b) "not voluntary" (*ouk hekousion*).[8] Virtue or moral

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[7] My thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this insight and my revision that includes a subsequent section specifically on Ibn Rushd's position.

[8] In his translation, Rackham interprets 'not willing' to describe "acts done in ignorance of their full circumstances and consequences, and so not willed in the full sense; but such actions when subsequently regretted by the agent are included in the class of *akousia* or unwilling acts, because had the agent not been in ignorance he would not have done them.

excellence (*aretē*) is, of course, a *state of character* made firm by habitual action (*praxis*; habit = *ēthos*), related to practical wisdom (*phronēsis*) and contrasted to theoretical wisdom (*sophia*) and technical skill (*technē*). Aristotle is concerned with "the way of the educated man" (*pepaideumenos*). Whether the educated man is distinguished in rational capacity from "the many" (*hoi polloi*) is a matter of interpretive debate.

For Aristotle, further, while there are actions (virtue) that admit of a mean (*meson, metrion*) between excess (vice) and deficiency (vice) there are also actions that do not admit of a mean and are "beyond the limits of vice" (1107a1 ff.). Among these is the act of murder, an act evil in itself. Aristotle is clear: "It is impossible ... ever to go right with regard to [murder]; one must always be wrong." Here 'wrongness' has nothing to do with the *person* who is wronged (i.e., one may have murdered "the wrong person"); or the *time* (i.e., the act was "ill-timed"); or the *way* in which the wrong is done (i.e., the instrument in use might have been something other than the one chosen). Simply, Aristotle claims, to murder is to go wrong. Indeed, says Aristotle (110b20), "it is true that all wicked men are ignorant of what they ought to do and [ought to] refrain from doing ..." Thus, the act of murder is causally related to the wicked person's ignorance.

Aristotle (Bk. 2, Ch. 7, §1) also reminds that, "conduct deals with particular facts." We are not concerned with generalizations or the universal as such, but with the specifics of an individual's conduct, right and wrong evaluated relative to the individual and the various virtues Aristotle identifies, justice among them. Granted, Aristotle recognizes the presence of emotion in human action. He characterizes one, e.g., who has excess of anger "an irascible sort of person" and one who is implacable, remaining angry, a "bitter-tempered" person. An individual whose action manifests the relative mean between excess and deficiency is considered morally praiseworthy; an individual whose action manifests either excess or deficiency in relation to the given mean is considered morally blameworthy. Aristotle does allow a place for "righteous indignation" (*nemesis*), construed as "a mean between envy and spite." When one moves to declare an individual morally blameworthy in his action, one must be mindful, Aristotle (Bk. 2, Ch. 9, §8) says, that "to what degree and how seriously a man must err to be blamed is not easy to define on principle. For in fact no object of perception is easy to define; and such questions of degree depend on particular circumstances, and the decision lies with perception."

This is, then, a matter of inductive argument (probability), not a matter for demonstration (certainty).

Aristotle also recognizes (Bk. 3, Ch. 1) that individuals sometimes act "from fear of greater evils" even as they sometimes act "for some noble object." Therefore, he grants that whether such actions are voluntary or involuntary is debatable. Whatever one says, however, one's assessment must have "reference to the moment of action." Aristotle also opines that a man may be blamed in the situation in which he endures "the greatest indignities for no noble end or for a trifling end," this being "the mark of an inferior person." Since virtue relates to knowledge, Aristotle (Bk. 3, Ch. 1, §13) also argues that:

> An act done through ignorance is in every case not voluntary. [...] since a man who has acted through ignorance and feels not compunction at all for what he has done, cannot indeed be said to have acted voluntarily, as he was not aware of his action, yet cannot be said to have acted involuntarily, as he is not sorry for it. Acts done through ignorance therefore fall into two classes: if the agent regrets the act, we think that he has acted involuntarily; if he does not regret it, to mark the distinction we may call him a 'non-voluntary' agent.

Hence, one who acts knowingly (*de eidos*) is to be held accountable for the action that he does knowingly, to be praised or blamed as the occasion warrants when what he does is voluntary (*hekousin*). In contrast, one who acts "through [by reason of] ignorance" acts, therefore, unknowingly – he does not know what he is doing, in which case. It seems he is not reasonably to be blamed for what he does, be it involuntary (*akoúsion*) or non-voluntary (*ouk ekoúsion*), even though the action is wrong. Aristotle (Bk. 3, Ch. 1, §14) distinguishes "acting through ignorance" and "acting in ignorance" (e.g., "when a man is drunk or in rage" the man acts in ignorance "owing to one or another of various contributing conditions").

Aristotle distinguishes between actions that admit of a mean and actions that are simply evil. But, further, Aristotle (Bk. 3, Ch. 1, §14) states, very clearly: "Now it is true that all wicked men are ignorant of what they ought to do and [what they ought to] refrain from doing, and that this error is the cause of injustice and of vice in general." Here Aristotle distinguishes various senses of 'ignorance': (1) ignorance from "mistaken purpose" (i.e., a mistake about the end/goal, *telos*), which leads to wickedness; (2) "ignorance of the universal," for which men are blamed; and (3) "ignorance of particulars," i.e., "ignorance of

the circumstances of the act and of the things affected by it ...” All are involuntary actions, involving pain and repentance. All involve injury to someone, of course; but they differ. One type of injury done in ignorance amounts to *error*; an injury that happens contrary to reasonable expectation amounts to a *misadventure*; and injury done without evil intent is *culpable error* (since the cause is internal, e.g., due to excess of passion).

Finally, we must account for Aristotle’s description of choice (*prohairesis*), which “seems to be voluntary” (Bk. 3, Ch. 2, §2). But, while a “sudden act” (i.e., an act done on the spur of the moment) is voluntary it is not chosen, since choice involves deliberation (about the means to a given end) within the range of what is possible. “Choice,” Aristotle says (Bk. 3, Ch. 2, §9), “seems to be concerned with things within our control.” And, “it is our choice of good or evil that determines our character.” (Bk. 3, Ch. 2, §11) In that sense, one chooses to become a good person. But, one does not choose to become a wicked person, if it is true that a wicked person acts through or in ignorance, i.e., s/he is ignorant both of what s/he ought to do and what s/he ought to refrain from doing, blameworthy for acts of omission (not doing good) and acts of commission (doing evil). Says Aristotle (Bk. 3, Ch. 8, § 1), “it is their voluntary performance that constitutes just and unjust conduct. If a man does them involuntarily [e.g., through accident or compulsion], he cannot be said to act justly, or unjustly, except incidentally, in the sense that he does an act which happens to be just or unjust.” Aristotle concludes (Bk. 3, Ch. 8, §3), “An involuntary act is therefore an act done in ignorance, or else one that though not done in ignorance is not in the agent’s control, or is done under compulsion ...”

In Bk. 3, Ch. 5, §4, Aristotle claims that, “it is ... not true that wickedness is involuntary,” in the sense that the cause is himself (he is “the originator and begetter of his actions,” i.e., the *efficient* cause). That is, the wicked man moves himself to do the wickedness – he has the power to do or not to do wickedness, being “the author of his own actions” (it seems the wicked man acts neither under compulsion nor through ignorance). So, Aristotle claims (Bk. 3, Ch.5, §12), “Therefore only an utterly senseless person can fail to know that our characters are the result of our conduct; but if a man knowingly acts in a way that will result in his becoming unjust, he must be said to be voluntarily unjust.” One can think here of a series of causes and effects in the relation of initial means to intermediate means/ends in relation to the

(final) end being pursued. Hence, Aristotle (Bk. 3, Ch. 5, §14) holds that, "the unjust ... might at the outset have avoided becoming so, and therefore they are so voluntarily, although having become unjust ... it is no longer open to them not to be so." Why not possible? It is not possible in the sense of the formation of character through habituated action: wicked acts a wicked man makes, through the repetition of the wicked acts. His character is habituated to wickedness, which becomes his "second nature."

It seems unusual to think that a man does wickedness while expressly believing he deliberately pursues a wicked act. Rather, it may be said that, like all men, the wicked man desires "the apparent good" – i.e., he desires what *appears* to him to be good but what in point of fact, *really*, is evil. Aristotle argues (Bk. 3, Ch. 5, §17): "... on the hypothesis that each man is in a sense responsible for his moral disposition, he will in a sense be responsible for his conception of the good, if on the contrary this hypothesis be untrue, no man is responsible for his own wrongdoing. He does wrong through ignorance of the right end, thinking that wrongdoing will procure him his greatest good ..." If one does not accept this claim, then, the implication is that in general no one is responsible for his own evil deeds.

In Bk. 5, Ch. 1, §18, Aristotle discusses justice (*dikaiosunē*) and injustice, both "distributive" and "corrective," as they apply in universal and particular senses. Aristotle speaks of "the worst man" as one "who practices vice towards his friends as well as in regard to himself." If one who does a wicked act does so *towards him/herself*, even as s/he may do so towards his or her friends, then it seems the wicked person *does wrong* both *to him/herself* and to his or her friends. The same holds true if one speaks instead of enemies. Yet, one must account for the *origin* of this action. The act may originate in passion (e.g., anger) rather than in deliberate choice; in which case, one may say the person *acted wickedly*, but we may not say that *therefore* s/he is *a wicked person*. Similarly, Aristotle (Bk. 5, Ch. 8) acts that proceed from anger "are rightly judged not to be done of malice aforethought; for it is not the man who acts in anger but he who enraged him that starts the mischief," given that "it is apparent injustice that occasions rage." Here one finds a defense of "provocation."[9] Anger that manifests in excess

[9] See here Ashworth, 1976, discussed in reference to English law. Thus, "In English law the defence of provocation operates to reduce to manslaughter a killing which

as rage lacks forethought and temperance (*enkráteia*); it is not in accord with the virtue of prudence (*phronēsis*) (involving both forethought and practicality as to what is to be done in a given situation) or temperance.

In Bk. 5, Ch. 11, §5 & 6 Aristotle comments:

> ... an act of injustice must be voluntary and done from choice, and also unprovoked; we do not think that a man acts unjustly if having suffered he retaliates, and gives what he got. But when a man injures himself, he both does and suffers the same thing at the same time. Again if a man could act unjustly towards himself, it would be possible to suffer injustice voluntarily. [...] Furthermore no one is guilty of injustice without committing some particular unjust act. [...] And generally, the question, "Can a man act unjustly towards himself?" is solved by our decision upon the question, Can a man suffer injustice voluntarily.

Aristotle (Bk. 5 Ch. 11, §§1-3) points out further:

> [On] the question, "Is it possible or not for a man to commit injustice against himself?" (1) One class of just actions consists in those acts, in accordance with any virtue, which are ordained by law. For instance, the law does not sanction suicide (and what it does not expressly sanction, it forbids). Further, when a man voluntarily (which means with knowledge of the person affected and the instrument employed) does an injury (not in retaliation) that is against the law, he commits injustice. But he who kills himself in a fit of passion, voluntarily does an injury (against the right principle [of retaliation]) which the law does not allow. Therefore the suicide commits injustice; but against whom? It seems to be against the state rather than against himself; for he suffers voluntarily, and nobody suffers injustice voluntarily.

Aristotle's point, that such a man does not act unjustly towards himself though *he suffers harm voluntarily*, underscores the fact that virtuous action requires practical wisdom, according to which an individual can see what is good *for himself* and what is good *for men*

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would otherwise be murder." This distinction is important in a context in which "Killings were presumed to proceed from malice aforethought: if there was no evidence of express malice, then the law would imply malice." Relevant to the issue engaged here is the recognition of provocation in (1) "the sight of a friend or relative being beaten" and (2) "the sight of a citizen being unlawfully deprived of his liberty."

in general, thus what is good *for the state* – not merely the former, but *both together*.

But at what point in life is it to be said that one possesses practical wisdom? This depends on an individual's deliberative capacity to understand both the universal and the particulars of action, thus rightly to choose the means in relation to the desired end (*telos*). Aristotle argues that practical wisdom is concerned with both *universals* and *particulars*. The latter become familiar from experience. Clearly, a young man has no experience dealing with particulars. The point of deliberative capacity is to discern the universal in the particulars, hence the "practicality" of the individual's deliberation that "tends to attain what is good." However, observes Aristotle (Bk. 6, Ch. 9, §4), "A man of deficient self-restraint or a bad man may as a result of calculation arrive at the object he proposes as the right thing to do, so that he will have deliberated correctly, although he will have gained something extremely evil; whereas to have deliberated well is felt to be a good thing." How so?

The bad person's *state of character* is problematic here; for s/he has *become* a bad person from the "origin" (*archē*) of his or her action, the "end" (*telos*) inextricably linked to that origin: The aim having been wide of the right mark from the beginning, the means likewise are badly chosen. The consequence is the person's wickedness. Thus, says Aristotle (1144a31-36): "wickedness perverts us and causes us to be deceived about the starting-points of action. Therefore it is evident that it is impossible to be practically wise without being good." The wicked person may be clever, but s/he is not practically wise. Indeed, the wicked person is habituated "beyond the limits of vice," so much so that his or her soul is "rent by faction" (Bk. 9, Ch. 4), "following as [s/he] does evil passions," so much so that "to be thus is the height of wretchedness."

Might one, then, have hope of reform or rehabilitation of the wicked person? This is a very unlikely outcome. Given that (1) this person's soul has "been cultivated by means of habits," and, (2) s/he "lives as passion directs," the bad person "will not hear argument that dissuades him [or her], nor understand it if [s/he] does; and how can we persuade one in such a state to change his [or her] ways? ... What argument would remold such people? It is hard, if not impossible, to remove by argument the traits that have long since been incorporated in the character ..." (Bk. 10, Ch. 9) Rather, Aristotle recommends, "a bad

[person] ... is corrected [if s/he is to be corrected at all] by pain like a beast of burden."

III. Hourani's Explication with Reference to the Qurʾān

Hourani focuses on Chapters 9 and 11 of Book 5 of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. The word in use is the verb *adikein*. One use concerns "doing wrong" by going "against the aim of the laws;" the other concerns "treating someone unjustly" by violating fair or balanced distribution of some good. Hourani also accounts for properly moral injustice (*adikein*) distinguished from "merely doing unjust things (*adika prattein*, *poiein*)," the former involving deliberation and being voluntary while the latter injustice occurs incidentally, i.e., without *intention* to do injustice. The former is the strict sense in which someone is accounted blameworthy for the wrong s/he does. Hourani observes, "One may suffer unjust effects (*adika paskhein*) at one's hands, but without being treated unjustly (*adikeisthai*) by any moral agent. [...] but at most [one] only suffers harm (*blaptetai monon*)." (Hourani 1985, 51)

Hourani then considers the Qurʾān. Can one doubt that *ẓulm al-nafs* means "wronging oneself"? Hourani considers some problematic cases. For example, "most strikingly, when a martyr chooses to suffer an unjust death rather than betray his convictions or his colleagues." Hourani is aware that one must evaluate such cases relative to Aristotle's principle: "Aristotle's solutions to the problem never abandon his principle that *accepting an injustice cannot be voluntary*." (Hourani 1985, 51; italics added) But, in the example here given of a martyr, the unstated assumption is that this individual is perceived to be a good person (not a wicked person) who suffers an unjust death involuntarily. That is, "no one willingly accepts evil for himself" – such a person *knows* the act to be evil (he does not act from ignorance) and suffers the act *involuntarily*, perhaps in view of "counterbalancing goods" in which he will share, e.g., "honor." It may be so with the martyr – s/he suffers injustice (passive sense) but does not thereby do wrong (active sense) to him/herself.

Hourani is clear that the Qurʾānic text concerns wrongdoers, sinners; e.g., Q 2:54, "*And when Moses said unto his people: O my people! Ye have wronged yourselves by your choosing of the calf (for worship) ...*;" Q 3:117, "*... a people who have wronged themselves ... Allah wronged them not, but they do wrong themselves*;" Q 4:64, "...

And if, when they had wronged themselves …;" etc.[10] Accordingly, Hourani states the interpretive issue, i.e., what is a matter of *ijtihād*: "This ... leads us to ask, even if (contrary to Aristotle) there are some people who really wrong themselves [voluntarily] ... The Qurʾān, too, must be taken seriously ..." (Hourani 1985, 52) Hourani appreciates Aristotle's philosophical insight; but he also appreciates the force of the Qurʾān's instruction. Both should be reconciled if this can be done through interpretation. (In this regard Hourani follows Ibn Rushd, about more shortly.) From this perspective, these are wrongdoers "who bring on themselves the punishment of the next life. The Qurʾān leads us emphatically to think that they deserve what they get; their punishment is just. So, how can it be said that they wrong themselves?" How do they *wrong themselves* in the sense of a *voluntary deliberated action* – "willful evildoing" – not in the sense of "merely 'harming,' 'paining,' in a way that might be accidental [incidental, unintended]?"

It seems, from the Qurʾān, that "the injury to oneself is not anything that occurs at the time of the act; it is, rather, the fact that *the act is the cause of a later punishment.*" (Hourani 1985, 53) What, then, is the correct interpretation? Hourani rules out two possibilities: (1) evildoers wrong their souls; (2) *ẓulm* means only "harm" or "hurt" but not "wrong." He interprets differently: "... most likely ... both 'harm' and 'wrong' are present in *ẓulm al-nafs* in a close association which is *not made explicit* but which *can be inferred* because it makes the best sense of the phrase in all passages." (Hourani 1985, 55; italics added) Thus: "The *ẓālīmī anfusahum* [sic] are in the first instance *ẓālimūn*, plain wrongdoers. But *all wrongdoers also harm themselves* as a result of their own acts. The harm comes inescapably as punishment for these acts." (Hourani 1985, 56) Given this interpretion, Hourani prefers to combine the senses of "wrong" and "harm" to mean "injuring oneself."

IV. Ibn Rushd's Islamic Aristotelianism

Hourani writes influenced by Ibn Rushd. One may then consider in summary what Ibn Rushd understands from his own engagement of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Ibn Rushd's thought represents what some consider Islamic Arab philosophy's "interpretive maturity." (Al Wali and Kadhim, 2012) Following Aristotle, the Muslim philosophers understood that one is properly "deliberative" (*fikrī*) when "one

[10] Cited passages are from http://www.altafsir.com, English translation.

considers, with respect to what one wishes to do, wherever he wishes to do it, whether it can be done or not, and if it can, how that action should be done." (Fakhry 1991, 80)

Ibn Rushd argues that one needs both revelation and reason – revelation "laying down Laws" which "cannot be laid down by human education." Important to his epistemology, Ibn Rushd argues:

> A knowledge of the laws cannot be acquired except after a knowledge of God, and of human happiness and misery; and the acts by which this happiness can be acquired, as charity and goodness and the works which divert men from happiness and produce eternal misery, such as evil and wickedness. Again the knowledge of human happiness and misery requires a knowledge of the soul and its substance, and whether it has eternal happiness or not. (Ibn Rushd 1921, 252)

Here 'happiness' (*saʿādah*) refers to Aristotle's *eudaimonia*, both revelation and reason directed at the goal (*telos*) of happiness. For Aristotle and Ibn Rushd, happiness means "an action of the rational soul in accordance with virtue." (Leaman 2004, 181)

Ibn Rushd is motivated to preserve religious truth, but his instruction by Aristotle and the Islamic philosophers prior to al-Ghazālī dispose him to a careful exercise of reason:

> One party [in classical Islamic disputation] chose to censure the philosophers, while the other agreed to interpret the Law, and make it conform to philosophy. All this is wrong. The Law should be taken literally, and the conformity of religion to philosophy should not be told to the common people. For by an exposition of it we should be exposing the results of philosophy to them, without their having intelligence enough to understand them. It is neither permitted nor desirable to expose anything of the result of philosophy to a man who has no arguments to advance, for there are no arguments either with the learned people [i.e., the theologians] who have a mastery over both the subjects, or with the common people who follow the exoteric of the Law (Ibn Rushd 1921, 188-189).

Ibn Rushd here seeks to defend Muslim philosophers, against the view of such as al-Ghazālī who attacked the philosophers for "interpretive error" ostensibly amounting to unbelief (*kufr*). Ibn Rushd, as with al-Ghazālī, accepts that knowledge is formed around consensus (*ijmāʿ*) yielding certainty (the "categorical" knowledge of demonstration, syllogistic reasoning); but, differing with al-Ghazālī,

Ibn Rushd argues that what is inductively true ("speculative" knowledge, what is "generally accepted," *mashhūrah*) is open to interpretation (*ijtihād*) and permits dissent rather than unanimity. Ibn Rushd allows for *ijtihād* while rejecting *taqlīd*, i.e., blind obedience to clerical authority.[11]

Given Ibn Rushd's claim about philosophy's relation to Islamic belief, Leaman (2004, 181) writes, "the method of reasoning involved in philosophy explains in paradigmatically rational form why *sharīʿah* has the characteristics it does, and this rational explanation is permitted, indeed *demanded* by Islam." Thus, "Since the truth of Islam lies in revelation through prophecy," Leaman (2004, 185) adds:

> ... all believers believe for the same reason. But the philosophers can justify the belief in another way [e.g., through syllogistic reasoning] as well as through acceptance of revelation ... [Both] the philosopher and the ordinary believer can be happy, but they will be happy in different ways. The ordinary believer's happiness will lie in his observance of the *sharīʿah* and social norms, while the happiness of the philosopher will lie in addition to such observance in his personal development of intellectual virtues.

Moral virtue is important for all, but intellectual virtue is the reserve of the philosophers. Ibn Rushd accepts Aristotle's distinction of intellectual (*nuṭqī*) and moral (*khuluqī*) virtue.

> In his *Commentary on Aristotle's 'Nicomachean Ethics'* Averroes [Ibn Rushd] shows how practical reason could be used to 'correct' religious law. He is here considering Aristotle's definition of the equitable as 'a correction of law where it is defective owing to its generality' and relates this to Islamic law concerning holy war or *jihād*. It is generally obligatory on all Muslims to wage war against non-Muslims at all times. Yet it is clear that such a general policy would on occasions be of considerable disutility to the Islamic regions. Following rigidly such a general instruction is said by Averroes to be a result of 'ignorance of the intention of the lawgiver, and for this reason it should be stated that peace is preferable, and war only occasionally relevant. (Leaman 2004, 171, citing here the Latin text from Bk. 5, Ch. 10, folio 248r)

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[11] See here Ebrahim Moosa, "Between Ghazali and Ibn Rushd – Ethics, Reason, Humility," Muslim Institute Third Ibn Rushd Lecture, 10 June 2015, London UK, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoY4fvL58YI, accessed May 14, 2018.

Ibn Rushd's appropriation of Aristotle's insight on equity aligns with Hourani's attention to this feature of Aristotle's thought in relation to his question whether the jihadist wrongs him/herself. But, one must be careful here about the concept of *jihād* in use, recalling the importance of the individual attending first and foremost, as a matter of moral virtue, to the greater *jihād* that conduces to proper formation of the soul. As Leaman (2004, 153) observes, "A large proportion of the Qur'an consists not just in arguing for the performance of particular kinds of acts but also the cultivation of the virtues, or the acquisition of dispositions to carry out such acts." Ibn Rushd understood this; hence, his appropriation of Aristotelian practical rationality conduced to a unity of thought about how one may "promote virtue," "prevent vice," and "avoid evil."

However, one sense of "the wicked person" is for Ibn Rushd somewhat different from that of Aristotle. Ibn Rushd defers to the Qurʾān as he considers the disputation among Islamic authorities. He accounts for the Muʿtazilīs, their belief that "man's wickedness or virtue is his own acquirement," while the Jabrīs hold that "man is compelled to do his deeds." These views contrast to that of the Ashʿarīs, who "say that man can do action, but the deeds done, and the power of doing it, are both created by God." These views are all "contradictory" arguments, Ibn Rushd notes, emanating from the Qurʾān and the Tradition. In contention with these views, Ibn Rushd allows for a "mean between compulsion and freedom" – an Aristotelian strategy of resolving the contradiction. He seeks "to reconcile them by means of a middle course, which is the right method." (Ibn Rushd 1921, 266)

Relating Aristotelian practical rationality to Islam assumes compatibility with an Islamic doctrine of free will (*iktisāb*, *kasb*), although Ibn Rushd acknowledges one may have "diametrically opposed arguments which can be advanced in support of both free will and predestination," as Majid Fakhry (2001, 11) puts it and clarifies:

> [d]eterminism (*jabr*) may be criticized on the ground that it renders religious obligation meaningless and any provision for the morrow, in the expectation of bringing about certain advantages and warding off certain disadvantages, entirely irrational. [...] To reconcile the two views, as Scripture itself appears to demand, we should understand, as Averroës argues, that human actions are the product of those internal faculties which God has implanted in us *as well as* those external forces which allow for the realization of our deliberately chosen aims.

That said, Ibn Rushd allows for God's "prior will" operative in individual conduct:

> [t]here shall exist among the innumerable variety of existing entities some wayward people, I mean, some who are disposed by their own natures to go astray, and that they are driven thereto by what surrounds them of internal and external causes that lead them astray." (Fakhry 2001, 12)

Appealing to the authority of the Qurʾān in expounding upon the doctrine of divine "direction," Ibn Rushd acknowledges that God has created some humans with "evil natures," according to his divine wisdom:

> For the nature and constitution of men, in His very creation, are such that they require some men, though very few, to be wicked and evil by their nature. Such is also the case with the outer causes, made for directing the people to the right path, which requires that some men must be bad. If many had been good then the divine law would not have been fulfilled, because either there had not been created things in which there is little evil and much good, for the good would have disappeared on account of that little evil, or there had been created things with much good and little evil. Now it is well known that the existence of many good ones with a few evil ones, is better than the non-existence of much good for the sake of little evil. (Ibn Rushd 1921, 284)

Ibn Rushd's epistemological distinction of categorical and speculative knowledge means one cannot judge with certainty whether the jihadist is a wicked person "by nature," according to God's creative will; one can only speculate that it might be so. Where the jihadist acts in fact not by nature but according to his or her own volition, then one evaluates his/her actions on the basis of the presence or absence of ignorance, in the sense clarified earlier.

V. Consider the Jihadist: "Wronging," "Harming," "Injuring" Himself?

If we accept Hourani's preferred interpretation of the meaning of the passages in the Qurʾān, then the jihadist who does injustice through his acts of terror is a wrongdoer (*ẓālimūn*) to others and also wrongs and harms himself as a result of his acts – he is properly denominated *ẓālīmī anfusahum*. He is, therefore, rightly to be

punished in the present lifetime (by the judicial institutions of the state) even as he can expect due punishment in the afterlife for having violated the right to life of those who are legitimately innocent. There is possible objection to this view, if the jihadist defends him/herself on the basis of Islamic tradition's "ethical voluntarism" or "theistic subjectivism" – i.e., "the theory that good and evil, justice and injustice, are defined entirely by reference to the commands of God, as revealed to man in the *sharīʿah*."[12] In this case the jihadist depends wholly on his or her interpretation of what this divine command requires in the specific context of his or her action. As Daniel Heller-Roazen (2006, 413) reminds, "... the Law (*šarīʿa*) [in contrast to faith or dogma, is] the single revealed body of prescriptions and prohibitions understood by Islamic tradition to be simultaneously civil and religious, temporal and spiritual." Thus, questions of right or wrong conduct can be only juridical, i.e., as a matter of jurisprudence (*fiqh*).

We must bear in mind several major points in relating Hourani's account to what Aristotle says:

- A wicked person *goes wrong* from the beginning (*archē*), his/her aim being wide of the right mark, which is the right end (*telos*).
- A wicked person's actions, e.g., murder, are beyond the limits of vice, and in that sense "simply evil" acts – murder is never morally right.
- In the foregoing sense, the wicked person *chooses* incorrectly, his or her *means* to the end being wrong even as his and her chosen end is merely an *apparently* good end, not a *really* good end.
- Having chosen the wrong means as well as the wrong end (i.e., the apparently good end) the wicked person acts such that s/he *habituates* her/himself towards wickedness in these acts and, therefore, (usually in the company of like-minded "friends") *becomes* a wicked person, his or her *state of character* in due time *being* that of a wicked person.
- Since all persons are responsible for their state of character, insofar as this state is produced by acts that are voluntary

[12] See here Hourani 1962, 15.

(*hekousin*), the wicked person is likewise responsible for his or her state of character and morally blameworthy accordingly.

Relative to these points, the wicked person's acts involve choice, thus a sort of deliberative capacity. However, we must recall Aristotle says, very clearly: "Now every wicked man is ignorant of what he ought to do and what he ought to abstain from, and it is by reason of error of this kind that men become unjust and in general bad." Following Aristotle here, the wicked person has only *cleverness of calculation*, not practical wisdom (*phronēsis*). Lacking prudence, his or her act excludes genuine forethought. Lacking genuine forethought, it seems, the wicked person does not act "with malice aforethought." Hence, the wicked person's *ignorance* of the right end (*telos*) is at the root of his or her error. Genuine forethought involves choice in relation to the right end; cleverness is a mere preoccupation with the means to a wrong end.

L. Gómez Espíndola clarifies the concept, thus:

> Aristotle claims we can distinguish actions *caused* by ignorance [*di' ágnoian*] and actions *done in* ignorance [*agnoon*]. An action is caused by ignorance if it is performed because the agent ignores the particulars which the action consists in and is concerned with. The agent does not really know, for example, what he is doing, toward whom his action is directed or what will be the consequences of the performance of the action. [...] In contrast, an action done in ignorance could be performed while perfectly knowing the particulars which define the action. In this case the ignorance is about universal, ignorance regarding what *kind* of action we must do or avoid. This ignorance – Aristotle says – is the cause of vice (Gómez Espíndola 2005, 2).

The jihadist, it seems, is responsible for an action not caused by his or her ignorance. But, it is an action done *in ignorance* of the universal, not the particulars of the act pursued. Following Gómez Espíndola's clarification, we can argue, by parity of reasoning, that the jihadist is not ignorant of the particulars – i.e., s/he *knows* what s/he is doing (hence, his or her *intent*); *knows* the person(s) (e.g., "innocent" civilians, construed as guilty because of the actions of his or her government; other "Muslims" construed as blasphemers, apostates; etc.) toward whom the act is done; *knows* the instrument (e.g., the explosive device) by which s/he acts; and *knows* the (likely) consequences of his or her action (e.g., the deaths of innocents or infidels; the installation of terror in the broader community; etc.). But

this act is done in ignorance precisely insofar as s/he is ignorant of the universal – "What [s/he] does not know is that performing this kind of actions [sic] is not right, but that is not a reason for saying [s/he] acted unwillingly. (1110b25-1111a7)." The jihadist does "willful evil" that, as an act of *murder* (contrasted here from a "just cause" killing), is *always* wrong, *simply* wrong (always *beyond* the limits of vice). There is no moral or legal defense such as the jihadist's subsequent appeal to his or her ignorance of the particulars. On Aristotelian terms, then, the jihadist *qua* wicked person is responsible for his or her evil acts and is, therefore morally blameworthy.

VI. An Illustration from Police Action in Bangladesh

The foregoing assessment images a jihadist experienced with life but whose ignorance of the universal has led him or her to calculate and commit acts of terror, thereby willingly to have become a wicked person. But, what of the child who is persuaded to act as a "suicide bomber" or to "fight to the death" against those alleged to be unbelievers, heretics, blasphemers, or apostates? What of a woman who, as wife, follows her husband into an association of terrorists, initially motivated by emotional attachment, acting under coercion, but carrying out the terrorist action nonetheless?

Consider a recent example involving such a boy and woman. It was reported in a Bangladesh newspaper on 16 December 2016 that, during an anti-terror operation in Azimpur, a suburb of the capital city of Dhaka, 14-year old Afif Kaderi rejected a call from police to surrender, opened fire, and was either killed in the exchange or he committed suicide. (Islam and Mollah 2016) In the same operation, jihadist Maynul Musa (a top leader in the radical group "Neo JMB," the new *Jama'at-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh*, "Assembly of Jihadists"), communicating by way of an encrypted mobile phone messaging application, "instructed his wife Trisha Moni to wear a suicide vest and blow up herself along with their four-month-old daughter instead of surrendering to law enforcers." According to the news report, "Trisha, however, did not carry out the instruction as her motherly love for the baby stopped her from detonating the vest."

Afif is the son of one named Tanvir Kaderi, a leader of the Neo-JMB, no doubt "radicalized" by his father's Islamist indoctrination. Some observers argue that Afif acted *voluntarily*, despite his age. He *intended* (a) to kill others and (b) *to become a martyr*, in the Islamist

sense of neo-JMB ideology. It *seems* that Afif is not ignorant of the particulars of his action but perhaps likely ignorant of the universal. If so, then his actions are done voluntarily, i.e., willingly. But, of course, this is a matter of perception; our perception may be in error. We have to ask whether it was really open to Afif (i.e., subject to his free, deliberative choice) to do or not to do what he did (i.e., not surrendering and instead committing to his act of militant *jihād*). Is his act is simply evil/wicked in the sense of an act of *ḥirābah*?

Gómez Espíndola reminds us that Aristotle distinguishes "different ways to willingly harm a community (cf. 1135b13-27)." Accounting for these ways, we can then place Afif's action in context, evaluating accordingly.

- The first way is by "nonrational feelings: We can perform an action willingly but without previous deliberation and decision." (Gómez Espíndola 2005, 5) The action is merely impulsive. "In these cases we could say that the agent acted unjustly, but not that he is an unjust person. He did not decide to perform an unjust action, but the circumstances led him to act unjustly."

Thus, if Afif was moved by impulse, his action impulsive under the circumstances, then *he acted unjustly* but *he is not an unjust person* – i.e., he does not have (in actuality) the state of character of a wicked man (though he has that character potentially).

- The second way is "by vice: This kind of action is also voluntary ... However ... the cause ... [is] a previous deliberation and decision ... If he deliberated and decided to do this unjust action, it is because he is unjust. Thus, these actions are indicators of the moral state of the agent." (Gómez Espíndola 2005, 5)

Hence, if Afif acted consequent to deliberation and decision, it is *because* he is an unjust person, i.e., one who commits a wicked act (causing destruction, *fasād*). It is unlikely any one would say that Afif did not act unjustly. But, it is also unlikely that one would say reasonably that Afif is a wicked person, given his age (already one of puberty, *bāligh*, but not of full maturity) and his lack of experience with respect to *knowing* either the universal or the particulars relative to a morally right or wrong act. In other words, most likely we would say that, given his age, Afif (1) "has not yet become vicious" and (2) "has not yet become wicked," although he acts unjustly towards the police authorities who seek his surrender to save his life (despite

punishment following due process of law).[13]

Like any other child, Afif acts motivated by non-rational feelings. This is a cause, in Ibn Rushd's sense, internal to himself. However, he lacks practical reason, "the capacity for decision;" for, Aristotle says explicitly: Practical wisdom (*phronēsis*) "is concerned not only with universals but with particulars, which become familiar from experience, but *a young man has no experience*, for it is length of time that gives experience ..." (emphasis added). Having no such experience that comes with time lived, Afif cannot (and did not) have the deliberative capacity really to evaluate either the particulars or the universal that relates to his actions. In Islam, similarly, it is said that, "the basic criterion of responsibility (*taklīf*)" is "the possession of mental faculty of mind (*ʿaql*), although this is subject to review in the case of the child who has attained age of puberty" (Wajis 1996). Therefore, lacking this practical wisdom, Afif (1) did not act with malice aforethought, although (2) he acted unjustly in the setting of the police operation. His was a *non-rational* response to his circumstances.

Is Afif, then, *morally* responsible for his act? Would Afif be morally responsible, morally *blameworthy*, were he to have been successful with an act that resulted in what is (from his perspective of Islamist indoctrination) an act of martyrdom? The answer is "no." He is neither morally responsible nor morally blameworthy, even though he does what is unjust. Gómez Espíndola provides the applicable clarification: "... the kind of action a mature person performs indicates his character and is his full responsibility, whereas actions of children ... indicate their circumstances and, at the best, their natural constitution, for which they are not responsible." (Gómez Espíndola 2005, 6) Afif's action indicates his circumstances and his non-rational feelings in those circumstances. Afif's father, as *external cause*, motivated Afif's disposition – a central feature of Afif's circumstances of life. Had Afif continued living under conditions where his disposition (guided by his father and other such Islamist associates) would play itself out in acts of terror, killing innocents or even police officials through the

[13] It is to be noted that if accounted guilty of *ḥirābah*, the penalty under *sharīʿah* is fixed, although the judge (*qāḍī*) has discretion as to the method of inflicting the punishment. (Wajis 1996)

instrument of explosive devices, etc., Afif most likely *would* have *become* an evil person.

We have one remaining question: Does Afif, through his act, *wrong himself* in the Qurʾānic sense of sinning, liable to divine punishment? If we accept Hourani's interpretation, preferring the expression "injures himself" (including both 'wrong' and 'harm'), then the answer is "yes, Afif wrongs himself." But, he does so only *proximately*; since, in the most important sense of the word, he wrongs Allah, going against the just aim of life Allah sets in proscribing murder of the innocent, despite the false belief they are not genuinely innocent. Similarly, on the Aristotelian account, Afif harms himself, acting against the right and duty of life that is his, "suicide" being an act that violates the duty (justice) to preserve life. In the most important sense, he wrongs the State, in this case, Bangladesh. Afif was subject to the punishment of the State insofar as he acted unjustly against the State; for, the State proscribes suicide not only as a matter of its legislation of a criminal act, but also in the context of the Islamic faith that informs the laws of Bangladesh as a Muslim-majority nation. Therefore, because the State, through its criminal law, proscribes suicide and the *sharīʿah* proscribes a Muslim's act of suicide, Afif acts against Allah.

Violating the sacrosanct right to life of those who are innocent, Afif cannot be and is not a martyr (*shahīd*), i.e., one who surrenders his life for a noble (just) cause. Given his age, Afif has not the years of life lived allowing him to lay claim to that stage of development of soul that is the enlightened self (*al-nafs al-muṭmaʾinnah*). Only on the basis of a properly phronetic decision is a noble or heroic deed consistent with justice. At best, Afif's state of psychological development is that of a soul struggling with itself to discern the good from the bad, i.e., *al-nafs al-lawwāmah*. At this stage, Afif is subject to both internal and external motivating factors that move him in the direction of the virtues (*maʿrūfāt*), the vices (*munkarāt*), or wickedness (*sharr*). The latter, if performed habitually, eventually (i.e., as a cumulative effect) establishes itself in the character of a wicked person (as "second nature"), his or her sinful action (*sayyiʾāt*) having exceeded his or her pious actions (*ṣāliḥāt*) to the point of injury to self, hence the wicked person "wronging" him/herself.

What now of the woman Trisha? The assessment is rather more obvious. She is of age to make a moral decision, having deliberative capacity in relation to the particulars of the moment to choose either

virtue or vice. She is subject to a judgment that finds her morally praiseworthy or morally blameworthy relative to the choice made. Clearly, Trisha deliberated: She understood the police orders to surrender; she understood her husband's directive to wear and detonate the explosive device; she evaluated her circumstances, including the emotional appeal present in her love for her daughter; she understood the likely consequences of her decision, be it (1) from the Islamist perspective, suicide/martyrdom and subsequent divine judgment, or (2) from the Bangladesh government/judicial perspective, subsequent punishment for participation in a criminal (terrorist) activity. Her action in respect to these particulars is decidedly voluntary, manifest with the intent to commit a terrorist act.

Trisha is admittedly influenced, if not coerced, to act by her husband (bearing in mind the patriarchic, hierarchical structure of a Muslim family in the sociopolitical context of Muslim-majority Bangladesh). One cannot judge with certainty that Trisha acted on the basis of practical wisdom or on the basis of her emotional state. Trisha made a choice. Given her comments to police authorities and our perception of her act, one assesses her act to have been chosen *in accordance with virtue* rather than in accordance with vice. Certainly, her choice avoided an evil act that is, as Aristotle says, always simply wrong. In the decision of the moment, Trisha neither wronged the State nor did she wrong herself in the sense Hourani clarifies. Under the circumstances of her deliberation, Trisha signaled her commitment to life rather than to death – she had the right aim (*telos*) and the correct means, thereby manifesting a correct (even if only tacit and incidental) evaluation of the particulars in relation to the universal.

VII. Hourani and Ibn Rushd's *Tafsīr* on Aristotle's Ethics

Ibn Rushd could surely understand, today, how a radical Islamist might appeal to the doctrine of ethical voluntarism arguing that s/he is obligated to act only and entirely with reference to the commands of Allah, as revealed in the *sharīʿah*. Such subjectivism, as Hourani (1962) noted, was the dominant theory of value in medieval Islam. As noted earlier, Ibn Rushd considered both scripture and reason reliable for moral deliberation and decision.[14] He argued that, "it is self-evident

[14] Heller-Roazen (2006, 424) explains that for Ibn Rushd (as clarified in the *Decisive Treatise*), "The methods of demonstrative science may lead to the knowledge of a subject not mentioned in the teachings of the Law; they may also lead to the

that justice [*al-ʿadl*] is good [*khayr*] and injustice [*al-jawr*] is evil [*sharr*]" – meaning good "in itself" and evil "in itself," thus not "by supposition" and notwithstanding what scripture says. (Hourani 1962) He clarifies with example: "... associating [other gods] with [Allah] would not be unjust or wrong (*ẓulm*) in itself, but only from the standpoint of the Law [*sharīʿah*], and if the Law had prescribed an obligation to believe in an associate of [Allah], then that would have been just ..." (Hourani 1962) Ibn Rushd's example here shows the absurdity of ethical voluntarism, for "according to subjectivism these [most sacred] duties [of Islam] would have only a conventional and not an intrinsic value." (Hourani 1962)

Justice, *al-ʿadl*, then, is not merely a matter of convention. There is an objective, intrinsic value to justice that the law seeks to realize. Ibn Rushd argues with reference to the Qurʾān (10:44) that Allah is "righteous" (*bi-l-qisṭ*) and, therefore, not a "wrongdoer," in which case *when wrong is done it is attributable causally to men*: "*Surely [Allah] wrongs not men anything, but themselves men wrong.*" [إِنَّ اللهَ لاَ يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ]. (Hourani 1962) That is, they wrong their own souls. Thus, Hourani (1962) clarifies, Ibn Rushd argues, "any person is evil when he does certain types of acts or creates certain things having in themselves a real [not merely "apparent"] character of evil ..." This unavoidably relates to human choice (*al-ikhtiyār*), "a condition of human obligation:" "Since we are certainly under obligation we must therefore have a choice. This means that we will our own acts." (Hourani 1962) If and when men go astray, Ibn Rushd opines, it is because they are "predisposed to go astray by their natures, and impelled to it by causes of misguidance, both internal and external, which surround them." (Hourani 1962) Here, "nature" accounts for Allah's creative act involving "natural elements" (*al-ṭabīʿah*) and "composition" (*al-tarkīb*) in the formation of humankind. The quest for human happiness (*al-saʿādah*) proceeds only with this understanding of the composite nature of a human being.

Clearly, then, despite the composite human nature, the majority of individuals have the rational capacity to achieve good and avoid evil

knowledge of one mentioned by them. If the subject is indeed not addressed by the Law, there can be no conflict with wisdom; the matter in question simply 'has the status of the statutes passed over in silence, which the jurist infers by means of Law-based syllogistic reasoning' ..."

(although not all equally)[15]: "... Ibn Rushd believed that reason can find out at least a part of what is right ..." (Hourani 1962) This is a matter of both theoretical and practical reason. Wrongdoing, if it is to be avoided, depends on both intellectual and moral virtue, the latter according to the proper function of the rational soul exercising right thinking, right judgment, and right action as prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice require, all to the exclusion of both vice and evil (*munkar*). Moral judgment in this sense is a matter of practical wisdom, different from "legal reasoning or legal analogy" (*qiyās fiqhī*), i.e., "deduction of moral decisions from scripture." (Hourani 1962) Practical wisdom depends on life experience and not merely the text of scripture and divine command. A Muslim, for Ibn Rushd, has "right of free opinion" (*ijtihād al-raʾy*). In his *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Bk. 5, Ch. 10), Ibn Rushd illustrates this view, pertinent to the present discussion because it concerns the "military" sense of *jihād*. Hourani (1962, 39) recalls this and comments:

> He quotes Aristotle's definition of equitable as "a correction of law where it is defective owing to its generality," and illustrates this from the Islamic law of *jihād*. [...] Such correction of positive law by equity implies the existence of a natural right, to which the Legislator conformed, and by our direct knowledge of which we may interpret his intentions.

In short, any Muslim interpreting *jihād* in the military sense that involves armed conflict with non-Muslims cannot take that imperative as absolute. It applies to the exception, to individual and collective acts of self-defense, not offensive war, not acts of aggression. Radical Islamists *qua* jihadists presuming themselves to be following this injunction err. Given Ibn Rushd's opinion, thereby they manifest ignorance of the intention present in the injunction. Acting in ignorance of this intent, therefore they do wrong – not only to others, but also to themselves.

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[15] In his *Decisive Treatise*, Ibn Rushd distinguishes three classes of people: those of rhetoric (*al-khaṭābiyyūn*) who are not adept at interpretation; those of dialectic (*al-jadaliyyūn*), adept "by nature or by habit" at dialectical interpretation; and those of demonstration (*al-burhāniyyūn*), who are capable of interpretation (*taʾwīl*) and the philosophical wisdom (*falsafah*, *ḥikmah*) proper to "science" (*ahl al-ʿilm*).

One cannot forget here Ibn Rushd's allowance for God's prior will that creates some humans to be "by their nature" evil. By their nature they are *disposed* to do evil and very likely to do evil when motivated either by internal or external causes. For such individuals, this is not first and foremost to be explained as action due to ignorance that might have been remedied. These individuals function according to that larger divine direction that allows a minor portion of evil (*qabīḥ*) and a majority of good (*khayr*) in the foundation of God's creative act.

Conclusion

We have completed a Qurʾānic and Aristotelian interpretation of wrongdoing that allows for the similarity of the two modes of practical rationality in the formulation of an interpretive resolution of the question posed at the outset. In the Qurʾānic reading, the *religious* context concerns the individual's relation to Allah; whereas, the *political* context of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* concerns the individual's relation to the *polis*, i.e., to the State. In the former case, the wrongdoer wrongs Allah and, thereby, wrongs him/herself in view of his/her prospective punishment in the afterlife. Whereas, in the latter case the wrongdoer wrongs the State and thereby wrongs (harms/injures) him/herself in view of the prospective punishment that the laws of the State prescribe. Either way, we conclude that, consistent with Islamic Aristotelianism such as articulated by Ibn Rushd, Hourani properly integrates the two modes of practical rationality by way of the more refined interpretive concept he has preferred, viz., "to injure oneself." In that sense, for both the Qurʾān and Aristotle, we may say the wrongdoer wrongs (injures, harms) him/herself. Accordingly, on this interpretion, a militant jihadist always wrongs him/herself through his or her act of terror, even as s/he wrongs other persons and the State in particular.

However, it is clear, as Aristotle understood, that an individual's state of character manifests itself as either virtue or vice consequent to habituated action. For Aristotelian ethics, acts of murder and suicide fall into the category of evil simply, these acts beyond the limits of vice as such. Mature adults who commit such evils while having the capacity of rational deliberation are properly evaluated as wrongdoers, while children (teenagers especially) are to be evaluated differently (as illustrated by example above). This holds true for both Aristotelian ethics and Islamic ethics in the sense of the integration of the two practical rationalities reviewed here.

Hence, those evaluating the actions of militant jihadists cannot lose sight of the significance of moral rectitude *qua* Islamic virtue, hence the importance of *ʿilm al-akhlāq* for a proper understanding of *jihād* to disabuse Muslims of the error of individual wrongdoing that is "militant" *jihād*.

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FINDING AL-FĀRĀBĪ IN *THE WALKING DEAD*

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Abstract

In the 21st century, the world offers new philosophical ideas with new discussion platforms, which are technologically advanced visual fields. However, no study considers these modern products to be something that can be read with classical Islamic philosophy. As a post-apocalyptic show, *The Walking Dead* presents a world full of zombies where humans are trying to rebuild their civilization. Therefore, we aim to study this adventure of civilization with the ideas of al-Fārābī, who was one of the most important political philosophers in Islamic thought. This study's purpose is to compare *The Walking Dead* universe with al-Fārābī's political philosophy to bring his ideas to the contemporary world. Thus, the study helps us learn al-Fārābī's philosophical system and shows us how he can still be effective in the modern age. Hopefully, this study proves that this kind of research can adapt the ideas of past thinkers to the current age and creates a connection between past and future thinkers.

Key Words: Al-Fārābī, *The Walking Dead,* political philosophy, the ultimate happiness, civilization, the Virtuous City, zombies.

Ilahiyat Studies
Volume 9 Number 1 Winter / Spring 2018
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p-ISSN: 1309-1786 / e-ISSN: 1309-1719
DOI: 10.12730/13091719.2018.91.173

Introduction

"Drink from the well, replenish the well, "[1] says King Ezekiel in *The Walking Dead* (*TWD*) to show the importance of living together. As the show proves many times, people need to live together, and living together requires having politics. The show is about rewriting the history of human civilization in a post-apocalyptic world. The story starts with the spread of a virus that causes people to turn into walkers, known as zombies. Thus, the world we know, including civilized societies and governments, is ruined, and people start to rebuild a world in which they can feed and protect themselves. Today, philosophical discussions have moved to more visual fields. Television series and movies provide an opportunity to discuss theories and ideologies. The creation of parallel universes gives us a field in which to look at our facts as an outsider so we have a better chance to understand the world in which we live. These parallel universes carry past thinkers' ideas to different dimensions where those ideas can be discussed by being harmonized with other theories. Shows such as *Lost*, *Westworld*, *Game of Thrones*, or *Supernatural* create these kinds of fields. All have a breaking point that separates their universe from ours, and from that point, human history restarts. At first sight, these shows can seem to be all about those breaking points – an island, a robot, a throne or supernatural creatures – but actually, they discuss the facts we know about our world. Likewise, *TWD* can seem to be only about zombies; however, it also tells a new history of civilization from hunter-gatherer societies to civilized cities by verifying humanity's political nature.

TWD provides rich settings for discussions of human nature and political thought. Academic research about gender, politics, and ethics occur surrounding *TWD*, as do many discussions about the philosophy of zombies. Among the works of Islamic thought, however, such studies about *TWD* are hard to find. Ozan Sağsöz's work of "The Walking Dead İçin Bir Mukaddime"[2] is the only example that studies *TWD* with a classical Islamic thinker. Sağsöz analyzes the show using

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1 Frank Árpád Darabont, prod., *The Walking Dead*, TV Series, Season 7, Episode 2, AMC, 2010.

2 Ozan Sağsöz, "The Walking Dead İçin Bir Mukaddime," *Mukaddime Notları: İbn Haldun'umu Öğreniyorum* (blog), March 12, 2015, https://mukaddimenotlari.wordpress.com, accessed April 10, 2017.

Ibn Khaldūn's famous work, *al-Muqaddimah*. Similarly, this work focuses on *TWD* and the philosophy of al-Fārābī. With this perspective, the effect of Christianity or nihilism and the place of post-Christianity in *TWD* communities should be mentioned. However, due to the article's limited scope, we focus only on al-Fārābī's perspective. In addition, there are works focus specifically on those topics. For example, in his article "Duality and Dissolution in the Post-Apocalypse: Nietzsche's Cycle of Morality in AMC's *The Walking Dead*," Roy John Gonzales highlights that *TWD* can be examined in terms of Nietzsche's ideas about the cycle of morality from acting for the sake of sustaining communities toward egoistic self-sufficiency and then revaluing the sake of the collective to re-create the civilization.[3] Additionally, in her article "'I Kick Arse for the Lord!' Christianity, Coloniality, the Zombie, and the Indian," Gabriel A. Judd examines the conflict between Christianity and zombie culture to draw an analogy between Indians and Western Civilization.[4]

Al-Fārābī was a philosopher who lived during the 10th century and who has been accepted as the second greatest philosophy teacher after Aristotle. His works on metaphysics, logic, and political philosophy had a major influence on later thinkers. His theories on political philosophy were especially important, and he became one of the most important names in this field. He was the first to assert an ideal form of state and an organization for a virtuous community in Islamic thought. He defined virtuous and unvirtuous societies and explained why people need to live together, why the Virtuous City is the best environment for them to reach the ultimate happiness and what the essential qualities of leaders are.

Therefore, this work argues that al-Fārābī's understanding of human nature and his identification of virtuous and unvirtuous communities can be read correspondingly with the survivors and communities in *TWD*. To that end, al-Fārābī's opinions on human nature and communities are examined through the social evolution of humanity in *TWD*. Ultimately, the show is helpful for understanding al-Fārābī's political ideas. It hopefully answers why humans are political

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3 Roy John Gonzales, Jr., "Duality and Dissolution in the Post-Apocalypse: Nietzsche's Cycle of Morality in AMC's *The Walking Dead*" (Master's thesis, Texas, TX: Texas A & M International University, 2016).

4 Gabriel A. Judd, "'I Kick Arse for the Lord!' Christianity, Coloniality, the Zombie, and the Indian" (Final Paper, Seattle: University of Washington, 2013).

creatures, why they come together, and finally what the Virtuous City is.

This work focuses on three topics: "Being A Political Creature," "al-Fārābī's Unvirtuous Cities," and "The Virtuous City: The Kingdom." In the first part, the question of why people are political creatures is discussed through al-Fārābī's explanations, and here, the first seasons of *TWD* are considered because in these seasons, characters are just starting to establish small groups similar to hunter-gatherer communities. In the second part, different communities of *TWD* are compared with al-Fārābī's unvirtuous communities. Here, the first political organizations, such as the Scavengers, Woodbury, Alexandria, and the Saviors, that are founded in regional areas are the main tools of discussion. In the final part, al-Fārābī's creation of the Virtuous City and Ezekiel's Kingdom are compared.

This order is chosen for the discussion because the show starts with the world that was reset by an apocalyptic moment and follows a certain chronological order in the construction of a human civilization. Therefore, the best arrangement is to see how al-Fārābī starts conceptualizing human nature, then describes different communities and finally presents the Virtuous City.

I. Being a Political Creature

TWD starts with a sheriff named Rick who wakes up in a hospital and learns the world ended. A virus spread globally and caused people to turn into a type of cannibal called the walkers. No government or authority is left, similar to the beginning of history. The only ones left are the walkers, who are irrational creatures, and the survivors, who try to build a life for themselves in the new world.

Rick's search for his wife and son ends in an adventure of founding a civilization. The group's formation, people's reaction to the new world, and their struggle between death and life have explanations in al-Fārābī's political philosophy. Al-Fārābī makes a connection between ethics and metaphysics to shape his political philosophy. Therefore, the first part of this chapter describes how he built the basis for his political philosophy. In the second part, the definition of "the beastly man" is the key point of our discussion, and finally, his creation of communal life is analyzed.

A. Stay Standing or Choosing?

Al-Fārābī's philosophy can be said to start with the idea that human beings are not born with perfect natures but have to reach perfection through their will and choice. For him, being exposed to the attributes of matter is an imperfection. All the creatures that exist sublunary are exposed to the attributes of matter; thus, they are imperfect, however, humans are the most honorable possible creatures because they are capable of reaching perfection.[5] Reaching perfection means reaching the ultimate happiness, which is humanity's ultimate purpose. Al-Fārābī arranges the human soul's (*al-nafs*) five main faculties – nutrition, appetite, sense, imagination, and reason[6] – and, as Ibn Khaldūn declares, reason – the rational faculty, or the ability to think – is humanity's greatest power[7] because, with their rational faculty, people choose to be together and to form communities in which they can reach happiness. This togetherness is what being a political creature refers to. This ability makes people different from other creatures on earth. A zombie world is a perfect environment in which to see the difference between humans and irrational creatures in terms of fighting for happiness. Most of the classical philosophers thought that people must live in an order that will lead them to the First Cause, which is God. The intellect that people have is the thing that makes them capable of following God, but although zombies look like people, they do not have what people have. Delfino and Tayler stress the same thing in their work on the philosophy of zombies:

> Zombies are everything we do not want to be. We're living, they're dead. We're intelligent, they're not. We're civilized, they're cannibalistic beasts. We hope for an afterlife of happiness, they represent an afterlife of horror. If humans are in the image of God, zombies are the reverse image of us – deformed, hideous, and bestial. Zombies force us to contemplate human nature itself and our worst

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5 Şenol Korkut, *Fârâbî'nin Siyaset Felsefesi (*Ankara: Atlas Kitap, 2015), 210.

6 Abū Naṣr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṭarkhān al-Fārābī, *Kitāb ārāʾ ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah*, ed. Albert Naṣrī Nādir, 5th ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1985), 87-89.

7 Ibn Khaldûn [Abū Zayd Walī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn], *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 46.

fears about it.[8]

Al-Fārābī continues to create a connection between the ultimate happiness and humanity's political nature and asserts that everything that helps the achievement of happiness is good and everything that prevents happiness is evil.[9] Goodness and evil can be either voluntary or natural. Al-Fārābī claims that voluntary goodness emerges when people know what happiness is and try to reach it with their five faculties and voluntary evil emerges when people do not direct their faculties to knowing happiness but pursue other pleasures, sovereignty, and honor, or when they prefer these things despite knowing happiness.[10] In al-Fārābī's ideal system, human beings gain goodness in three steps: first, by gaining virtues and skills; second, by being educated in sophisticated and civilized society; and third, by helping the rational soul to attain the level of will and free choice and all of these steps can only be achieved in the Virtuous City.[11] Therefore, aiming at the ultimate happiness and perfection makes people political creatures because to do so they need to live in the community.

As al-Fārābī states, "Human beings were created in a nature that needs many things to maintain their lives and to reach perfection, and it is not possible to deal with all those things by themselves,"[12] and "Humans are such a species that it is impossible for them to maintain their vital needs and to be the best at what they do without being together in one place."[13] This sense of community separates humans from other creatures. Their need for each other is not derived from any animalistic impulses; it is an issue of will and choice.[14] Similarly, Ibn Khaldūn indicates that although bees and locusts have a communal life similar to people, the reason for their togetherness is instinct rather than reason.[15] He claims that for this reason, politics is born in cities:

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8 Robert Delfino and Kyle Taylor, "Walking Contradictions," in *The Walking Dead and Philosophy: Zombie Apocalypse Now*, ed. Wayne Yuen (Chicago: Open Court, 2016), 51.

9 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-siyāsah al-madaniyyah al-mulaqqab bi-mabādiʾ al-mawjūdāt*, ed. Fawzī Mitrī Najjār (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1993), 72.

10 *Ibid*., 73-74.

11 Korkut, *Fârâbî'nin Siyaset Felsefesi,* 218.

12 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb ārāʾ ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah,* 117.

13 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-siyāsah al-madaniyyah,* 69.

14 Korkut, *Fârâbî'nin Siyaset Felsefesi*, 210.

15 Ibn Khaldûn, *The Muqaddimah*, 42.

people are rational creatures; therefore, their associations must be rationally regulated, they do not come together haphazardly without any aim; unlike other animal groups, they build a political system.[16]

In *TWD,* the difference between people and walkers is the same. When a walker group attacks the Atlanta survivors for the second time, Andrea is the first one call the walkers a "herd," and when Glenn ask "What was that? All of them marching along like that?" Shane says, "A herd, that sounds about right."[17] Although togetherness provides the same things to both groups, which is the strength to maintain their lives and to find food, they separate themselves from the walkers because while the walkers come together aimlessly, whereas people come together voluntarily. A woman who despises Maggie because of her choice to get pregnant, says that "the point is stay *standing*," implying that being pregnant means risking her life when many things already threaten people's lives. However, Maggie rejects her position with a statement that shows the difference between walkers and humans: "No, walkers do that; I am *choosing* something."[18] Families are the smallest political unit of a community, and Glenn and Maggie embrace the sense of living in a community by choosing to raise a child. They are not creatures that can "march along" like that. Thus, while people establish a "community," walkers form a "herd."

B. The Third Option between Being the Butcher or the Cattle

People need to come together in communities because they are civilized creatures, but people exist who are not involved with communal life, people who live far from the cities. Because they lack the environment that could help them make strides towards perfection, they lose their rational and political human sides. Al-Fārābī calls them beastly men:

> Then there are congenitally beastly ones among the humans, and these beastly ones are neither political creatures, nor have they any political communities. On the contrary, some of them are like pets, some of them are like wild animals, and some of them are like fierce creatures. Some of them reside in prairies, separately or in groups, live like wild beasts and there are those who live close to the cities. Some of them do

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16 *Ibid*., 336.

17 Darabont, *The Walking Dead*, Season 2, Episode 1.

18 *Ibid*., Season 6, Episode 13.

not eat anything except raw meat or weed, or they hunt for their prey like fierce animals.[19]

Due to civilization's end in *TWD*, many beastly ones exist whose rational faculties are blunt or have never been improved. They have a tendency to all evil deeds and establish this evilness in their own nature.[20] They become a threat to the survivors. Therefore, they start to distinguish themselves from beastly ones. When Rick is about to lose his mind, he faces a question that later became "the three questions" his group asked people before accepting them into their community: "How many walkers have you killed, how many people have you killed, and why?"[21] These questions become the key for them to distinguish reliable humans from beastly ones. Because human beings are rational creatures, only they count how many people they have killed, and only they think about why they did it.

Rick meets with a woman while in the woods. The woman has a wildish look and could not be distinguished from a walker. When she says that she and her husband have to hide from people to protect themselves, Rick says, "We need numbers. People are the best defense against walkers or people. We help each other."[22] However, she does not go with Rick to his community; rather, she chooses to die like an animal whose wild nature does not allow it to live among people. Apart from any community, she loses that which makes her human: her rational side. She cannot even distinguish walkers from humans. Her husband was a walker, and she was trying to feed him with Rick, like "a fierce animal hunting for its prey."

There are also the cannibals of Terminus. They lost their civilized side after the incidents they lived through, and they began to believe that this is the world's new order: "You're the *butcher* or the *cattle*,"[23] which means either you feed on people like a walker or you became food for others. While the survivors try to distinguish themselves from the walkers, the people of Terminus tend to resemble them; they

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19 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-siyāsah al-madaniyyah,* 87.

20 Fārābī [Abū Naṣr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṭarkhān al-Fārābī], *Fusulü'l-Medeni: Siyaset Felsefesine Dair Görüşler*, ed. D. M. Dunlop, trans. Hanifi Ozcan (İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1987), 33.

21 Darabont, *The Walking Dead*, Season 3, Episode 6.

22 *Ibid*., Season 4, Episode 1.

23 *Ibid*., Season 5, Episode 1.

choose to live like them. They are together to hunt, and they do not have any other purpose. They isolate themselves from the outside world and they draw people into their trap to eat them. Al-Fārābī states that, "Those who are not beneficial but dangerous must be treated like wild animals,"[24] so the survivors killed cannibals to protect themselves and to prevent them from hurting people.

Al-Fārābī likened beastly humans to animals, which is the opposite of civilized and rational human beings, and the people of Terminus and the woman in the woods are likened to the walkers, who are the new antithesis of civilized and rational human beings in *TWD*. These people are corrupted; they were not born as cannibals. Beastly humans are also not born like that; they are the ones who cannot improve towards the perfection because they did not engage in the communal and civilized life. Their unvirtuous side grew in the isolated and uncivilized life of animals. All people are born with an imperfect nature, and they are left to improve their voluntary evil or voluntary goodness by their will and choice. Either they can be the most glorious creatures, or they can be inferior even to animals.

Plato discusses a dilemma that a man can be drawn into. He believes that if a man has to choose between living like a beast and dying, he should choose death.[25] Rather than being a butcher, humanity should choose to be cattle because being the butcher means losing one's humanity. In *TWD*, the survivors are faced with the same question. A scientist gives them the opportunity to die without feeling any pain. They choose not to do so, but after a while, when Rick's son was shot, his mother regrets refusing the scientist's offer. She says, "If he survives, he ends up just another animal who doesn't know anything except survival."[26] She is aware that people are not like other creatures, which only care about survival. Likewise, while Maggie looks for Glenn, Sasha says, "We should be searching for food and shelter instead," and Bob says in return, "maybe we didn't survive just to keep surviving."[27] Life is not only about searching for the necessary needs because doing so is what animals or the walkers do. For humans as rational creatures, life must be something else. Otherwise, we end

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[24] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-siyāsah al-madaniyyah*, 87.

[25] Muhsin Mahdi, tr., *Alfarabi: Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, rev. ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 63-64.

[26] Darabont, *The Walking Dead*, Season 2, Episode 3.

[27] *Ibid.*, Season 4, Episode 10.

up being like the beastly ones. As al-Fārābī said, humans are given reason and free will, and with these faculties, either they can give meaning to their life or they can choose to live like an animal. To Plato's question, al-Fārābī probably would suggest that a man does not have to choose between the two. A third option exists, which is building a meaningful life by searching for happiness, and, as previously asserted, people cannot build a life by themselves. For this reason, Bob and Sasha do not leave Maggie by herself but stand by her in her search for Glenn.

C. The Rule of Making It Together

The question of "what is community" is one of al-Fārābī's main questions. He distinguishes complete communities (*al-ijtimāʿāt al-kāmilah*) from incomplete communities (*al-ijtimāʿāt al-nāqiṣah*). Complete communities are cities, nations (*ummah*) and societies, and incomplete communities are families, streets, neighborhoods, and villages.[28] In his estimation, communities must have sciences, arts, and education to explain their virtuousness because these factors represent completion. With education, each person has a different expertise; thus, the virtues arise. Without all of these, an environment is not created that will help people achieve the ultimate purpose which is happiness, and incomplete communities have no education in the sciences or arts; therefore, we cannot talk about the virtuousness of incomplete communities; as art belongs to the city, virtuousness belongs only to the city.[29]

Al-Fārābī also notes three things that connect people in the community: love, collaboration, and hierarchy. At the beginning of the apocalypse, people first try to reach the ones to whom are related. In the Atlanta camp, almost all members have a family bond with one another, and even the fight for the leader corresponds with being a father.[30] The smallest units of communities are families; families are parts of streets, streets are part of neighborhoods, and neighborhoods are part of cities.[31] Like organs working together for the sake of the body, families work in the same kind of order, they are superior to one

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[28] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb ārāʾ ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah,* 117-118.

[29] Korkut, *Fârâbî'nin Siyaset Felsefesi*, 288.

[30] James Aston, "The Post-apocalyptic Family in *The Walking Dead,*" https://www.academia.edu, accessed April 10, 2017.

[31] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb ārāʾ ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah*, 118.

another in different ways, and they work together for the sake of the house and the city.[32] Glenn's words about being together describe the same thing: "We can *make it together*, but we can only make it together."[33] While he is referring to keeping his family together, a resident of Alexandria invites them to join that community with the same words Glenn used. Thus, collaboration starts in the family, then moves to the city; if families come together around the same purpose and work in mutual assistance, a city emerges. Al-Fārābī mentions a kind of hierarchical order in this formation by comparing it with the body's organization. As he implies, a city must have a leader, much as a body must have a heart; some members are closer to the leader in their works, and others are farther.[34] Thus, everybody in the collaboration has a different responsibility. The same thing is notable in *TWD;* while Rick is the heart, Glenn is the strategist "city guy" who runs to city centers to scavenge. Dale and Hershel represent the group morality, and Daryl is the muscle, with his hunting and tracking skills.

Different parts of cities – like individuals, families, and neighborhoods – hold on to each other with love. Love first emerges in the city with participation based on merits, which means people come together around the same thoughts and purposes; then, mutual love emerges among the people.[35] When they start to help each other, to benefit from each other, love based on profit arises; finally, when they start to enjoy each other, love based on enjoyment emerges.[36] This love builds a connection among the city's members. In *TWD*, they come together around the idea of "there is us and the dead. We survive this by working together, not apart,"[37] similar to what Glenn says about making it together. Out of their collaboration, the love based on benefit is born. When they spend substantial time together, and because of the many incidents they live through, they start to share a love based on enjoyment. Glenn prays for his friends, Daryl puts himself in danger for Carol's daughter, and Carol starts to care about Daryl more than anyone else. Once they have this connection, they become a strong community. This phenomenon is similar to what Ibn Khaldūn calls the

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[32] Fārābī, *Fusulü'l-Medeni,* 37; al-Fārābī, *Kitāb ārā' ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah,* 118.

[33] Darabont, *The Walking Dead*, Season 5, Episode 10.

[34] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb ārā' ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah,* 120-121.

[35] Fārābī, *Fusulü'l-Medeni,* 52.

[36] *Ibid.*, 53.

[37] Darabont, *The Walking Dead*, Season 1, Episode 2.

group feeling (*ʿaṣabiyyah)*. He identifies it as the feeling that "makes for mutual support and aid and increases the fear felt by the enemy."[38] The group feeling is accompanied by difficulties that the group lives through and is stronger in Bedouin communities than in safe cities.[39] With the group feeling, Rick's group becomes a strong group that other groups are afraid of. When they first enter Alexandria, the difference between the two communities is obvious. While Rick's group members see each other as family and have the courage to risk their lives for each other, the people of Alexandria do not have this strong connection because they have been living in safety since the beginning of apocalypse.

II. Al-Fārābī's Unvirtuous Cities

Al-Fārābī believes that many unvirtuous ideas occur among unvirtuous communities. Some claim that the most successful tyrant is the perfect one; they want to make others their slaves because they suppose that everything exists just for them.[40] Others believe that it is natural to keep what you have for yourself and try to seize people's goods; the one who is most successful defeating others is the happiest.[41] Finally, some people argue that no emotional connection occurs between individuals and that they are only connected by the necessities.[42] Thus, while the Virtuous City aims at the ultimate happiness, unvirtuous cities aim at physical power or superiority.

When people come together with such ideas, naturally, this association does not produce virtuousness. Despite the general perception that peaceful cities or democratic cities are good, al-Fārābī does not regard them as virtuous; thus, his definition of unvirtuous cities must be understood in order to understand his concept of the Virtuous City. Al-Fārābī's political philosophy encompasses four types of unvirtuous cities. First is the wicked city (*al-madīnah al-fāsiqah*). These people know real happiness and everything that the people of the Virtuous City know, but they act like an ignorant city.[43] The second

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38 Ibn Khaldûn, *The Muqaddimah,* 98.

39 Sağsöz, "Walking Dead Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme I," *Mukaddime Notları: İbn Haldun'umu Öğreniyorum* (blog).

40 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb ārāʾ ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah,* 152.

41 *Ibid.*, 153.

42 *Ibid.*

43 *Ibid.*, 133.

is the city that intentionally changes its character (*al-madīnah al-mubaddalah*). The people of this city have the same opinions and deeds as the Virtuous City, but they change them.[44] Third is the city that misses the right path because of the wrong judgment (*al-madīnah al-ḍāllah*). The people of this city aim at the ultimate happiness and believe in what the people of Virtuous City believe, but they do not have the right information about those beliefs; their first ruler is usually a fraud.[45] Last is the ignorant city (*al-madīnah al-jāhilah*), whose people do not know the ultimate happiness; even if they are taught what it is, they neither understand nor believe in it; thus, they seek what they think is good, such as bodily health, wealth, earthly pleasures or honor.[46] Al-Fārābī focuses on the ignorant cities, which are the city of necessity (*al-madīnah al-ḍarūriyyah*), the city of wealth and riches (*al-madīnah al-nadhālah*), the city of depravity and baseness (*madīnat al-khissah wa-l-suqūṭ*), the city of honor (*madīnat al-karāmah*), the city of tyranny (*madīnat al-taghallub*), and the democratic city (*al-madīnah al-jamāʿiyyah*). Ignorant cities are formed for one of four reasons: for basic necessities, via a tyrant, out of disagreement about the kind of attachment that should exist, or from the idea of peaceful cities. Each of the ignorant cities is centered around one of these four reasons. Al-Fārābī formed his classification based on Plato's ideas. Compared to today's states, which mostly focus on democratic discourses, both philosophers' ideas may seem unusual, but their perspective is different due to the situation of their times. *TWD* uncovers this difference by forming different types of states at the beginning of civilization. Therefore, in this chapter, both ignorant cities and unvirtuous reasons are analyzed through *TWD* communities.

A. The City of Necessity: the Scavengers

Al-Fārābī indicates that some cities are formed without any attachment among their members, hate is normal in them and they only come together for mandatory things, and when this necessity that brings them together is removed, they return to hating each other.[47] In *TWD*, this kind of formation can be seen among the Scavengers and among the hospital community in which Beth ends up. Both groups

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[44] *Ibid.*

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] *Ibid.,* 131.

[47] *Ibid.,* 153.

might be considered examples of the city of necessity, which is also the first of the ignorant cities. "People of this city cooperate for obtaining bodily necessities like eating, drinking, clothing, housing, and sexual intercourse."[48] They have many methods such as farming, raising livestock, hunting, and robbery to acquire necessities.[49] Neither the hospital nor the Scavengers come together through any kind of attachment or commitment. The only thing that brings them together is the need for things that keep them alive. Therefore, unvirtuous rules run them. However, when al-Fārābī talks about people's political nature, he does not mean that the only reason they come together is to acquire vital necessities. The city of necessity is unvirtuous because its members come together *only* for vital needs; therefore, arts, sciences or artisanship cannot be produced, so merits and virtues cannot exist. The doctor of the community in the hospital says, "art isn't about survival; it is about transcendence and being more than animals, rising above."[50] He appears to not believe in people's ability to do art in this post-apocalyptic world. Although Beth tries to prove otherwise, the people of his city do not have the capacity to form a community that would produce arts and sciences. The only thing that keeps them together in the hospital is their fear of the outside world in which they cannot find food or protection. The Scavengers in a heap of trash, are in a similar situation. Their code – "we take; we don't bother"[51] – explains why they are called Scavengers. As their name implies, they scavenge only what they need to maintain their lives, and anything more than that is only more trash to them. In addition, they use a primitive language. The actor who plays their leader discloses a connection between their language and their social character:

> It's very succinct, clear, and to the point. And as you can see from the heap and how all the trash is used, there's nothing that is wasted. In this case, it's the word; there's no need for extraneous words, it's just what you need and direct. The rest is just to be dropped back in the trash.[52]

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48 *Ibid.,* 132.

49 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-siyāsah al-madaniyyah,* 88.

50 Darabont, *The Walking Dead*, Season 5, Episode 4.

51 *Ibid.*, Season 7, Episode 10.

52 Lesley Goldberg, "Did 'The Walking Dead' Just Officially Introduce the Whisperers?" *The Hollywood Reporter*, February 19, 2017,

Whether they will become more sophisticated is unclear because they start to communicate with other communities, but for now, they seem to be a practical group that only focuses on necessities.

The difference between the beastly ones and the people of the city of necessity should be explained. Al-Fārābī describes them as two distinct groups because what makes the beastly ones unvirtuous is that they do not or cannot live in a community. However, like the Scavengers, the city of necessity can organize into a union and cooperate. Its people collaborate for their vital needs; they can produce policies, so a difference remains between them and the animals. They are just the most primitive communities; therefore, they are unvirtuous, but as a city, they are the most inclined to be the Virtuous City.[53]

B. The City of Honor: Woodbury

Woodbury is the first community in *TWD* that reminds us of the Virtuous City. As al-Fārābī declared, the city of honor is the best city out of the ignorant cities; however, if the desire for honor is too extreme, then this city may become a city of tyranny.[54] People of this city cooperate to gain honor and fame among other communities and to be treated with respect.[55] The Governor wants only to be respected and to be known in return for what he gives people. He canonizes Woodbury in his rhetorical speeches and its people canonize him. The bond that people of Woodbury have is based on a shared leader and a shared place. The Governor and the city itself are the most glorious things. In her words, "years from now, when they write about this plague in the history books, they will write about Woodbury,"[56] Andrea highlights this glory. Their desire is not only to fulfill vital needs, gain enormous wealth, or subdue others but also to gain fame in history and be respected for their achievement. Al-Fārābī considers this behavior unvirtuous because without any association in beliefs or deeds, these people only come together around a sanctified city and a sanctified leader. When the ruler's blessings for his or her people start to

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http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/live-feed/walking-dead-who-is-jadis-are-they-whisperers-alpha-977624, accessed May 30, 2017.

53 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-siyāsah al-madaniyyah*, 102.

54 *Ibid.*, 94.

55 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb ārāʾ ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah,* 132.

56 Darabont, *The Walking Dead*, Season 3, Episode 9.

disappear, the bond they have will weaken, and finally, it will vanish.[57] Likewise, when the sanctity attributed to the city and its leader are lost in the first attack on Woodbury, the social bond also vanishes because the only thing that binds them together is this sanctity. Therefore, instead of staying and fighting to protect what they have, people want to leave.

Another example that allows us to compare Woodbury with the city of honor is the Governor's attitude towards Rick's group. When the Governor explains why his people should attack the prison, he says, "We gotta take out the group that's living there. Let the biters move back in."[58] The Governor does not want the prison to move his community there or he does not want to seize their goods; he only wants to destroy these people who are smart enough to take a prison full of walkers. The Governor does not want to lose the glory and the superiority he has. If Rick's group establishes a glorious community in the prison, the people of Woodbury will soon to hear about that community's reputation and the Governor will face the threat of not being the only honorable leader.

Although al-Fārābī considers the city of honor the best city among ignorant cities, he explains that if the desire for honor becomes too great, this city can become a city of tyranny. When his army cannot defeat Rick's group, the Governor kills all of his soldiers. The Governor is always a tyrant because of his extreme passion for glory and honor, but when he starts to reveal his true nature, even the people closest to him start to turn against him. Plato claims that the more wars a tyrant starts against his rivals to maintain his authority, the angrier his citizens become, and finally, the boldest of his influential partisans will find fault with his policy.[59] Likewise, the desire for honor makes the Governor such a tyrant that he kills the people closest to him in the process of building Woodbury and keeping it safe.

In short, the city of honor has the capacity to turn into a city of tyranny; al-Fārābī connects the city of tyranny, the city of wealth and the city of depravity with the city of honor based on this capacity for transformation. All of these cities place too much importance on

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57 Korkut, *Fârâbî'nin Siyaset Felsefesi,* 394.

58 Darabont, *The Walking Dead*, Season 3, Episode 8.

59 Plato, *Republic*, trans. John Llewelyn Davies and David James Vaughan (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1997), 288.

wealth, honor or pleasure, and when they cannot gain these, they use tyrannical methods to obtain them by force; thus, they become tyrants.[60] In addition, a city may include all of these goals, like the Saviors.

C. The City of All Unvirtuousness: the Saviors

The Saviors are the biggest villains among the communities of *TWD*, and it might be claimed that they carry all unvirtuousness al-Fārābī compiles for the city of wealth and riches, the city of depravity and baseness, and the city of tyranny.

First, they are similar to the city of wealth and riches because they are always hungry for more. The only purpose of the city of wealth is to accumulate more than it needs, the richest is the most superior, and to gain wealth, people use the methods of the city of necessity such as farming, raising livestock, hunting, and robbery.[61] Likewise, the Saviors trade with others or plunder them, and they accumulate wealth for wealth's sake alone, unlike the Scavengers. The Scavengers do not desire wealth; they use everything they have, and all else is just trash. However, the Saviors must have more than others. When the Saviors come to Hilltop, they do not just take food or weapons. They also take a painting that belongs to Hilltop's leader, not because they care about art but because others cannot have something that the Saviors do not. That would be the opposite of the Saviors' goal of being the richest.

Second, the Saviors are similar to the city of depravity and baseness because they are also fond of everything that gives them earthly pleasures. In the city of depravity and baseness, people cooperate for somatic pleasures or for the pleasures of the imagination, such as entertainment, they want such things because they enjoy them, not because their bodies benefit from them; they assume that the one who has the most resources for play and enjoyment is the happiest.[62] Negan tries to seduce Eugene with all of these resources along with tyrannical threats. Eugene is given the right to play Atari, to have whatever he wants. The fact that he carries the pickles that are given to him throughout an entire episode shows that he enjoys these privileges and he becomes closer to being one of the Saviors.

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60 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-siyāsah al-madaniyyah,* 98.

61 *Ibid.*, 89.

62 *Ibid.*

The Saviors also resemble the city of tyranny. One of the unvirtuous reasons al-Fārābī underlined was coming together via a tyrant, and this seems the biggest reason for the Saviors' aggregation. For al-Fārābī, people of the tyrant city cooperate to gain superiority[63] and "some want power to spill blood, some want it to gain wealth and some want it to enslave others."[64] The Saviors seem to have all three features asserted in al-Fārābī's argument. They want the power to spill blood, and they want resistance from people because they enjoy subduing others. Al-Fārābī declares that those who subdue others for spilling blood do not kill a sleeper or steal from him.[65] The qualities that distinguish the Saviors' or the Wolves' from the murders of Rick's group can help explain al-Fārābī. The Wolves attack people just to kill and steal from them. They attack in the daylight because they enjoy killing. Similarly, the Saviors have a code to kill a person in each group they want to enslave. Killing and stealing become basic methods by which both groups gain dominance. While the Wolves mark the bodies of people they kill with their initials, the Saviors take their photos because they want to be known and to be feared. However, Rick's group attacks the Saviors in their sleep and kills them without facing any resistance. Although this attack seems more brutal, it is the opposite because Rick's group does not kill to have fun or to gain sovereignty. The Saviors are also tyrants because they use power to gain wealth. As stated previously, the Saviors use any method to gain wealth, except scavenging because they use other communities to do that. They force other cities to deliver what they have scavenged. While others serve them, the Saviors enjoy wealth, pleasure, and power. This phenomenon creates the third factor that makes the Saviors tyrants, which is enslaving others. The Saviors have a hierarchy based on tyranny. Negan is the head, the tyrant. He has men such as Simon and Dwight, and although they are Negan's slaves, they have the power to subdue others. Finally, there are the people at the bottom, who have no right to benefit from Negan's sovereignty. Al-Fārābī divides tyrant cities into three types using the same criterion: "Only one of the people (*bi-wāḥid min ahlihā*: the leader) might be a tyrant, or half of the people might be tyrant or all of the people might be tyrant."[66] The Saviors may be included in the second group. Negan is the head of the

63 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-siyāsah al-madaniyyah,* 94.

64 *Ibid.*

65 *Ibid.*, 95.

66 *Ibid.*, 97.

tyrants because he is the richest, the most tyrannical, and the one who receives all of the pleasure. The Saviors accept his authority by saying "I am Negan" because they are forced to have a deific respect for their leader. Their desire for wealth and earthly pleasures makes some of them tyrants over others. They may consider themselves the happiest community because of what they have, but neither Plato nor al-Fārābī regards this happiness as real. Plato's words summarize the Saviors' situation. He claims that those who are not familiar with wisdom and virtue, who only aim at perpetual banqueting and who fight with each other over these enjoyments, will never reach true pleasure but will only fill the unreal part of their nature with unreal things.[67]

D. The Democratic City: Alexandria

Alexandria is the most apparent example of the democratic city in *TWD*. Deanna, the leader of Alexandria, identifies this place as "the start of sustainability."[68] They claim to rebuild civilization away from the terrifying world behind the city walls. The basic idea of democratic cities is that people should not fight with each other because they belong to the same species: humanity.[69] Al-Fārābī describes the goal of democratic cities as "being free and doing whatever they wish without restraining their passions in the least."[70] Although democratic cities are accepted as the best state formation today, both Plato and al-Fārābī regard them as unvirtuous. Plato believed that democratic cities did not have any order; in these cities, people could choose not to submit to the government or not to keep the peace even though others tried to do so.[71] Al-Fārābī agrees with him in believing that all types of lives exist in democratic cities, but he does not reject the idea that virtuous people can also be there due to this diversity.[72] In Alexandria, people such as Nicholas, Pete, and Aiden are corrupt. However, Deanna feels as though she cannot do anything to prevent their behaviors. Although Pete terrorizes his wife and sons, nobody stops him. When Rick offers to split them up, Deanna refuses him and says, "What happens if he

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67 Plato, *Republic,* 313.

68 Darabont, *The Walking Dead,* Season 5, Episode 12.

69 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb ārā' ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah,* 164.

70 *Ibid.,* 133.

71 Plato, *Republic,* 276.

72 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-siyāsah al-madaniyyah,* 100-101.

does not want to do that?"[73] She emphasizes that they cannot force or kill him because a civilization exists, but they let him do whatever he wants, although the things he does are not civilized. Therefore, al-Fārābī and Plato believed that democratic cities' free environment could not prevent evil.

In addition, for al-Fārābī, the ruler must have particular attributes and a connection with the Active Intellect. Therefore, the democratic regime that creates no difference between the ruler and the ruled ones is not a virtuous system to him. The ruler's attributes that al-Fārābī introduces show that a leader must have the capacity to make quick decisions, to repair any damage in the community, and to give people a common purpose. However, in democratic systems, the ruled ones give the instructions, while the leaders rule according to the desire of the people.[74] When Rick says, "this isn't a democracy anymore,"[75] he means that whenever they need to make a decision, the situation becomes a fight because everybody wants something different. Eventually, Rick refers to this previous conversation and accepts that he was wrong about declaring a dictatorship. He continues to be the leader by finding a middle way between despotism and democracy. The problem of democracy arises again when Deanna wants to exile Rick from Alexandria by organizing a forum. Maggie says, "You let Rick in; you let all of us in. You talked to us; you decided. Now you want to put that decision on a group of very frightened people who might not have the whole story. That's not leadership."[76] Maggie criticizes Deanna's leadership because Deanna does not take the responsibility of making a hard decision. Instead, she leaves the decision to the people who have limited knowledge about the situation.

Perhaps for these reasons, Rick's group has difficulty living in Alexandria at the beginning, but later, they transform Alexandria because as al-Fārābī declares, founding a virtuous people's regime is easier in democratic cities than in other cities.[77] In forthcoming seasons, Alexandria might evolve to become a virtuous organization, but for now, they seem to be at the start of sustainability.

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73 Darabont, *The Walking Dead,* Season 5, Episode 15.

74 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-siyāsah al-madaniyyah,* 99.

75 Darabont, *The Walking Dead,* Season 2, Episode 13.

76 *Ibid.*, Season 5, Episode 16.

77 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-siyāsah al-madaniyyah,* 102.

In conclusion, as al-Fārābī asserted, "some people of ignorant cities have peaceful souls, but some of them have wicked souls."[78] While keeping the peace among people is the main purpose of the first group, the main purpose of last group is to be superior to others. Therefore, the Virtuous City must be right in between them.

III. The Virtuous City: The Kingdom

"Civilization starts when we stop running, when we live together,"[79] says Reg. Ibn Khaldūn, uses a similar description when he describes civilization as something that separates humans from other creatures: "It means that human beings have to dwell in common and settle together in cities and hamlets for the comforts of companionship and for the satisfaction of human needs."[80] Thus, Reg's words underline a transformation in *TWD*: the foundation of the first cities such as Alexandria, Hilltop, the Saviors, and the Scavengers. However, among them, the Kingdom is the first community that can be compared with what Plato, al-Fārābī, and other philosophers talked about: a virtuous city. King Ezekiel's realm is the only kingdom in *TWD,* and it differs from other communities in terms of its ruler and its people. Because of Ezekiel's tiger, his Shakespearean attitudes and his people's enormous respect for him, Carol thinks that this place is like a circus[81] at first. However, later, she becomes one of the King's most trusted friends. Thus, this might be a good setting in which to understand al-Fārābī's Virtuous City, which also appears to be a place whose reality is difficult to imagine.

A. Larger Than Life: King Ezekiel

One of the first things that constitutes Plato's or al-Fārābī's ideal cities special is that the first ruler must be a philosopher. They both believe that the leader must be someone who reaches perfection in happiness and wisdom. Because only philosophers can do that, the leader of the Virtuous City must be a philosopher. Of course, these philosophers must have the capacity to rule. Plato argues that as long as political power and philosophical wisdom cannot be united in one

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78 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb ārā' ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah,* 166.

79 Darabont, *The Walking Dead,* Season 5, Episode 16.

80 Ibn Khaldûn, *The Muqaddimah*, 43.

81 Darabont, *The Walking Dead,* Season 7, Episode 2.

person, the state will not reach deliverance.[82] Al-Fārābī identifies the leader as, "The person who is at the highest level of humanity and happiness and whose soul is united with the Active Intellect."[83] Ezekiel means the strength of God; thus, for the first time in *TWD*, a connection seems to exist between a ruler and God. Reaching God and acquiring the highest level of happiness and wisdom are important for al-Fārābī because the leader should organize the city in a harmony in which people cooperate to destroy evil and to gain virtues.[84] In addition, leaders must differentiate the good from the evil giftedly so they can organize this harmony. For this reason, the leader must be at the highest level of happiness and wisdom. For instance, when Carol first meets with Ezekiel, she tries to deceive him with her act of being an old and weak woman. She appears to believe in Ezekiel and to trust him, but Ezekiel does not believe her act. He offers her fruit to test her. When Carol does not accept the offer, he understands that Carol does not trust Ezekiel and she is not as much of a fool as she seems. Only then does Ezekiel realize Carol's problem. He stops her when she tries to escape from the Kingdom, and he offers her a cure.

Al-Fārābī believes that the first ruler has to produce a *millah,* which aims to place a particular purpose in the community: "this *millah* is thoughts and acts that are limited by the leader and founded by him in accordance with the conditions of community."[85] Ezekiel's words written on the walls might be compared with al-Fārābī's description, although they are not completely like al-Fārābī's. Ezekiel's words are something that none of the other leaders have in *TWD*. Moreover, these words are not all that makes Ezekiel first "good" ruler on *TWD*:

> Unlike Alexandria's leader Deanna, Ezekiel knows how to balance security and prosperity… Unlike the Governor, Ezekiel doesn't rule to have power or control over other lives, but rather because people need somebody to follow. Ezekiel views leadership as a burden to bear, not as a way to gain power and domination over others. Unlike Negan, Ezekiel is not cruel. Unlike Rick, Ezekiel has built something sturdy and

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82 Plato, *Republic,* 178.

83 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb ārā' ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah,* 125-126.

84 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-siyāsah al-madaniyyah,* 84.

85 Fatih Toktaş, "Fârâbî'nin *Kitâbü'l-Mille* Adlı Eserinin Takdim ve Çevirisi," *Dîvân: İlmî Araştırmalar* 12, no. 1 (2002), 258.

> sustainable. He is driven by intellect and patience, not raw emotion and reaction.[86]

When Deanna tries to secure her community, her people live away from the real world behind walls and they weaken. When the Governor intemperately pursues honor and power, he turns into a tyrant, and his village is ruined. While Rick does everything to protect his people, he is faced with losing his humanity many times. However, Ezekiel protects his people by creating an environment in which they can learn how to fight, and he builds a valuable life for them that has a purpose. He becomes their leader because he believes that this protection is his responsibility, not because of any earthly desires. He finds a way to protect his people without losing his control and his humanity. Thus, Ezekiel might be compared with the philosopher king who provides his people a purpose to live for and a way of life to live with.

Al-Fārābī also tries to address how communities emerge. For Ibn Khaldūn, without a strong authority, man cannot exist.[87] Al-Fārābī describes the same need by comparing the human body to the community. Just as the heart is the first organ to exist and is the reason for the other organs' existence, the leader is the first one to exist and he is the reason for others' existence.[88] Ezekiel says,

> People want someone to follow; it's human nature. They want someone to make them feel safe, and people who feel safe are less dangerous, more productive. They see a dude with a tiger, they start telling stories about finding it in the wild, wrestling it into submission, turning it into his pet. They make the guy *larger than life*, a hero. And who am I to burst their bubble? Next thing you know, they treat me like royalty. They wanted – they needed – someone to follow, so I acted the part.[89]

Ezekiel does not choose to be a leader; instead, people follow him as a leader. He is the first to appear. As long as the leader lives, the

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[86] Erik Kain, "'The Walking Dead' Season 7, Episode 2 Review: Long Live King Ezekiel," *Forbes,* https://www.forbes.com/sites/erikkain/2016/10/30/the-walking-dead-season-7-episode-2-review-long-live-king-ezekiel/#157e7d19fa9d, accessed June 8, 2017.

[87] Ibn Khaldûn, *The Muqaddimah*, 42.

[88] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb ārā' ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah,* 120.

[89] Darabont, *The Walking Dead,* Season 7, Episode 2.

community lives. As the heart gives a reason for other organs to work, the leader gives a reason for others to live. As the heart tries to prevent and repair any damage in the body, the leader tries to protect and cure his community. Herewith, al-Fārābī likens a leader to a doctor and claims that the leader must cure the sick in the community by helping those who are sick to reach the goodness in conformity with other parts of the community.[90] Likewise, both Morgan and Carol heal in Ezekiel's kingdom. They are opposite characters: Carol is a cold-blood murderer, while Morgan refuses to kill even in the war. When killing consumes her humanity, Carol starts to lose her sanity. She cannot stop killing despite wanting to; thus, she decides to live by herself away from people. However, Ezekiel offers her an isolated house outside the Kingdom but close to it. He says to her, "You can go and not go."[91] Thus, he can visit her occasionally enough to protect her, and at the same time, she can have the space she wanted. Morgan, on the other hand, lost his mind when his son died, and he gains his humanity only after he decided not to kill at all. However, in the Kingdom, when the Saviors kill his student Benjamin, he almost loses his mind again. The only thing that keeps him sane is the world Ezekiel founded; as Benjamin says right before his death, "The world does drive people crazy now. But you made us *another world*."[92] In the same episode when Morgan is about to lose his mind by deciding to kill all the Saviors, Carol stops him by offering the same solution Ezekiel offered her once, "You can go and not go."[93] At the end of the season, they both return to the community and join the war against the Saviors.

This section can rightly conclude with the twelve qualities that al-Fārābī attributed to the first ruler, which include those previously described regarding the first ruler. First, all the leader's organs must be complete, so he can use them properly. Second, the leader should have the capacity to understand and to envision everything that he has been told. Third, the leader's memory must be strong, so he cannot forget anything he understands, sees, hears or comprehends. Fourth, the leader must be clever to understand the real meanings behind the signs. Fifth, the leader must have the art of eloquence to express his thoughts in the best way. Sixth, the leader must love to learn. Seventh,

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90 Fārābī, *Fusulü'l-Medeni,* 37.

91 Darabont, *The Walking Dead,* Season 7, Episode 2.

92 *Ibid.*, Season 7, Episode 13.

93 *Ibid.*

the leader should not be fond of earthly pleasures such as eating, drinking, sexual pleasure or gambling. Eighth, the leader must love honesty and honest people while being disgusted at lying and liars. Ninth, the leader must be magnanimous, and he must love exalted things. Tenth, possessions such as money should have no value to him. Eleventh, the leader must love justice and just ones, he must hate tyranny or dictatorship, and he should not hesitate to provide justice to the people. Finally, the leader must be determined to do whatever he thinks has to be done and to do it bravely.[94]

B. Making Another World: the Kingdom

The Virtuous City is "the city whose residents cooperate to acquire the perfection in the things that are needed for real existence for continuity of existence, for making a living, and for gaining protection."[95] For the survivors, having a civilized life while they were trying to protect themselves was difficult. The Kingdom is the first place that seems to provide both protection and a civilized life because Ezekiel creates an environment that neither weakens its residents nor deprives them of a valuable life. In the Kingdom, children receive an education, people exercise, and teenagers get defense education from disabled veterans. The citizens also have a proper army with war-horses and armor. While other communities still believe that giving birth to a child in this world is crazy, the Kingdom is full of children. The list goes on. The Kingdom has the best appearance in the show by giving hope to the belief that life can still exist:

> The Kingdom's purpose at this point in the story is to reinstate a belief that a good life is still possible -- though only if those in charge can make the tough but necessary decisions. The world will never be the same as it was before the apocalypse, but that doesn't make living in it any less worthwhile. As Ezekiel so wisely explains, "*Embrace the contradiction.*"[96]

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94 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb ārāʾ ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah,* 127-129.

95 Fārābī, *Fusulü'l-Medeni,* 38.

96 Sarah Moran, "How The Kingdom Changes The Walking Dead," *Screenrant*, October 31, 2016, accessed June 8, 2017, http://screenrant.com/walking-dead-kingdom-ezekiel-change-seaosn-7/.

As al-Fārābī stresses about the people of the Virtuous City, "their life is the nicest and the most beautiful way of living among what others have."[97]

In addition, the people of the Virtuous City create a harmony by following their first ruler's purpose.[98] Al-Fārābī identifies this harmony by explaining that virtuous communities have no disagreements because the purpose of virtuousness is goodness desired only for itself.[99] Corrupt people lived in Alexandria and Woodbury. Despite their leaders' claims about providing a happy life, sickness was inside them, but in the Kingdom, even the warriors have a sense of virtuousness. Before the Kingdom's introduction, none of the soldiers had been exactly "good." In Alexandria, there were none. In Woodbury, soldiers were murderers who kill and lie like their leader. However, the Kingdom's soldiers are the first that can be considered virtuous because like all parts of the Virtuous City, the warriors follow their leader's purpose in pursuing the goodness that is desired only for itself. Thus, the harmony continues.

In the Kingdom, one person breaks the harmony. He tries the wrong methods to convince the King to fight with the Saviors. He tries to kill Carol, who was under the King's protection, to make him angry with the Saviors; then, he tries to kill himself for the same cause, but because of him, the King's heir dies instead. Al-Fārābī does not reject the idea that contrarian people such as Richard can occur in the Virtuous City. He calls them *al-nawābit,* which means *the weeds* that spring up among the plants. These people are a threat to the community, as weeds are to plants; therefore, the leader is responsible for handling them. Morgan and Carol may be considered weeds, and Ezekiel found a way to cure them both.

Some similarities between the Kingdom and the Virtuous City are presented to demonstrate the Virtuous City's general framework. However, some differences also occur between the two universes, which make al-Fārābī's philosophy distinctive. One difference is the place of God. For al-Fārābī, as long as the virtuous leader exists, religion will live and God will lead his people: "The art of the ruler is an art that has a connection with the revelation that comes from God.

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97 Fārābī, *Fusulü'l-Medeni,* 69.

98 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb ārāʾ ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah,* 122.

99 Fārābī, *Fusulü'l-Medeni,* 76.

He designates deeds and thoughts in the virtuous religion (*millah*) only according to the revelation."[100] Thus, for al-Fārābī, the ruler should have a connection with God in order to create a virtuous city. He simply implies that "God is also the ruler of the Virtuous City as much as he is the ruler of the universe."[101] Through this statement, he indicates a difference between the philosopher-prophet and the philosopher-king. He believes that prophets with a *sharīʿah* (*millah*) were also philosophers, such as the Prophet Muḥammad. Additionally, the Virtuous City is more easily established by philosopher-prophets, who can also provide for its sustainability because philosopher-prophets are granted the strongest imaginative faculty.[102]

Another difference between the Kingdom and the Virtuous City is the place of the ultimate happiness and perfection. Al-Fārābī argues that Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle believe that people reach two perfections because they have two lives, and they can only reach the last perfection in the afterlife provided they found the first perfection in this life.[103] Thus, for al-Fārābī, reaching perfection in this life is the prerequisite for ultimate happiness in the afterlife. In addition, the people of the Virtuous City should know the attributes of God, the attributes of spiritual creatures, the hierarchy among them and their situation according to God, how the universe existed and what it is, how the first creation occurred, God's relation to the universe and to people, how revelation emerges, things about death and the afterlife and other things related to all of these concepts.[104] The people should know these concepts because only then can they try to find the right way to reach perfection in this world and then in the afterlife. These concepts make religion a vital part of al-Fārābī's philosophy. However, *TWD* characters are usually uncertain regarding their belief in an afterlife or even in God. They seek an ultimate happiness, but this seeking does not seem to be connected with eternal life. While for al-Fārābī, perfection is about both this world and afterlife, for the people in *TWD*, perfection seems to be only about this world without a final aim.

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[100] Toktaş, "Fârâbî'nin *Kitâbü'l-Mille* Adlı Eserinin Takdim ve Çevirisi," 259.

[101] Ibid., 272.

[102] Korkut, *Fârâbî'nin Siyaset Felsefesi*, 255-256.

[103] Fārābī, *Fusulü'l-Medeni,* 38-39.

[104] Toktaş, "Fârâbî'nin *Kitâbü'l-Mille* Adlı Eserinin Takdim ve Çevirisi," 259.

Conclusion

The purpose of this work was to show that *TWD* is not only a zombie show but also a philosophical discourse. While the show creates a dystopia, it forces us to ask ourselves why people need to live together, why they are political creatures and many other questions about the history of civilization. *TWD* demonstrates that the thoughts of ancient philosophers are not that old; their questions were the same as ours, and they also tried to answer them. Therefore, the *TWD* universe can be read correspondingly with al-Fārābī's political philosophy. First, humans' political nature was explained in comparison with zombies. Second, *TWD* communities were compared with al-Fārābī's unvirtuous communities. Finally, the resemblances between the Virtuous City and the Kingdom were examined to understand al-Fārābī's Virtuous City more clearly.

Here, al-Fārābī's virtuous city may or may not be a utopia. Some think that al-Fārābī was aware of the impossibility of finding an ideal ruler who holds all twelve qualifications, so he accepted the possibility that rulers might exist with fewer qualifications for the Virtuous City. Al-Fārābī presented two kinds of virtuous ruler, an ideal and an actual one, because al-Fārābī acknowledged that when a ruler who holds all qualifications cannot be found, then a second ruler who has fewer qualifications can come along.[105] In addition, "al-Fārābī implies the principle of separation of power within the state, although there is no distinctive mention of it."[106] Such assumptions refuse to accept al-Fārābī's Virtuous City as a utopia, unlike Plato's *Republic*, because he did not picture an unrealizable political state. Although the Virtuous City might not be accepted as actual, al-Fārābī's Virtuous City was more based on reality than Plato's. This distinction can be proved through the term *al-maʿmūrah,* which can be translated as "inhabited world." The term is distinctive and can be explained through *TWD*. The world, which is overrun by zombies, leads people to reorganize a society that consists of many city-states such as Alexandria, Hilltop, and the Kingdom. They are united against the biggest threat to a virtuous *maʿmūrah*, the Saviors. Al-Fārābī describes *al-maʿmūrah* as the union of nations for building happiness.[107] Many scholars think that with this

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[105] Byoung Joo Hah, "Al-Fārābī's Political Theory" (PhD diss., Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1995), 262.

[106] Hah, "Al-Fārābī's Political Theory," 262.

[107] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb ārāʾ ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah,* 118.

term, al-Fārābī refers to a kind of global governance, which is different from the Greek political philosophers who imagined only a perfect Greek city. This distinction might be because he lived in a time when the Islamic civilization was rapidly growing and spreading, so naturally, he not only pictured a virtuous city but also a universal virtuous association. Orwin similarly argues;

> Alfarabi could no longer take his bearings solely by the political thought of his predecessors Plato or Aristotle, whose primary point of reference had been the Greek *polis*. In an era in which "globalization" has become an inevitable cliché, Alfarabi's assessment of the significance of the global community merits careful consideration.[108]

Additionally, *al-maʿmūrah* can be compared with *dār al-Islām* as a global political association. Thus, al-Fārābī's idea of *al-maʿmūrah* brings him closer to the actuality by making it possible to talk about a virtuous association from a global understanding of today. Likewise, *TWD* shows us how today's world, which includes many global political associations, was first formed by discussing the attempt of many city-states to become one for a virtuous life by defeating wickedness. As Maggie implies at the end of season seven, "It started with both of you, and it just grew to all of us, to sacrifice for each other, to suffer and stand, to grieve, to give, to love, to live, to fight for each other."[109] Nevertheless, that al-Fārābī was a political idealist seems a foregone conclusion because of his expectations about religious factors in the political system. He idealized a virtuous and religious state in which people would live for the ultimate happiness. In addition, like most of the idealist political philosophers, he starts by formulating an ideal society and then explains how state officials would fit into it.[110] Thus, considering him a realist is difficult even though his *al-maʿmūrah* was not a pure utopia.

To conclude, studying classical thinkers such as al-Fārābī, Qinālīzādah, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Khaldūn, Avicenna, Plato or Aristotle to

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[108] Alexander I. Orwin, "Can Humankind Deliberate on a Global Scale? *Alfarabi and the Politics of the Inhabited World*," *American Political Science Review* 108, no. 4 (2014), 830, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055414000422.

[109] Darabont, *The Walking Dead,* Season 7, Episode 16.

[110] Rumee Ahmed, "Jurisprudence and Political Philosophy in Medieval Islam," in *The Routledge Companion to Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Richard C. Taylor and Luis Xavier López-Farjeat (New York: Routledge, 2016), 61.

read contemporary fields is extremely important. This kind of research broadens horizons and creates more suitable work fields for this age. Discussions can be found among these philosophers' statements about living in communities, the ethics of war and peace, and values about this life and the afterlife. Therefore, reading them with different tools, which might be stories told through the screen or on the page, help us to reinterpret classical philosophy for this age. This process unites different minds from different cultures, as this study does by combining a product of American culture, a zombie apocalypse, with the philosophical system of a Muslim thinker. This synthesis shows that all humans seek answers to the same questions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are indebted to anonymous reviewers of this article for providing insightful comments.

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THE COMPANIONS' UNDERSTANDING OF SUNNAH: THE EXAMPLE OF ʿABD ALLĀH IBN MASʿŪD

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Abstract

An accurate understanding of the concept of the Sunnah is required to obtain accurate conclusions from assessments, discussions, and studies within the context of the Sunnah. This understanding is possible through comprehensive examination of the awareness of the Sunnah among the Companions (*ṣaḥābah*), who witnessed the age of the Prophet in every aspect. Indeed, current discussions and studies of the Sunnah highlight a single aspect of the problem. On some occasions, the concept "Sunnah" is presented within a reductive approach as narratives (*riwāyah*) that offer jurisprudential solutions for secondary problems. Other times, behavior-centered definitions transform the Sunnah into a domain that can be experienced only at the imitative level. Consequently, the multidimensional structure of the concept is restricted, and it becomes nonfunctional in terms of providing a way of thinking and a perception of the world. In this paper, due to the vastness of subject, this problem is examined on the basis of a single example, namely, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd (d. 32/652), a prominent Companion.

Key Words: ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd, the Companions, Sunnah understanding of *al-ṣaḥābah*, *ijtihād*, the Prophet Muḥammad.

Ilahiyat Studies
Volume 9 Number 1 Winter / Spring 2018
DOI: 10.12730/13091719.2018.91.174
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p-ISSN: 1309-1786 / e-ISSN: 1309-1719

Introduction

Every ideology, religion or similar formation requires an initial community to make its thoughts and principles tangible and to sustain their continuity by handing them down to the next generation. For Islam, this initial community was the Companions, whom the Prophet Muḥammad formed in every aspect, including thought and behavior. This initial community experienced the Prophet's (*nabawī*) teaching and comprehended the rules and principles of Islam in detail. Accordingly, they undertook the responsibility of communicating this understanding to subsequent generations. The Companions led a life in line with the values of their polytheist society; having embraced Islam, however, they immediately abandoned all past principles with regard to faith and deed. Nevertheless, the process of gaining the new doctrines brought by Islam was not that brief given the difficulties of adopting these doctrines in terms of thought and behavior. Consequently, this process required a long period, known as *the age of the Prophet*, in which He was personally involved at every stage.

Thanks to the example of the Prophet in this process, the Companions learned the rules and principles to establish a common perception. In this regard, the Sunnah falls under a common perception in the consciousness of the Companions. However, the Companions provided service to different areas of the Sunnah in different ways. Some Companions were occupied with communicating narratives (*riwāyah*), the material of the Sunnah, while others served in practical ways by means of decisions and reasoning during their administrative and judicial posts.

In this context, Ibn Masʿūd displays a profile of service that includes both narratives and knowledge. Above all, his statements comprise a significant and comprehensive framework for the Sunnah. No other Companion has pointed out as clearly the issues Ibn Masʿūd underlines. Therefore, Ibn Masʿūd seems an accurate choice to study to see the nature of the Sunnah awareness among the Companions.

I. The Companions' Understanding of Prophecy

To comprehend the perception of the Sunnah among the Companions, it is necessary to know their Prophet conception, which was provided for them in person by Rasūl Allāh during the age of the Prophet. Knowledge of issues such as the immunity and accountability

of the Prophet is particularly important since these issues may be directly influential on views regarding the information provided by the Sunnah.

A. Immunity of the Prophet

In some speeches, the Prophet gave the explicit message that he was under divine protection against external factors. As quoted by Ibn Masʿūd, the Prophet once said to the Companions, "Some *jinn*s are appointed to accompany every one of you without exception," underlining a fact that is valid for each human being. The Companions understood that this phrase indicated beings that are somehow influential for humans. Accordingly, they wondered about the Prophet, who taught them every religious subject, and asked, "O Rasūl Allāh! Is this the same for you?" In reply, the Prophet Muḥammad said, "Yes, for me too. I am protected only because Allah helps me against them. They have no other than good words to me now."[1]

According to another narrative, the Prophet states that his demon, who is naturally an unbeliever, is a Muslim.[2] At this point, the Prophet tries to instill in the Companions an awareness that unlike others, he will not be dragged into delusion via external seductions or indoctrinations. Accordingly, his teachings or words are free from any such negative influence.

The Prophet is also held immune from human weaknesses. The Companions saw the Prophet angry, joyful, sad, and even crying.

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1 Muslim, "Ṣifāt al-munāfiqīn," 69. For a similar narrative from Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 68/687), see Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, IV, 166. For another narratives see Muslim, "Ṣifāt al-munāfiqīn," 70; al-Tirmidhī, "al-Raḍāʿ," 17; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, XXII, 226. Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (d. 544/1149) indicates there is a consensus on the opinion that the tongue, body, and mind of the Prophet are preserved against Satan; see Abū l-Faḍl al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ ibn Mūsá al-Yaḥṣubī, *Ikmāl al-muʿlim bi-fawāʾid Muslim*, ed. Yaḥyá İsmāʿīl (al-Manṣūrah: Dār al-Wafāʾ, 1998), VIII, 351.

2 Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ʿAmr ibn ʿAbd al-Khāliq al-Bazzār al-Baṣrī, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār al-maʿrūf bi-Musnad al-Bazzār*, ed. Maḥfūẓ al-Raḥmān Zayn Allāh et al. (Medina: Maktabat al-ʿUlūm wa-l-Ḥikam & Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2009), XIV, 249; Abū l-Faḍl Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī bi-sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Imām Abī ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī and Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1960), I, 439.

Evidently, they thought the Prophet may make decisions or hold attitudes under the influence of his emotions, just like any other human being. Some attempted to evaluate the words of the Prophet through such a human attitude and indicating that he talks when he was in anger or joy, whereupon the Prophet Muḥammad replied, "I swear that only truth comes out from me."[3] The Prophet repeats a similar warning upon the death of his son Ibrāhīm. Some Companions saw Rasūl Allāh cry and found this behavior strange. Thereupon, Rasūl Allāh said, "This is due to compassion; the eyes water and the heart grieves," pointing out that he was also a human. However, he immediately added, "However, we only say what our Lord will be content."[4] In doing so, the Prophet attempted to prevent the conviction that the human conditions in the fulfilment of his duty as a messenger may produce negative effects. He was well aware that acceptance of the human condition as a criterion in understanding, accepting or refusing the Sunnah information may lead to inaccurate and arbitrary interpretations.

The immunity of the Prophet does not mean that he never erred or forgot. Nevertheless, the Companions did not allow for such situations in their conception of the Prophet, even if they witnessed them in person. Indeed, the Prophet cannot be considered in error or oblivion in the eyes of the Companions, even if he errs or forgets on some occasions. For example, Ibn Masʿūd never thought that any information provided by the Sunnah could be affected by human characteristics such as anger or obliviousness. On the contrary, Ibn Masʿūd says, "The Prophet (pbuh) is correct and informs correctly (وهوالصادق المصدوق)."[5] noting the incontestability of information proposed by the Sunnah. In fact, Ibn Masʿūd personally witnessed[6] how the Prophet's decision about captives from the Battle of Badr was eventually corrected by means of revelation[7] and heard him say, "I am a man like all of you. I do forget as you do."[8] Nevertheless, like the other Companions, Ibn Masʿūd knew that the Prophet was under divine supervision and was corrected by divine warnings whenever he

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3 Abū Dāwūd, "al-ʿIlm," 3; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, XI, 57.

4 Al-Bukhārī, "al-Janāʾiz," 42.

5 Al-Bukhārī, "Badʾ al-khalq," 6; Muslim, "al-Qadar," 1.

6 Al-Tirmidhī, "al-Tafsīr," 9.

7 Q 8:67.

8 Muslim, "al-Masājid," 92.

erred or forgot. Thanks to this awareness, the Companions considered the Sunnah knowledge formed under divine control and not subject to the negative effects of the human condition and external factors.

B. Accountableness

On many occasions, the Prophet reminded the Companions that he was accountable like any of them[9] and did not take kindly to be positioned in a superior position in this regard. Accordingly, he lived as any other subject among the Companions and tried to fulfil his responsibilities as a subject in the best possible manner. For example, Ibn Masʿūd witnessed how the Prophet acted out of the desire to gain reward on the day of the Battle of Badr despite his seat and heard him say, "You are not stronger than I am, and I am not less in need of reward (*thawāb*) than you."[10]

The Prophet never allowed approaches against the understanding that he was an accountable subject and an ideal example for others. On one occasion, a Companion asked him the provision about "being impure until the morning despite having intended to fast." The Prophet replied that he also faced such situations and continued fasting after eventual bathing. Thereupon, the Companion said, "You are not like us. All your sins have been forgiven." Upon these words, Muḥammad became angry and replied as follows to correct the Companion: "My word! Among all of you, I am the one who fears Allah the most and who wants to know best the things to avoid."[11] Indeed, expressions such as the one from the mentioned Companion are based on the understanding that the Prophet could act how he liked in fulfilling religious duties and obeying orders and prohibitions.[12] This approach, no doubt, paved the way for extravagant comments about the practices of the Prophet, who set an example not only with his words but also with his deeds. According to a narrative that reveals actual evidence, a group of Companions, including Ibn Masʿūd, consulted the wives of the Prophet Muḥammad to learn about and adopt his manner of worshipping. They probably did not get the answer they sought since

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9 For some narratives in which the Prophet underlines his being a human and subject, see Abū Dāwūd, "al-Sunnah," 11; Ibn Mājah, "al-Atʿimah," 6.

10 See Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, VII, 17.

11 Muslim, "al-Ṣiyām," 79; Abū Dāwūd, "al-Ṣawm," 36.

12 See Abū l-Walīd Sulaymān ibn Khalaf ibn Saʿd al-Tujībī al-Bājī, *al-Muntaqá sharḥ al-Muwaṭṭaʾ* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Saʿādah, 1914), II, 43.

they underestimated what was told to them and associated the answers with "absolute forgiveness of Allah towards the Prophet." Thereupon, the Companions made decisions such as continuous fasting, spending nights in worship, and keeping away from women. The Prophet eventually became aware of their situation and warned the Companions that their path was contrary to his Sunnah.[13]

II. Position and Exemplary Status of the Companions

The perception regarding the special bond between the Companions and the Sunnah is expressed as early as the lifetime of the Companions. Ibn Masʿūd presented the most explicit words on this matter. During a speech, Ibn Masʿūd spoke as follows:

> Who wish to look up to someone among you should better look up to the Companions of the Prophet. They were the finest, best-informed, farthest from falsity, and ideal in attitude and path. They were a community chosen by Allah to be present in talks with His messenger. Therefore, acknowledge their virtue and follow their path. For sure, they were persons on the true path.[14]

Ibn Masʿūd thus praised the Companions, highlighting their significant function with regard to the Sunnah. Above all, Ibn Masʿūd emphasize that the Companions were chosen by Allah and attained an unreachable status by receiving the Sunnah firsthand. Thus, Ibn Masʿūd noted that the Companions were a peerless example for upcoming generations.

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13 Al-Bukhārī, "al-Nikāḥ," 1.

14 Abū ʿUmar Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr al-Namarī, *Jāmiʿ bayān al-ʿilm wa-faḍlihī*, ed. Abū l-Ashbāl al-Zuhayrī (al-Dammām: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 1994), II, 947. Despite some differences in wording, see Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn ibn Masʿūd al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ al-sunnah*, ed. Zuhayr al-Shāyīsh and Shuʿayb al-Arnāʾūṭ (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1983), I, 214; Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ājurrī, *Kitāb al-sharīʿah*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar ibn Sulaymān al-Dumayjī, 2nd ed. (Riyadh: Dār al-Waṭan, 1999), IV, 1685; Abū l-Saʿādāt Majd al-Dīn al-Mubārak ibn Athīr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmiʿ al-uṣūl fī aḥādīth al-Rasūl*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Arnāʾūṭ (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ḥilwānī, 1969-1972), I, 292. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar uttered similar sayings; see Abū Nuʿaym Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyāʾ* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1985), I, 305.

The true origin of Ibn Masʿūd's words about the Companions is the Prophet himself, since he actually heard Rasūl Allāh saying, "Allah has never sent a messenger before me who did not have chosen helpers and friends to obey the Sunnah (of such messenger) within his community ..."[15]

In another speech, Ibn Masʿūd repeats this chosen status of the Companions once again: "Allah looked into the hearts of His objects. He found the heart of the Prophet as the purest of all. He chose him and sent him as messenger. Then, again, He looked into hearts of His objects and found the hearts of the Companions of Rasūl Allāh as the purest. He chose them as helpers of His messenger and advocates of religion."[16] In the same speech, Ibn Masʿūd adds, "Whatever Muslims consider good is good also in the presence of Allah. Whatever they consider evil is evil also in the presence of Allah,"[17] hinting that the Companions would always make decisions compliant with divine will thanks to their knowledge, training and experience gained through the Prophet's teaching.

Ibn Masʿūd quotes the following ḥadīth indicating the superior status of the Companions among other generations:

"The most benevolent among the community (*ummah*) are those in my time. They are followed by the following generation and then their followers. Then comes such a community that their testimony contradicts their oaths and their oaths contradict their testimony."[18]

Continuously emphasizing the status of the Companions with regard to the Sunnah, Ibn Masʿūd clearly tries to present the

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15 Muslim, "al-Īmān," 80.

16 Pursuant to this approach, the Prophet addressed his Companions as follows: "فإنما بعثتم ميسرين، ولم تبعثوا معسرين" "You were sent as persons to make things easier and not more difficult." See al-Bukhārī, "al-Wuḍūʾ," 63; Abū Dāwūd, "al-Ṭaḥārah," 137; al-Tirmidhī, "al-Ṭaḥārah," 113.

17 Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd ibn al-Jārūd al-Ṭayālisī, *Musnad Abī Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī*, ed. Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Cairo: Dār Hajr, 1999), I, 199; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, VI, 84; al-Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakhkhār*, V, 119; Abū l-Qāsim Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad ibn Ayyūb al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, ed. Ḥamdī ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Salafī (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Taymiyyah, 1983 → Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1994), IX, 112; al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, I, 375.

18 Muslim, "Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥābah," 210.

Companions as ideal and indispensable examples for posterity. According to Ibn Masʿūd, to follow the Companions is the Sunnah, and the contrary is a heretical innovation (*bidʿah*).[19] The Companions are living practitioners of the Sunnah. Therefore, any attitude against them will be contrary to the Sunnah. Ibn Masʿūd was told that some people gathered in the *masjid* after evening prayer and performed *dhikr*; whereupon he immediately went to the *masjid*. Having seen the deeds contrary to the Sunnah, Ibn Masʿūd went into a rage: "I swear to Allah, you either fabricated an evil innovation or you are much better informed than the Companions of the Prophet." After this warning, he wanted them to stop and leave the *masjid* immediately. One among the congregation tried to soothe Ibn Masʿūd, swearing they did not intend any heretical innovation or did not mean any superiority to the Companions. In response to these words, Ibn Masʿūd said, "You either abide by the Companions, who have clearly advanced far ahead of you, or head for clear heresy with irrelevant deeds."[20] Thus, he reminded them that any path other than the lifestyle of the Companions would be perversion and heresy.

The importance attached to the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs by Ibn Masʿūd is another aspect of his perception of the Companions.

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[19] Ibn Masʿūd gives the following explanation: "Follow us and do not come up with innovations. This would be enough for you," "Obey (us); do not allow heretical innovations. Each innovation is heresy." Al-Dārimī, "al-Muqaddimah," 23; Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Waḍḍāḥ ibn Bazīʿ al-Qurṭubī, *al-Bidaʿ wa-l-nahy ʿanhā*, ed. ʿAmr ʿAbd al-Munʿim Salīm (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Taymiyyah, 1995), 36; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, IX, 154; Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī al-Bayhaqī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-shuʿab al-īmān*, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Ḥāmid (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 2003), V, 230; Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn Yaḥyá al-Marwazī, *al-Sunnah*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Baṣīrī (Riyadh: Dār al-ʿĀṣimah, 2001), 78.

[20] Abū Bakr ʿAbd al-Razzāq ibn Hammām ibn Nāfiʿ al-Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-Aʿẓamī, 2nd ed. (along with Maʿmar ibn Rāshid al-Ṣanʿānī's *Kitāb al-jāmiʿ*; Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1983), III, 222; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, IX, 126. One day, ʿImrān ibn Ḥuṣayn was asked by someone "to leave the Sunnah aside and to talk us about the Qurʾān!" Thereupon, he replied in parallel with Ibn Masʿūd and said, "O people! You will learn from us; otherwise, you will go astray." See Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Thābit al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Kifāyah fī maʿrifah uṣūl ʿilm al-riwāyah*, ed. Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn Muṣṭafá al-Dimyāṭī (Meat Gamr: Dār al-Hudá, 2003), I, 83.

He describes the period as "first guidance" (*al-hady al-awwal*) and emphasizes the exemplary nature of this era under their leadership in the wake of Muḥammad's demise. The related speech by Ibn Masʿūd goes as follows: "Now, you follow the Sunnah. In the near future, you will fabricate some inappropriate things and you'll be presented some unusual things. Whenever you come across such things, stick by the first guidance."[21] According to Ibn Rajab, the foregoing speech was given in the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.[22] Therefore, Ibn Masʿūd considers this era, during which the Sunnah was implemented at the ideal level, a continuation of the age of the Prophet.

III. Sunnah Comprehension

Evaluations by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd of the Sunnah and his views on the relation between the Sunnah and revelation, particularly the Sunnah and the Qurʾān, might help in understanding his conception of the Sunnah.

A. Parts of Sunnah

The expression "right way of guidance" (*sunan al-hudá*) by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd is the clearest evidence that he divides the Sunnah

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[21] Al-Marwazī, *al-Sunnah*, 93; Abū ʿAbd Allāh ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Muḥammad Ibn Baṭṭah, *al-Ibānah ʿan sharīʿat al-firqah al-nājiyah wa-mujānabat al-firaq al-madhmūmah*, ed. Riḍā ibn Naʿsān Muʿṭī (Riyadh: Dār al-Rāyah, 1994), I, 329. In another narrative, Ibn Masʿūd once again defines his age for being strict followers of Sunnah, saying "فإنا اليوم على الفطرة"; see Abū Bakr ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad Ibn Abī Shaybah al-ʿAbsī, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Ḥūt (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1989), VII, 271. For the "Sunnah" signification of the word, see Majd al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāyah fī gharīb al-ḥadīth wa-l-athar*, ed. Rāʾid ibn Ṣabrī ibn Abī ʿAlafah, 3rd ed. (Amman: Bayt al-Afkār al-Dawliyyah, 2003), 698; Abū l-Fayḍ Muḥammad al-Murtaḍá ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs min jawāhir al-Qāmūs* (Kuwait: Maṭbaʿat Ḥukūmat al-Kuwayt, 1965-2001), XIII, 331; Abū Ḥabīb Saʿdī, *al-Qāmūs al-fiqhī: lughat*^{an} *wa-iṣṭilāḥ*^{an}, 2nd ed. (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1988), 288. In explanation of the ḥadīth, "Human nature consists of five things or five things are of human nature (*al-fiṭrah khams*^{un} *aw khams*^{un} *min al-fiṭrah*)" (al-Bukhārī, "al-Libās," 63; Muslim, "al-Ṭahārah," 16). Ibn Ḥajar says that the word *al-fiṭrah* means Sunnah for most scholars (see al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, I, 168).

[22] Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿulūm wa-l-ḥikam*, ed. Shuʿayb al-Arnāʾūṭ and Ibrāhīm Bājis (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 2001), II, 132.

into various categories.[23] In a narrative including this expression, he says, "Rasūl Allāh taught as the right way of guidance. This kind of the Sunnah includes performing *ṣalāh* in a masjid where *adhān* is recited."[24] Thus, Ibn Masʿūd indicates the importance attached by the Prophet to this kind of Sunnah and how the Prophet Muḥammad meticulously taught it to his Companions.

ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd uses the same expression in another narrative:

> Whoever wants to come into presence of Allah as a Muslim should rigorously continue performing *ṣalāh* in a place where *adhān* is recited. Actually, Allah made *sunan al-hudá* an order to your Prophet for you. *Sunan al-hudá* also includes performing *ṣalāh* with congregation ...[25]

Ibn Masʿūd defines a practice of the Prophet as *sunan al-hudá* and describes its abandonment as heresy. In this regard, he means the Sunnah that is considered the sign of the true path and the abandoning of which leads to heresy.

Ibn Masʿūd uses a different approach for practices other than *sunan al-hudá*. On one occasion, he found inappropriate the position of feet of a man performing *ṣalāh* and said, "He does not act in line with the Sunnah; if he opened his feet a little more, I would have liked it much

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[23] Certain Ḥanafī *fiqh* works report a narration specifically attributed to the Prophet: "*Ṣalāt* with congregation is among *sunan al-hudá*," showing that the term *sunan al-hudá* was also used by the Prophet; see Burhān al-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Abī Bakr al-Marghīnānī, *al-Hidāyah sharḥ Bidāyat al-mubtadī*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAdnān Darwīsh (Beirut: Sharikat Dār al-Arqam ibn Abī l-Arqam, n.d.) I, 69; Abū l-Faḍl Majd al-Dīn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Maḥmūd al-Mawṣilī, *al-Ikhtiyār li-taʿlīl al-Mukhtār*, ed. Zuhayr ʿUthmān al-Juʿayd (Beirut: Sharikat Dār al-Arqam ibn Abī l-Arqam, n.d.), I, 78. According to al-Zaylaʿī (d. 762/1360), the narrative in the mentioned articulation has a single narrator (*gharīb*); see 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), II, 21. However, we could not find any ḥadīth source except for ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd that shows that this wording was used by the Prophet or a Companion.

[24] See Muslim, "al-Masājid," 256.

[25] Muslim, "al-Masājid," 257; Abū Dāwūd, "al-Ṣalāt," 48; al-Nasāʾī, "al-Īman," 51; Ibn Mājah, "al-Masājid," 14.

more."[26] Ibn Masʿūd's behavior shows that he considers the Sunnah at a different level and value.

B. Source of the Sunnah

The Companions in general and ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd in particular were aware that the Sunnah was partially grounded in revelation (*waḥy*).[27] The foregoing saying, "Allah made *sunan al-hudá* an order to your Prophet for you,"[28] shows that according to Ibn Masʿūd, certain Sunnah were directly obtained through revelation. In fact, it is not strange that Companions had this perception. Indeed, they witnessed in person some incidents in which the Sunnah was shaped by the direct intervention of divine will. On one occasion, Ibn Masʿūd states that they overslept and missed Morning Prayer, whereupon the Prophet said, "If Allah wished so, you would not oversleep and miss the prayer. However, Allah wanted this to be the Sunnah for those who oversleep or forget the prayer in the future."[29]

The thoughts of Ibn Masʿūd about the relation between the Sunnah and revelation are reflected in his discourse. For example, he once saw al-Walīd ibn ʿUqbah (d. 61/680), the governor of al-Kūfah, dawdle about leading the prayer, whereupon Ibn Masʿūd stepped up as *imām* to lead it and reproached the governor: "Neither Allah nor His

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[26] al-Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, II, 265; Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Muṣannaf*, II, 109; al-Nasāʾī, "al-Iftitāḥ," 13; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, IX, 270; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrá*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā (Mecca: Maktabat Dār al-Bāz, 1994), II, 288.

[27] Abū ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Quṭb al-Dīn Shāh Walī Allāh Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Dihlawī, *Ḥujjat al-Allāh al-bāligbah*, ed. Maḥmūd Ṭuʿmah Ḥalabī (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1997), I, 294.

[28] Muslim, "al-Masājid," 257; Abū Dāwūd, "al-Ṣalāt," 48; al-Nasāʾī, "al-Īmān," 51; Ibn Mājah, "al-Masājid," 14.

[29] Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, VI, 243; al-Nasāʾī, "al-Siyar," 169; al-Ṭayālisī, *Musnad*, I, 294. The ḥadīth "For sure, I become or made forgotten to replace Sunnah" in *al-Muwaṭṭaʾ* by al-Imām Mālik approves it (see Mālik ibn Anas, *al-Muwaṭṭaʾ*, "al-Sahw," 331. For similar comments about these two narratives, see Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, *Fatḥ al-bārī sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Maḥmūd ibn Shaʿbān ibn ʿAbd al-Maqṣūd et al. (Medina: Maktabat al-Ghurabāʾ al-Athariyyah, 1996), II, 271; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *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), XXIV, 375.

Messenger accepts us to retard prayer.[30] Indeed, Ibn Masʿūd heard in person from the Prophet that the timely performance of prayer is a strong Sunnah decided by divine will. According to a narrative, the Prophet one day turned to ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd and asked, "What if you have a ruler who wastes the Sunnah and retards prayer times?" Ibn Masʿūd said, "What would you want me to do, o Messenger of Allah?" The Prophet replied as follows: "O son of Umm ʿAbd! Are you asking me how to act? One cannot obey any creation in rebelling against Holy and Almighty."[31] Thus, the Prophet Muḥammad states that it is Allah's will who decides on the timely performance of prayer in particular and fulfilment of the Sunnah in general.

As a jurisprudent (*faqīh*) Companion, Ibn Masʿūd observed the strong relation between the Sunnah and revelation in the light of such words and incidents. However, Ibn Masʿūd did not believe the Sunnah was entirely obtained through revelation, even though he admitted it was shaped in line with divine will.

C. The Relation between the Sunnah and the Qurʾān

The abovementioned attitude of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd about the relation between the Sunnah and revelation is also reflected, in a more particular context, in his views about the Sunnah and the Qurʾān. Above all, he saw no difference between an order, prohibition or recommendation communicated through the Qurʾān or the Sunnah. Instead, in his eyes, these two sources were so identical that he never allowed any approach against their identity and meticulously interfered in any such contradictory thoughts. The following narrative might help in understanding his approach:

"ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd said: 'Allah curses those who change the women He created for the flirtatious ones who have tattoos on their body, remove hairs on their face, and thin their teeth for a better look.' A woman called Umm Yaʿqūb from Banū l-Asad tribe overheard his words and immediately talked to Ibn Masʿūd: 'I heard you cursing such and such women.' Ibn Masʿūd replied: 'Why wouldn't I curse the women who are cursed in book of Allah and cursed by the Prophet as well?' Then, the woman objected: 'I swear I read the Book from the beginning to the end. But I never came across anything like you say.'

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30 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, VII, 325.

31 Ibn Mājah, "al-Jihād," 40; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, VI, 432.

Thereupon, Ibn Masʿūd answered: 'If you actually read (the Qurʾān), you would have seen' and asked her: 'Did not you read the verse, '*And whatever the Messenger has given you – take; and what he has forbidden you – refrain from*'?' 'For sure I did,' the woman replied. Ibn Masʿūd continued: 'Indeed, (the Prophet) forbade these.' The woman continued discussion saying: 'I know that yours do some of these things.' Thereupon, Ibn Masʿūd said: 'Then, go and have a look!' The woman left to look at her (Zaynab bint ʿAbd Allāh al-Thaqafiyyah, wife of Ibn Masʿūd). Nevertheless, she could see nothing with wrong his wife to support her agreement and said this to Ibn Masʿūd. He replied: 'If my wife were someone like you thought, I would not keep her with me for a second.'"[32]

This narrative clearly shows that ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd attributed to Allah an issue for which the judgment is communicated through the Sunnah. In fact, he had actually heard how the Prophet damned the women garnished with the abovementioned methods.[33] However, Ibn Masʿūd easily adopted the foregoing approach since he considered the problem within the integrity of the Sunnah and the Qurʾān. A closer look at the progress of the discussion may help us understand his approach in a better way. If we pay attention, the narrative begins with Ibn Masʿūd saying it is Allah who curses the women garnished with the mentioned methods. Nevertheless, the woman attributes this deed to Ibn Masʿūd. Then, Ibn Masʿūd asks, "Why wouldn't I curse the women who are cursed in book of Allah and cursed by the Prophet as well?" referring to his previous words and to a similar expression by the Prophet, indicating that he is also in line with the Prophet. At this stage, Umm Yaʿqūb did not ask, "What did Rasūl Allāh say?" Instead, she claims she found no Qurʾān verse cursing the garnished women and wanted to continue the debate over the Qurʾān. Ibn Masʿūd considered it more necessary to correct her attitude of differentiating the Qurʾān and the Sunnah. Reciting a Qurʾān verse, he showed how the judgments decided by the Sunnah can be attributed to the Qurʾān.[34]

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[32] Al-Bukhārī, "Tafsīr al-Qurʾān," 310; Muslim, "al-Libās," 33; Abū Dāwūd, "al-Tarajjul," 4.

[33] Al-Nasāʾī, "al-Zīnah," 26; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, VII; 68; al-Ṭayālisī, *Musnad*, I, 307.

[34] Because of the mentioned meaning, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071) cites this narrative in his *al-Kifāyah* under the title "Narratives with claim that the Qurʾān

Indeed, al-Zarkashī (d. 794/1392) dwells on the same problem; for him, Ibn Masʿūd attributes, in deep wisdom, a word of the Prophet to the Qurʾān during this conversation.[35] As a result of this approach, he means that the prohibitions imposed by the Sunnah on women with regard to tattoos, the removal of facial hair or changing the position of teeth are also present in the Qurʾān as judgments.[36] Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449) notes the progress of the debate between Ibn Masʿūd and Umm Yaʿqūb, concluding that judgments decided by the Sunnah can be attributed to the Qurʾān and that judgments obtained through reasonable inference can be orally attributed to both the Sunnah and the Qurʾān, pursuant to the approach of Ibn Masʿūd.[37]

Another narrative demonstrates that the attitude of Ibn Masʿūd against the approach that dissociates the Qurʾān and the Sunnah was not an instantaneous reaction but the outcome of a conscious preference. According to the narrative, a woman came to Ibn Masʿūd and spoke as follows: "I am a woman with thin hair. Could I add some to my hair?" Ibn Masʿūd replied, "No," whereupon the woman wanted to find out the origin of his judgment: "You heard (this) from the Prophet or saw it in Book of Allah?" Then, again, Ibn Masʿūd reacted in a similar way: "I both heard it from the Prophet and see it in Book of Allah."[38]

In fact, the addition of hair for women is forbidden by the Sunnah,[39] and there is no Qurʾān verse directly dealing with the problem. Nevertheless, the woman was not satisfied with the negative answer and asked the origin of the judgment on the basis of a separation between the Qurʾān and the Sunnah. Just as in the previous example, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd opts for the *uslūb al-ḥakīm*[40] method, and his

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and the Sunnah are equivalent in the manner of obligating and binding." See al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Kifāyah*, I, 59.

35 Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Bahādur ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Zarkashī, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Tāmir (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1994), I, 29.

36 Abū l-Ḥasan Nūr al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn Sulṭān Muḥammad al-Qārī al-Harawī, *Mirqāt al-mafātīḥ sharḥ Mishkāt al-maṣābīḥ* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2002), VII, 2820.

37 Al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, X, 373.

38 Al-Nasāʾī, "al-Zīnah," 23.

39 Al-Bukhārī, "Farḍ al-khumus," 19; Muslim, "al-Libās," 115.

40 *Uslūb al-ḥakīm* means replying a question slight out of context and changing to a subject considered more useful by responder; see ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ḥasan

answer focuses on correcting her incorrect attitude rather than replying to her question.[41]

IV. The Sunnah Perspective with Regard to Information Therein

The words of the Companions reveal the comprehensive framework of information provided by the Prophet for them about almost every topic. For example, Abū l-Dardāʾ (d. 32/652) emphasizes the extensiveness of the information they obtained from the Prophet: "When Rasūl Allāh left us, he had given so much information even including the birds in the sky."[42] Likewise, Ibn Masʿūd notes the capability of the Prophet to attain information through revelation: "The Prophet is granted key to information on every issue (*mafātīḥ kull shayʾ*) but five."[43] Evidently, this privilege of the Prophet is reflected in his Sunnah.

On the other hand, the Companions uttered words to indicate that the Sunnah comprises information that addresses different levels of

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Ḥabannakah al-Maydānī, *al-Balāghah al-ʿarabiyyah* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1996), I, 498.

41 Like Ibn Masʿud, Muʿāwiyah (d. 60/680) and ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar (d. 73/692) also observed this tendency of dressing up among women and warned against these methods, some of which originally belonged to Jewish women; see al-Bukhārī, "al-Libās," 83; Muslim, "al-Libās," 33; Abū Dāwūd, "al-Tarajjul," 5; al-Nasāʾī, "al-Zīnah," 67; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, IV, 98.

42 Al-Ṭayālisī, *Musnad*, I, 385; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, XXXV, 346; Abū Yaʿlá Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Muthanná, *Musnad Abī Yaʿlā al-Mawṣilī*, ed. Ḥusayn Salīm Asad (Damascus: Dār al-Maʾmūn li-l-Turāth, 1984), IX, 46.

43 Abū Bakr ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr ibn Īsá al-Qurashī al-Ḥumaydī, *al-Musnad*, ed. Ḥusayn Salīm Asad al-Dārānī (Damascus: Dār al-Saqā, 1996), I, 220; Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Muṣannaf*, VI, 317; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, VII, 232; Abū Yaʿlá, *Musnad*, IX, 86. The five things in the narrative are mentioned in Q 31:34 "The Hour of Apocalypse, time of rain, what happens in wombs, what one will earn tomorrow and what land he will die." After referring to this *ḥadīth*, Ibn Ḥajar indicates that a similar narrative is quoted by Ibn ʿUmar as *marfūʿ*; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, I, 124. According to Ibn Kathīr, the narrative complies with prerequisites established by the authors of *sunan*, but they exclude it from their works; see Abū l-Fidāʾ ʿImād al-Dīn Ismāʿīl ibn 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, 353.

reason and that cannot be shared with everyone. The awareness among the Companions in this respect is apparent in the sayings by ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ("Inform man about what he can understand. You would not want to see Allah and His Messenger being denied?"[44]) and Abū Hurayrah ("I memorized two vessels of information through Rasūl Allāh. I spread the first group; as for the second, my throat would have been cut if I shared it"[45]). Accordingly, Ibn Masʿūd says, "Do not communicate the words that the people cannot comprehend. Otherwise, they only bring along sedition."[46] This is a general expression but worth noting with regard to the *ḥadīths* of the Prophet. Indeed, according to al-Jaṣṣāṣ (d. 370/981), Ibn Masʿūd first mentions some narratives and then Qurʾān verses approving them in the awareness that the reports, which seem contrary to explicit declarations of the Qurʾān and definite in the Sunnah, should not be considered in their apparent meaning but interpreted in an appropriate manner within the scope of relevant possibilities.[47] The evil consequences of the interpretation of such information in the Sunnah only depending on their apparent meaning are a problem taken into consideration by scholars.[48]

This saying by Ibn Masʿūd can be understood as a warning to prevent any controversy about, at least, certain Sunnah.[49] Indeed, according to some, it is not unlikely that these words of the Prophet are misunderstood and thus denied. At the beginning of a narrative in which the Prophet talks about the phases of the fetus in its mother's womb, Ibn Masʿūd states,[50] "حدثنا وهو الصادق المصدوق",[51] after saying, "

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44 Al-Bukhārī, "al-ʿIlm," 50.

45 *Ibid.*, 42.

46 Muslim, "al-Muqaddimah," 5.

47 Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Jaṣṣāṣ al-Rāzī, *al-Fuṣūl fī l-uṣūl*, ed. ʿUjayl Jāsim al-Nashamī (Kuwait: Wizārat al-Awqāf al-Kuwaytiyyah, 1994), I, 207.

48 See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, I, 225.

49 Abū Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-qārī sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad Munīr ʿAbdah Aghā l-Dimashqī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 2002), III, 417.

50 See al-Bukhārī, "Badʾ al-khalq," 6; Muslim, "al-Qadar," 1.

51 According to al-Ṭībī (d. 743/1343), the expression should be constructed as "opposing" rather than "condition." Thus, the style in use should expand the meaning, indicating that the Prophet is not one who only says and instructs the truth in his speech; he also demonstrates the same characteristic in all his manners

رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلمَ", to remind the audience that Rasūl Allāh is "a prophet equipped with the quality of perfect righteousness who only obtains correct information."[52] In brief, Ibn Masʿūd thus reminds the audience that it is Rasulullah who is speaking, and he warns them not to have erroneous ideas by jumping to a conclusion regarding what they are about to hear.[53]

V. Intellectual Aspect of the Sunnah

A. Manner of Thought Foreseen by the Sunnah

The Companions were the earliest community to think on the basis of principles and methods put forth by the Sunnah. Thanks to *nabawī* training, the Companions resembled the Prophet not only in behavior but also in rational aspects.

The following narrative told by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd emphasizes the importance of thought: "The most virtuous man of all is who uses reason in religion and is head in terms of deeds; the most wise man of all is the one who, even if fails in his deeds, behaves with prudence in case of dispute and sees the truth."[54] The Prophet thus encourages his Companions to contemplate religious matters and even to gain the capacity to find solutions to the problems of others. In addition, the Prophet explains two essential sources to nourish such thinking: "I am

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and behaviors. Al-ʿAynī (d. 855/1451) believes such an approach fits well with the mentioned narrative and supports al-Ṭībī; see al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-qārī*, XV, 130.

52 Al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, XI, 478; Abū l-Ḥasan Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Sindī, *Ḥāshiyat al-Sindī ʿalá Ibn Mājah* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, n.d.), I, 39.

53 Ibn Ḥajar reports that according to al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (d. 544/1149) and al-Imām al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277), "this phrase is not employed for accrediting but for reinforcing the narrative." For Ibn Ḥajar, Ibn Masʿūd thus emphasizes the correctness of information provided by the Prophet in his speech; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, II, 181). Likewise, al-Kirmānī (d. 786/1384) associates the expression with the content of the narrative; for him, Ibn Masʿūd thus opposes medical convictions of the day that contradict the aforementioned information; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, XI, 478; al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-qārī*, XXIII, 145.

54 Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥākim al-Nīsābūrī, *al-Mustadrak ʿalá l-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, ed. Muṣṭafá ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā (along with Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī's *Talkhīṣ al-Mustadrak*; Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1990), II, 522; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Jāmiʿ*, II, 807; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-ṣaghīr* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī & Amman: Dār ʿAmmār, 1985), I, 372.

leaving behind two things. You will never go astray as long as you hold fast onto them: Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger."[55]

At this stage, the linguistic characteristics of the Qurʾān and the words of the Prophet are worth noting. Indeed, thanks to its specific character, the Qurʾān has defied mankind,[56] while the Sunnah is actualized by the hand of a prophet, the most fluent of Arabs[57] who was capable of uttering the shortest expressions carrying the widest meanings (*jawāmiʿ al-kalim*).[58] Given the character of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah in relation to their manner of using the Arabic language, the calls by both sources for reasoning also stipulate a certain methodology. This manner of thinking, based on this methodology and specific to Islam, is expressed in the concept of *ijtihād*. Unlike its eventual terminological meaning, *ijtihād* corresponds not only to the effort to decide on the conclusion of a *fiqh* problem; it also includes associating any behavior and thought in social, political, cultural or other aspects of life with a principle from the Qurʾān and the Sunnah. The following example is striking since it shows to what extent the Companions applied this manner of thinking. According to the narrative, ʿAlqamah (d. 62/682) was together with Ibn Masʿūd in Mīná when ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān (d. 35/656) came, and they were together alone. Meanwhile, ʿUthmān asked Ibn Masʿūd, "What about if I married you a *jāriyah* to remind you of the old days?" Finding that the Caliph was with him for no special reason, Ibn Masʿūd called over ʿAlqamah, who sat nearby. Then, Ibn Masʿūd replied to ʿUthmān as follows: "You speak thus, but the Prophet said: 'O the youth! Among you, those who can afford marriage should marry. Indeed, marriage is the ideal way to save the eye and honor. In addition, whoever cannot, should fast. Fasting will be a shield for those.'"[59] Apparently, Ibn Masʿūd could give an affirmative or negative answer to ʿUthmān; instead, he preferred to respond by reminding him of the words of the Prophet. This attitude shows that Ibn Masʿūd attempted to form his preferences and behaviors on the basis of knowledge or information taken from the Sunnah.

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55 Mālik ibn Anas, *al-Muwaṭṭaʾ*, "al-Qadar," 3338; al-Nīsābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, I, 171.

56 Q 2:23-24.

57 Al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ al-sunnah*, IV, 202; al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-qārī*, XVI, 65; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, X, 455.

58 Muslim, "al-Masājid," 5.

59 Ibn Mājah, "al-Nikāḥ," 1; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, VI, 72.

Another feature of the form of thinking that the Prophet wanted to instill in the Companions is that the methods established by the Sunnah can produce different and even opposing facts. Given the relevant examples, the Companions made dissimilar and even opposite decisions about a certain problem before they attained such a level of consciousness. In such cases, they went to the Prophet asked him for the correct decision. Rasūl Allāh approved both decisions.[60] Thus, the Prophet wanted to bring them to the awareness that it is natural to obtain different conclusions by means of the *ijtihād* methods foreseen by the Sunnah on a given topic. Indeed, Ibn Masʿūd displayed this approach, which he learned from the Prophet, before his disciples Jundab and Masrūq (d. 63/683), who presented dissimilar *ijtihād*s about the same issue. Accordingly, he said that both disciples were right. Nonetheless, he also indicated that if he were to decide in person, he would opt for the *ijtihād* by Masrūq.[61]

Another perception provided by this attitude is the ability to approach different thoughts in a broad-minded manner. Ibn Masʿūd is an exemplary personality in this regard. Ḥudhayfah (d. 36/656) saw those retreating for worship (*iʿtikāf*) in al-Kūfah masjid, whereupon he reproached as follows: "Are you not surprised to see this group that thinks they retreat for worship between your and Abū Mūsá's house?" In response, Ibn Masʿūd said, "Maybe I am wrong and they are right. Maybe I forgot, but they remember."[62] His attitude reflects the principle that it is necessary to avoid hasty conclusions since some apparently controversial decisions and practices might also have valid grounds.

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60 For further examples, see al-Bukhārī, "Ṣalāt al-khawf," 4; Abū Dāwūd, "al-Ṭaḥārah," 131-32.

61 Abū Bakr Shams al-aʾimmah Muḥammad ibn Abī Sahl al-Sarakhsī, *al-Mabsūṭ* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1993), II, 44.

62 Abū Muḥammad Muwaffaq al-Dīn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī, *al-Mughnī*, ed. Ṭāhā Muḥammad al-Zaynī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhirah, 1968), III, 190. Ibn Masʿūd also emphasizes that there is no place for sentimentalism on this matter and that it is necessary to seek the truth in any case: "Accept whoever brings you the truth, even if he is distant and unpleasant. Do not accept whoever calls you to the void, even if he is a close friend"; Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad Ibn Ḥazm al-Qurṭubī, *al-Iḥkām fī uṣūl al-aḥkām*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīdah, 1983), IV, 570.

B. Relation between the Sunnah and *İjtihād*

İjtihād is a key concept to present ways and methods for resolving problems that are not clearly concluded by the Qurʾān and the Sunnah. The most distinct framework to show the meaning and status of the concept is observed during a conversation between Muʿādh ibn Jabal (d. 17/638) and the Prophet Muḥammad. He asked him, "What would you do about a problem without a given solution in the Qurʾān or the Sunnah?" Ibn Jabal replied, "I apply independent reasoning (*ijtihād*)." The Prophet was very pleased with this response.[63] His positive reaction to the foregoing response means that this attitude toward solving a problem is approved by the Sunnah (*taqrīr al-sunnah*).[64] In addition, with regard to a problem not covered by the Qurʾān and the Sunnah, Muʿādh ibn Jabal did not simply say, "Allah and His Messenger know best" and does not simply ask, "What would you say?" Instead, he is confident enough to say, "I apply independent reasoning." This behavior shows that the Prophet directly or indirectly taught this method beforehand.[65] Indeed, because the Prophet never stipulated this order of priority before, the fact that a Companion so easily suggested *ijtihād* among two principal sources, the Qurʾān and the Sunnah, can only be explained through the level of consciousness brought to them by the Prophet. In fact, the same order of priority is seen in the letter by ʿUmar (d. 23/644) to Shurayḥ ibn al-Ḥārith (d. 80/699), qāḍī of al-Kūfah,[66] and in another speech by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd.[67] These statements are clear evidence of the collective consciousness of the Companions about the mentioned perception.

In this regard, *ijtihād* appears as a significant form of the Sunnah taught to the Companions by the Prophet. The method expresses the association of behavior and thought with a *sharīʿah* rule not only in legal issues but in all aspects of life. The Prophet taught these methods

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63 Abū Dāwūd, "al-Aqdiyah," 11; al-Tirmidhī, "al-Aḥkām," 3; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, XXXVI, 382.

64 For a similar comment, see Muḥammad Ibrāḥīm al-Ḥifnāwī, *Dirāsāt uṣūliyyah fī l-sunnah al-nabawiyyah* (al-Manṣūrah: Dār al-Wafāʾ, 1991), 14.

65 For a collection of examples supporting this argument, see Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Shalabī, *Taʿlīl al-aḥkām* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahḍah al-ʿArabiyyah, n.d.), 23-34.

66 Al-Nasāʾī, "al-Qaḍāʾ," 11; al-Dārimī, "al-Muqaddimah," 23.

67 Al-Nasāʾī, "Ādāb al-quḍāt," 11.

to the Companions while solving their problems or answering their questions.

The Prophet also encouraged his Companions to make use of these ways and methods of the Sunnah to solve any kind of problem. For example, he said, "One who applies reasoning (*mujtahid*) is rewarded regardless of he is right or wrong,"[68] indicating that any conclusion based on *ijtihād* procedures will be worth rewarding. At the same time, his saying points to the value of *ijtihād* in any condition.[69] According to the Prophet Muḥammad, however, independent reasoning is valuable on the condition that it is grounded in knowledge.[70] Those who draw conclusions without grounding in knowledge will pay a heavy price for their misconduct in the Hereafter. Therefore, the expression "I apply independent reasoning" by Muʿādh does not signify an arbitrary comment but a comparison with a rule derived from the Book or the Sunnah.[71]

The *ijtihād* practice of the Companions matches well with the foregoing framework. They attempted to resolve any problem primarily and directly within the framework of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah. If there was no direct mention of a given problem in the Qurʾān or the Sunnah, they looked for a principle in these two original sources to establish some kind of causality or relation. They compared the problem in question with this principle and tried to establish an

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68 Al-Bukhārī, "al-Iʿtiṣām, 21"; Muslim, "al-Aqḍiyah," 15.

69 According to al-Ṣindī (d. 1138/1726), al-Nawawī reports that the *mujtahid*, on the first instance, is rewarded for reasoning and accuracy, while he is, on the second instance, only rewarded for reasoning. Therefore, it apparently supports the argument that reasoning is valuable in any case; see Abū l-Ḥasan Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Sindī al-Tatawī, *Ḥāshiyat al-Sindī ʿalá Sunan al-Nasāʾī*, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah, 2nd ed. (along with al-Nasāʾī's *Sunan al-Nasāʾī* and al-Suyūṭī's *Sharḥ* [*Zahr al-rubá fī sharḥ al-Mujtabá*] in *Sunan al-Nasāʾī bi-sharḥ al-Ḥāfiẓ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī wa-Ḥāshiyat al-Imām al-Sindī*; Aleppo: Maktab al-Maṭbūʿāt al-Islāmiyyah, 1986), VIII, 224.

70 See Abū Dāwūd, "al-Aqdiyah," 2.

71 Abū Sulaymān Ḥamd ibn Muḥammad al-Khaṭṭābī, *Maʿālim al-Sunan wa-huwa sharḥ Sunan al-Imām Abī Dāwūd*, ed. Muḥammad Rāghib al-Ṭabbākh (Aleppo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1932), IV, 165; Abū l-Ṭayyib Muḥammad Shams al-ḥaqq ibn Amīr ʿAlī al-Diyānuwī al-ʿAẓīmābādī, *ʿAwn al-maʿbūd sharḥ Sunan Abī Dāwūd* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1994), IX, 368; al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ al-sunnah*, X, 117.

"overcoming conviction" (*ẓann ghālib*).[72] The Caliph ʿUmar summarized this approach as follows: "Our opinions are merely convictions and strained."[73] Nevertheless, it is worth noting that a conviction attained through independent reasoning is not a simple estimate but expresses a certain intellectual effort and endeavor.[74]

Words by Ibn Masʿūd about the methodology to be followed in identifying the resolution for a problem are similar to the *ḥadīth* with Muʿādh. Ibn Masʿūd says,

> We lived such an age when neither nor opinions were asked nor our names were mentioned. Then, Allah brought us to the point you see. Now, whoever is addressed a question from now on should decide on the basis of the Book of Allah. If he cannot find the resolution in the Book of Allah, then he should decide on the basis of the Sunnah of Rasūl Allāh. If there is no resolution about such matter in both the Qurʾān and the Sunnah, then he should decide on them through resolution by the wise. None of them should ever fear or shy away. Indeed, what is *ḥalāl* and what is *ḥarām* is certain. There are uncertainties between the two. Then, abandon what makes you doubt and head for what makes you sure.[75]

Ibn Masʿūd addresses the hierarchy of evidence in general terms in his speech. Accordingly, he gives an order, "the Qurʾān, the Sunnah, and consensus (*ijmāʿ*)," and presents *ijtihād* as the fourth method to apply during inference (*istinbāṭ*). According to Ibn Masʿūd, a performer of *ijtihād* (*mujtahid*) will be more involved in this final option thanks to his knowledge and experience. Therefore, he should courageously address and resolve problems without hesitation. For this purpose, he refers to the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet[76] and tells the *mujtahid* to act in awareness about "certainty of what is *ḥalāl* and what is *ḥarām*." He recommends that they abandon more doubtful opinions and opt for more reliable ones. Moreover, Ibn Masʿūd promotes

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[72] Abū Zayd Walī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar: Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn al-musammá Dīwān al-mubtadaʾ wa-l-khabar fī tārīkh al-ʿArab wa-l-Barbar wa-man ʿāṣarahum min dhawī l-shaʾn al-akbar*, ed. Khalīl Shiḥādah (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1988), 573.

[73] Abū Dāwūd, "al-Aqḍiyah," 7; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrá*, X, 200.

[74] Al-ʿAẓīmābādī, *ʿAwn al-maʿbūd*, IX, 365.

[75] Al-Dārimī, "al-Muqaddimah," 23; al-Nasāʾī, "Adab al-qaḍāʾ," 11.

[76] See Al-Bukhārī, "al-Īmān," 37; Muslim, "al-Musāqāt," 107.

cautious behavior in doubtful situations, saying that "*ḥarām* shall overcome *ḥalāl* if the two are present together."[77]

In another speech, Ibn Masʿūd highlights the enormous responsibility and effort required for inference. If a *mujtahid* cannot attain a resolution on the basis of *sharʿī* references, Ibn Masʿūd encourages him to make a decision on the basis of personal experience and *fiqh* perception, saying, "If you are helpless, you make an explanation and do not hesitate." Then, he strictly warns him to express arbitrary opinions without grounding in any principle and underlines the necessity of grounding in a principle at every stage of *ijtihād*: "If it hadn't been for any of them (the Qurʾān, the Sunnah, the views of pious men, and your appropriate reasoning), do not be ashamed and avoid what is beyond."[78]

For Ibn Masʿūd, it is not sufficient only to make use of tools and methods provided by methodology while evaluating an injunction (*naṣṣ*). Indeed, he says, "Embrace knowledge before it fades away. Avoid concentrating on useless matters, falling into innovation and heading into compulsory comment. Your duty (in this subject) is to obey the tradition (which the Companions followed)."[79] Thus, he emphasizes that *ijtihād* does not mean making inappropriate comments on injunctions;[80] on the contrary, it means the conscious,

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77 Al-Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, VII, 199.

78 *Ibid*., VIII, 301; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, VIII, 187.

79 Al-Dārimī, "al-Muqaddimah," 23; Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd ibn Manīʿ al-Zuhrī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrá*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1968), IX, 170; al-Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, XI, 252; Abū l-ʿAbbās Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *al-Fatḥ al-mubīn fi sharḥ al-Arbaʿīn*, ed. Aḥmād Jāsim Muḥammad and Quṣayy Muḥammad Nawras al-Ḥallāq (Jeddah: Dār al-Minhāj, 2008), 495. Ibn Rajab (d. 795/1393) explains the expression "وَعَلَيْكُمْ بالعتيق" through "ما كان عليه الصحابة رضي الله عنهم", as the method, path etc. followed by the Companions. Given the context, we chose the word "tradition" for translation; see Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, *Jāmiʿ*, II, 171.

80 Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī makes the following assessment about the semantic framework Ibn Masʿūd might intend with the mentioned words: "*İjtihād* takes place in two manners about issues where no general or particular evidence is available. First method is to take into account the concepts and content of the matter and to analyse the injunction under which it should be included through a clear and accurate comparison. This is the primary task of *mujtahid* in determining *sharʿī* judgment. The second manner is overconcentration on unimportant aspects

appropriate, and accurate use of tools and methods provided by the methodology. With the final sentence, Ibn Masʿūd points out the methods applied by the Companions as the way to save *mujtahid* from such outrageous attempts. Thus, he instructs posterity that the methodological aspect of the Sunnah can only be learned through the practice of the Companions.

In addition to his sayings, some attitudes of Ibn Masʿūd provide significant data regarding his conception of *ijtihād*. In this context, we can consider the *ijtihād* about a woman who was married before the bride wealth was set and whose husband died prior to the wedding night. Ibn Masʿūd indicated that he had no knowledge about this specific example. Accordingly, he initially asked his respondents to consult another person. However, since they could not obtain a conclusion for a month, he said, "On this matter, I will talk grounding completely on my own reasoning. If my opinion is accurate, it comes from Allah; if it is wrong, then it comes from me and Satan. Allah and His Messenger are released from erroneous reasoning." Having heard the reasoning by Ibn Masʿūd, some members of the Ashjaʿ Tribe said, "We attest that in this matter, you have passed the judgment which the Prophet passed for another woman, called Barwaʿ bint Wāshiq, from our tribe." Thereupon, Ibn Masʿūd determined that his reasoning was compliant with the Sunnah, and he became very content.[81]

It is interesting that Ibn Masʿūd felt the need to say, "I will talk grounding completely on my own reasoning," before answering the question. In consideration of the entire narrative, he thus implies that his reasoning about the problem is grounded primarily on experience and reason. Therefore, he wanted to express that he would think

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to distinguish two similar matters or collective assessment of two dissimilar issues grounding on irrelevant distant similarities. Many *fiqh* scholars have opted for this wrong path." According to Ibn Rajab, the true method is deductions in line with the methodology of the Companions (see Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, *Jāmiʿ*, II, 171). It is not improbable that Ibn Masʿūd thought so. Indeed, he indicates that the Prophet, on three occasions, said, "هلك المتنطعون" "whoever chose falsity in words and deeds perished" (see Muslim, "al-ʿIlm," 7). Pursuant to this argument, Ibn Ḥajar quotes the abovementioned explanation by Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, mentioning certain imāms, and indicates that the words by the Prophet are compliant with the second and incorrect method given by Ibn Rajab (see al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, XIII, 267). Therefore, Ibn Masʿūd might be explaining these words of the Prophet.

81 Abū Dāwūd, "al-Nikāḥ," 33; al-Nasāʾī, "al-Nikāḥ," 69.

before trying to make a resolution to the extent of his capacity.[82] Ibn Masʿūd continued his words: "If my opinion is accurate, it comes from Allah; if it is wrong, then it comes from me and Satan. Allah and His Messenger are released from erroneous reasoning." Thus, he emphasized that he would display any necessary effort to identify the verdict of the Legislator (*Shāriʿ*) on the question, and any possible error would arise from his own weakness and shortage of knowledge. Indeed, the Qurʾān and the Sunnah include a judgment for almost every problem, either implicitly or explicitly.[83]

Therefore, Ibn Masʿūd ascribes to reason during *ijtihād* a role that reveals a judicial connection between an injunction and an occurrence and not one that invents judgments or conclusions. His pleasure in the coincidence between the judgment by the Prophet and his reasoning is due to the fulfilment of his objective in an accurate manner.[84]

Another issue about *ijtihād* is when the *mujtahid* should apply this method. Above all, the Companions agree that *ijtihād* cannot be applied to problems where the judgment is clearly indicated through injunctions.[85] Nevertheless, it is impossible for the *mujtahid* to know all injunctions. In the previous example, Ibn Masʿūd has opted for his personal reasoning about an issue for which he was unaware of the resolution by the Sunnah.

The attitude of Ibn Masʿūd toward the reasoning by Abū Mūsá al-Ashʿarī (d. 42/662) in a similar case provides remarkable data regarding the demonstration of various aspects of the matter. The narrative goes as follows: "Abū Mūsá al-Ashʿarī was asked about respective shares in heritage of daughter, daughter of son and sister of a deceased man. He replied, 'Half of the heritage belongs to the daughter of the deceased, and half belongs to his sister.' Thus, the daughter of his son was deprived of his inheritance. Abū Mūsá told the questioner, "Now go to ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd (ask him too); his response would be like my decision." They then brought up the matter

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82 Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ādam ibn Mūsá al-Athyūbī al-Wallawī, *Sharḥ Sunan al-Nasāʾī al-musammá Dhakhīrat al-ʿuqbá fī sharḥ al-Mujtabá*, 2nd ed. (Riyadh: Dār al-Miʿrāj al-Dawliyyah li-l-Nashr, 2003), XXVIII, 80.

83 Al-Khaṭṭābī, *Maʿālim al-sunan*, III, 213; al-ʿAẓīmābādī, *ʿAwn al-maʿbūd*, VI, 105.

84 Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Salāmah al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ mushkil al-āthār*, ed. Shuʿayb al-Arnāʾūṭ (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 1994), XIII, 351.

85 Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *al-Fuṣūl*, II, 319.

to Ibn Masʿūd, reporting the judgment by Abū Mūsá and declaring it was him who sent them. Ibn Masʿūd approved Abū Mūsá, saying, "If I do so, for sure I will be in perversion and go astray from the true path. In this matter, I will pass a judgment which was passed also by the Prophet. The daughter of the deceased takes half of heritage, the daughter of his son gets one-sixth and completes two-thirds of the amount. The rest is the share of his sister." Learning the answer by Ibn Masʿūd, Abū Mūsá al-Ashʿarī approved him: "You needn't consult me anymore as long as this wise man is with you."[86]

Abū Mūsá al-Ashʿarī conducted reasoning on a problem without knowing the previous judgment on a similar matter by the Prophet. He thought his judgment would be approved by Ibn Masʿūd. Nevertheless, Ibn Masʿūd shared the resolution by the Prophet and showed that Abū Mūsá passed a judgment about an issue that was not available for reasoning.

The foregoing expressions, which are clearly well chosen by Ibn Masʿūd, show how the latter assessed the situation from the perspective of Abū Mūsá and himself. Ibn Masʿūd did not make a negative remark about reasoning by Abū Mūsá, showing that the *mujtahid* may apply reasoning in line with general religious objectives and principles even though he is unaware of the relevant injunction.[87] This attitude does not contradict the abovementioned recommendation by Ibn Masʿūd that "*mujtahid* should not shy away from matters about which he is not well-informed, and should avoid what is beyond." Indeed, when the Companions had to make a decision on the basis of their opinion, they grounded it on a principle taken from the Qurʾān, the Sunnah or consensus, not only from reason.[88]

On the other hand, Ibn Masʿūd acted in awareness of his privileged position and disapproved of a decision by Abū Mūsá al-Ashʿarī to

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86 Al-Bukhārī, "al-Farāʾiḍ," 8.

87 Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Khalaf Ibn Baṭṭāl al-Qurṭubī, *Sharḥ Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī li-Ibn Baṭṭāl*, ed. Abū Tamīm Yāsir ibn Ibrāhīm (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 2003), VIII, 351.

88 ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Aḥmad al-Bukhārī, *Kashf al-asrār ʿan uṣūl Fakhr al-Islām al-Bazdawī*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh Maḥmūd Muḥammad ʿUmar (along with Abū l-ʿUsr al-Bazdawī's *Uṣūl al-Bazdawī*; Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1997), III, 221.

deprive the daughter of the son of the deceased of the heritage to avoid contradicting the explicit Sunnah.[89] This is why, according to Ibn Masʿūd, his declaration of an opinion in line with the expectations of Abū Mūsá despite his knowledge of the Sunnah is "perversion." Consequently, Abū Mūsá al-Ashʿarī abandoned his reasoning through the expression of his admiration for Ibn Masʿūd's level of knowledge.[90]

VI. Social Aspect of the Sunnah

On many occasions, the Prophet underlined the strong connection between the concepts of the Sunnah and community. For example, talking to Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān about future seditions, the Prophet stated that "a society to abandon the Sunnah will come up" and ordered them "to abide by Muslim community and their leader when such time arrives."[91] In another narrative, the Prophet talked about cases in which the sins of a Muslim shall be forgiven, adding the "association of Allah with others, violation of act and abandonment of the Sunnah" as exceptions. He was then asked, "O Rasūl Allāh! We understand why the association of Allah with others cannot be forgiven, but what does 'violation of act and abandonment of the Sunnah' mean?" Thereupon, Prophet Muḥammad replied, "Violation of act means to stand with a sword before a person whose hands you held onto and whom you obeyed. Abandonment of the Sunnah means leaving the community."[92] Ibn Masʿūd quotes some words of the Prophet about the religious consequences of leaving the community. On one occasion, the Prophet ordered, "Kill one who leaves the community."[93] Another time, Ibn Masʿūd saw the Prophet stand up and say,

> My word to the One except Whom there is no God, shedding the blood of a Muslim who says 'There is no God but Allah. Muḥammad is His

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89 Al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, XII, 17.

90 *Ibid.*, 18.

91 Al-Bukhārī, "al-Manaqīb," 25; Muslim, "al-Imārah," 51.

92 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, XII, 30; al-Nīsābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, I, 207. Al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) claims the ḥadīth is authentic; see Abū ʿAbd Allāh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿUthmān al-Dhahabī, *Talkhīṣ al-Mustadrak*, ed. Muṣṭafá ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā (along with al-Ḥākim al-Nīshābūrī's *al-Mustadrak*; Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1990, I, 207).

93 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-faqīh wa-l-mutafaqqih*, ed. Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿĀdil ibn Yūsuf al-ʿAzzāzī (Riyadh: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 1996), I, 416.

> messenger,' is never *ḥalāl*. There are three exceptions: One who abandons his religion and leaves his community, a married man who commits adultery, and one who will be slain against the life of another.[94]

Ibn Masʿūd always called the attention of his audience to issues such as principles for maintaining the Muslim community and the responsibilities of an individual toward the community. Thus, he laid special stress on social unity. During a speech, he claimed that "obedience" is the principal character of Muslim society, saying:

> O people! To obey and to act together with community is your responsibility. They are the rope which Allah orders us to hold. Whatever you find evil in community and obedience is better than whatever you will like in case you leave them.[95]

In line with his social responsibility, the Prophet primarily taught the Companions the principle of "commanding right and forbidding wrong." Indeed, Rasūl Allāh held a meeting that particularly focused on this subject matter, and approximately forty Companions, including Ibn Masʿūd, attended his speech. The Prophet stated, "Indeed, you are a community to achieve victories, booty, and conquests." Then, he warned, "Those who attain such days among you should fear Allah, order the good and forbid the evil" before adding, "Whoever invents a lie on my behalf should get ready for his seat in hell."[96] Thus, he clarified that good is what is considered appropriate by the order he taught them, while evil is heretical innovations forbidden by his orders. Accordingly, Ibn Masʿūd said, "The fact is, the Sunnah is what every community abandons first as to religion."[97] Ibn Masʿūd stated that a society in which good is not ordered and evil is not avoided will go astray from the path of the Prophet.

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94 Muslim, "al-Qasāmah wa-l-muḥāribīn," 25; al-Tirmidhī, "al-Diyāt," 10; Abū Dāwūd, "al-Ḥudūd," 1.

95 Al-Nīsābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, III, 83. Al-Dhahabī indicates the narrative fulfils the prerequisites stipulated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim; see al-Dhahabī, *Talkhīṣ al-Mustadrak*, III, 83.

96 Al-Tirmidhī, "al-Fitan," 73; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, VII, 220.

97 Al-Nīsābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, IV, 564. Al-Dhahabī considers the narrative compliant with prerequisites stipulated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim; see al-Dhahabī, *Talkhīṣ al-Mustadrak*, IV, 564.

In this regard, Ibn Masʿūd also quoted the following words by the Prophet: "The first event to start collapse of Children of Israel occurred when they came across a person (who made a practice of evil) and said to him, 'Man! Fear God and do not do what you are doing anymore, since it is not halal for you,' but then spent time and ate together with this man the following day. As they behaved so, Allah assimilated their hearts to one another (made their hearts dark and firm). Then, the Prophet recited the Qurʾān verse: 'Cursed were those who disbelieved among the Children of Israel by the tongue of David and of Jesus, the son of Mary.'[98] Then, he added, 'I swear to Allah that you shall order the good and avoid the evil. You shall prevent whoever does wrong and turn him back to truth and not allow him deviate from truth ever again. Otherwise, Allah shall assimilate your hearts to one another and curse you, as He did them'."[99]

On another occasion, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd associated the subsistence of the Sunnah on the social level with the qualities of scholars and rulers. According to him, if these classes and groups neglect their responsibilities, heretical innovations will become widespread and replace the Sunnah in the course of time. Consequently, the generations raised in such an environment will take the innovations of the Sunnah and defend them erroneously, leading to inevitable social collapse.[100]

VII. Political Aspect of the Sunnah

The Sunnah provides the framework for numerous important future problems. One of the most significant is the arrangement of relations between rulers and subjects in the wake of the Age of the Prophet. Ibn Masʿūd is a remarkable figure to help us understand this aspect of the Sunnah. Indeed, he is a person who was addressed by the Prophet himself as follows: "If I were to leave behind someone as a ruler without consultation, I would have left Ibn Masʿūd."[101] Ibn Masʿūd was

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98 Q 5:78.

99 See Abū Dāwūd, "al-Malāḥim," 17; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, X, 146; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, X, 44.

100 Abū l-ʿUlá Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Aḥwadhī bi-sharḥ Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, n.d.), VI, 374.

101 Al-Tirmidhī, "al-Manāqib," 107; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, II, 10; Ibn Mājah, "al-Īmān," 21; al-Nīsābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, III, 359.

so well informed about political and administrative dimensions of the Sunnah that he deserved such praise by the Prophet.

In terms of relations between a ruler and subjects, Ibn Masʿūd primarily focuses on the political unity of Muslim society and the avoidance of problems that may prejudice this unity. In this regard, the most important question is inappropriate deeds by those in power. In fact, the Prophet provided prospective warnings about this problem. According to a narrative quoted by Ibn Masʿūd, the Prophet said, "After my days shall come up some rulers who say what they haven't done and who do what they are not ordered to do,"[102] declaring the advent of some rulers who would abandon their responsibilities (in other words, the ruling approach established by the Sunnah) and would behave arbitrarily in line with their own will. In another narrative through Ibn Masʿūd, the Prophet said, "After my days shall come up rulers who make use of public assets and interests for their personal good[103] and shall appear some other affairs which you will dislike." The Companions asked him what he commanded to those to saw those days. In reply, the Prophet said, "Do your part and ask Allah for your due,"[104] encouraging Muslims to abide by their rulers.[105] Indeed, revolt against political authority may lead a society to unforeseeable catastrophes.[106] The Prophet twice refrained from answering a question about rulers who require their subjects to obey them despite behaving unfairly before, on the third occasion, explaining, "Listen and obey. Indeed, both they and you are held responsible for what you are responsible."[107] In the eyes of al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), the

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102 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, VII, 374.

103 Al-Nawawī points to the different meanings of the word "أَثَرَة" in the narrative before explaining it as "the exploitation of state treasury by rulers in line with their personal interests." Abū Zakariyyāʾ Yaḥyá ibn Sharaf ibn Mūrī al-Nawawī, *al-Minhāj fī sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj*, 4th ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1997), XII, 232.

104 Muslim, "al-Imārah," 45.

105 Al-Nawawī, *al-Minhāj*, XII, 232.

106 Al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, XIII, 6-7.

107 Muslim, "al-Imārah," 49.

understanding of obedience in the foregoing narratives is one of the most essential principles of Islam.[108]

During a speech in this context, Ibn Masʿūd expressed in person the abovementioned approach of the Prophet: "Indeed, the ruler represents a seat for which you are tested. If he is fair, his share is reward and your share is gratitude; if he is cruel, his share is sin and your share is patience."[109] On another occasion, Ibn Masʿūd gave a similar answer to a difficult question with regard to obedience to rulers. He was asked, "What would you say about a person who has girded his weapons, went for battle together with his commanders and then compels us to some affairs beyond our limits?" Ibn Masʿūd replied as follows: "I swear to Allah that I don't know what to say. However, the Prophet never held us responsible for something else until we fulfilled his previous order. Indeed, you will attain benevolence as long as you forbear from Allah."[110] Another time, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd expressed his general approach with the words, "It is bad to come into conflict (*al-khilāf sharr*[un])."[111] Practicing this principle in his deeds, Ibn Masʿūd abided by a reasoning of ʿUthmān even though he disapproved of it, and he even warned ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf (d. 32/652) about the same issue and made him obey the Caliph.[112] Again, when the Caliph ʿUthmān dismissed him from his post in al-Kūfah and called him to Medina, some told him "not to go; we will protect you and prevent any unfavorable thing from happening to you." Nevertheless, he refused these offers of help, saying, "Indeed, his right upon me requires my obedience. In addition, certain affairs and seditions might occur in the

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[108] Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥārith ibn Asad al-Muḥāsibī, *al-Makāsib wa-l-waraʿ wa-l-shubhah wa-bayān mubāḥihā wa-maḥẓūrihā wa-ikhtilāf al-nās fī ṭalabihā wa-l-radd ʿalá l-ghāliṭīn fīhi*, ed. Nūr Saʿīd (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Lubnānī, 1992), 64.

[109] Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Muṣannaf*, VII, 468; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, IX, 475.

[110] Al-Bukhārī, "al-Jihād wa-l-siyar," 111.

[111] Al-Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, II, 516; Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥabīb ibn Saʿd al-Kūfī, *Kitāb al-āthār*, ed. Abū l-Wafāʾ al-Afghānī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, n.d.), 30; Abū Dāwūd, "al-Manāsik," 7; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrá*, III, 205.

[112] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr ibn Yazīd al-Āmulī al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī: Tārīkh al-umam wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Turāth, 1967), IV, 268.

future. I would never like to be the first person to open the door for such occurrences."[113]

Expressions such as "Listen and obey" by the Prophet are understood by Ibn Masʿūd as the need to not revolt against final decisions by rulers despite adverse opinions, criticisms, and warnings and to take part with a ruler by appreciating obedience to the ruler as a religious duty. An example of this approach occurred during apostasy (*riddah*) events. A group that included prominent Companions such as Ibn Masʿūd and ʿUmar objected to the decision of war by Abū Bakr.[114] Nevertheless, upon persistence by the Caliph, they fulfilled their respective tasks. As an opponent, Ibn Masʿūd also obeyed the order and was within the crew that undertook the duty of protecting significant locations in Medina.[115] In the wake of the events, Ibn Masʿūd and numerous Companions closely witnessed how *riddah* revolts, the most serious problem faced by the post-Prophet rule, were resolved thanks to this method. Ibn Masʿūd admitted that the Companions who agreed with him were wrong and that Abū Bakr made a vital move for the survival of the Muslim community thanks to his persistent attitude against Ibn Masʿūd and others.[116]

Other narratives clarify what the Prophet meant by obedience to a ruler. For example, according to a narrative, Rasūl Allāh heralded the

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[113] Abū l-Ḥasan ʿIzz al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Athīr al-Shaybānī, *Usd al-ghābah fī maʿrifat al-ṣaḥābah*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad Muʿawwaḍ (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1994), III, 286; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, ed. Bashshār ʿAwwād Maʿrūf et al. (Beirut: Muʾassasāt al-Risālah, 1985), III, 300; al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣābah fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥābah*, ed. ʿĀdil Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd and ʿAlī Muḥammad Muʿawwaḍ (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1994), IV, 201.

[114] For relevant objections by ʿUmar, see Abū Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar ibn Wāqid al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-riddah maʿa nabdhah min Futūḥ al-ʿIrāq wa-dhikr al-Muthannā ibn Ḥārithah*, ed. Yaḥyá al-Jabūrī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1990), 48-53.

[115] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, II, 245; al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-l-aʿlām*, ed. Bashshār ʿAwwād Maʿrūf (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2003), III, 28.

[116] See Abū l-Ḥasan Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyá ibn Jābir ibn Dāwūd al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān* (Beirut: Dār wa-Maktabat al-Hilāl, 1988), 99-100; ʿIzz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-tārīkh*, ed.ʿUmar Abd al-Salām al-Tadmurī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1997), II, 201.

advent of rulers to object the *sharīʿah* criteria in the future. He wanted the strong to react with their power and the weak to react with their hearts. Moreover, he strictly warned them to tolerate the misdeeds of such rulers and to follow them. Nevertheless, when a Companion asked him, "Should we fight against them?" the Prophet replied, "No, as long as they perform *ṣalāt*,"[117] calling his community to patience in the face of a ruler who, in a sense, fulfilled his religious responsibilities, albeit at minimum level. In another narrative, Muʿādh ibn Jabal asked the Prophet, "O Rasūl Allāh! What would you say if we are ruled by persons who do not abide by your Sunnah and disregard your orders?" Muḥammad replied, "There shall be no obedience to one who does not obey Allah"[118] and said that obedience to the ruler is out of the question if he acts against the Sunnah.[119] Indeed, Ibn Masʿūd was aware that the misdeeds of rulers, if not duly reacted to in the right time, would be copied by the masses in the course of time. Consequently, the Sunnah would become innovation and vice versa, and the acknowledged (*maʿrūf*) would become the rejected (*munkar*) and vice versa.[120] Advising the community about the vital importance of warning the rulers for the survival of the Sunnah, Ibn Masʿūd showed his finger (as a sign of smallness) and said, "You will be ruled by rulers who will reduce the Sunnah to so little. If you leave them to their own devices, they will cause huge catastrophes."[121]

All the previous examples show the conviction of Ibn Masʿūd that the relations between rulers and subjects in the Muslim community can advance on the basis of absolute obedience. The only exception is cases in which rulers make requests that require revolt against Allah. ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd said, "Obedience to anyone is out of question in regard to revolt against Allah."[122] In such a case, the community

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[117] Muslim, "al-Imārah," 62; al-Tirmidhī, "al-Fitan," 78; Abū Dāwūd, "al-Sunnah," 31. For explanation of the ḥadīth, see al-Nawawī, *al-Minhāj*, XII, 243; 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), IV, 99.

[118] Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, XX, 442.

[119] For an example about the attitude of Ibn Masʿūd, see Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, VII, 325.

[120] Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *al-Bidaʿ*, 160.

[121] Al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, IX, 298; al-Nīsābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, IV, 564.

[122] Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Muḥallá bi-l-āthār*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ghaffār Sulaymān al-Bindārī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), V, 342. For ḥadīths constituting the basis for the words by ʿAbd

cannot abide by the rulers. He practically showed that "disobedience" cannot be construed as "revolt against the rule."[123]

Conclusion

The Companions' understanding of the Sunnah reflects the exemplary behaviors of the Prophet Muḥammad as well as his way of thinking. Indeed, the Prophet provided the Companions not only with attitudes to be imitated but also taught them the essential principles and methods of understanding the Qurʾān and the Sunnah while generating opinions or searching for resolution to a problem in any aspect of life. Thus, the criteria for resembling and obeying the Prophet appeared not only in behavior but also in thought. Ibn Masʿūd lived during the best part of the Age of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and took significant posts in those days. Indeed, this era was a continuation of the Age of the Prophet since both aspects of the Sunnah, particularly its intellectual dimension, were reflected in daily life at the ideal level.

Our paper initially proposes the necessity to review behavior-centered definitions of the Sunnah and to redefine the Sunnah to include thought. Such a definition takes into account the historical function of the Rightly Guided Caliphs era and will become more precise by means of studies that address the roles of jurisprudent Companions such as Ibn Masʿūd in the process. Thereupon, it will be understood that the principle of compliance with the Sunnah is also a prerequisite for methods to comment on and understand religious (*sharʿī)* injunctions.

According to the perception of the Sunnah by Ibn Masʿūd, the Prophet Muḥammad is a protected and accountable subject of Allah who is equipped with all kinds of knowledge. In this regard, the Prophet is the most reliable source to learn the Sunnah. The Companions were his chosen assistants during the Age of the Prophet and therefore the essential sources to learn the Sunnah for posterity.

On the other hand, Ibn Masʿūd particularly highlights the integrity of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah, a point meticulously emphasized by the Prophet himself. As a result of this approach, Ibn Masʿūd sees no

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Allāh Ibn Masʿūd, see al-Bukhārī, "al-Aḥkām," 4; Muslim, "al-Imārah," 39; Abū Dāwūd, "al-Jihād," 97; al-Tirmidhī, "al-Jihād," 29.

[123] For an actual example by Ibn Masʿūd on the issue, see al-Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, III, 80.

difference in authority between the Qurʾān and the Sunnah and can easily attribute Sunnah-based judgments to the Qurʾān. Whenever he came across any discourses that differentiated these two sources or only took the Qurʾān into account, he called the attention of his respondent to this point and tried to provide him with the proper perspective.

The awareness provided by the Prophet Muḥammad to his Companions regarding "the necessity of grounding all deeds and thoughts on a religious principle" is also reflected in the *ijtihād* understanding of Ibn Masʿūd. In the practice of Ibn Masʿūd, *ijtihād* includes religious injunctions and principles through this methodological form of the Sunnah for understanding and interpreting any situation and incident. Accordingly, Ibn Masʿūd applied reasoning by seeking a religious ground for the matter regardless of the severity of the problem.

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AN EVALUATION OF THE IDENTITY OF *SĀMİRĪ* IN THE QUR'ĀN

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Abstract

According to the classical Orientalist view, the Qur'ān copies biblical stories and, not infrequently, does so in an incorrect way. The Qur'ānic story of the Golden Calf, with the Sāmirī (Samaritan) character as the protagonist, is given to be an explicit example of this incorrect copying. This paper, however, considers the possibility that the incidents depicted in the story might have happened in a different way from what is described in the Bible. Thus it aims to examine the Biblical version of the story with reference to the Qur'ānic version, but unlike the classical Orientalist view, adopts an unbiased attitude. In this way, an explanation is offered of the etymology of the word "Sāmirī" indicating its possible relation to the concept of "firstborn" as well as to the genealogy of Joseph.

Key Words: Firstborn, Golden Calf, *'ijl al-Sāmirī*, Samaritan, Joseph, Aaron, Beloved Son, Sāmirī.

Introduction

Stories about the Israelites in the Qur'ān are similar to those in the Hebrew Bible in many aspects; however, they may also include dissimilar details. The "Golden Calf/ *'Ijl al-Sāmirī*" is one of the stories that is common in both sacred texts. According to two narratives in the

Ilahiyat Studies
Volume 9 Number 1 Winter / Spring 2018
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p-ISSN: 1309-1786 / e-ISSN: 1309-1719
DOI: 10.12730/13091719.2018.91.175

Torah, it was Aaron who made the Golden Calf. However, the Qurʾān names this person Sāmirī.

With the argument or prejudice that the Qurʾān was derived from previous sacred texts, certain Western researchers claim the existence of a historical "mistake" in the Qurʾānic narrative:

> Muḥammad seems to have understood most of the Jewish legend correctly, but the word Sammâêl puzzled him. […] But since the city of Samaria was not built, or at least called by that name, until several hundred years after Moses' death, the anachronism is at least amusing, and would be startling in any other book than the Qur'ân, in which far more stupendous ones frequently occur.[1]

Independent sources express various criticisms regarding the dating and accuracy of stories in the Bible. Nevertheless, certain Orientalists take the information in the Bible as truth when such criticisms or revisions are proposed by the Qurʾān. They attempt to evaluate the Qurʾān through the Orientalist perspective.[2]

The objective of this paper is to analyze the Golden Calf story in the Bible with reference to the word "Sāmirī/Samaritan" in the Qurʾān while avoiding any theological conditioning[3] or methodological contradiction.

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1 William St. Clair Tisdall, *The Original Sources of the Qur'ân* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge & New York: E. S. Gorham, 1905), 113.

2 Grounded in common stories in the Qurʾān and the Bible, certain Orientalists have written self-contained works arguing that these stories in the Qurʾān are derived from surrounding traditions. Abraham Geiger, *Judaism and Islám - A Prize Essay*, trans. F. M. Young (Vepery: M. D. C. S. P. C. K. Press, 1898); Tisdall, *The Original Sources of the Qur'ân*; Abraham I. Katsh, *Judaism in Islām: Biblical and Talmudic Backgrounds of the Koran and Its Commentaries. Suras II and III* (New York: New York University Press, 1954).

3 Salime Leyla Gürkan calls this approach "theological/ideological conditioning," which considers the Qurʾān as a "deficient or incorrect copy of the Old Testament just because the Old Testament precedes the Qurʾān and includes much more historical material." According to Gürkan, "from an objective approach one has to admit that, as regards the same stories, the Qurʾān sometimes provides information different from the one contained in the Old Testament, and even sets those stories against a different context or background. It is also a fact that on many occasions the narratives presented in the Qurʾān do not contradict the archaeological findings, though neither confirm them directly ... This surely does

In this regard, the Golden Calf stories in the Torah and the Qurʾān will be handled in a comparative way, and the views of Orientalist and Muslim scholars will be presented with regard to the reasons behind the differences between the two sacred texts.

The etymology of the word "sāmirī" will be analyzed to reveal the identity of the Sāmirī who made the Golden Calf. Then, we will address possible connections between the Samaritan who made the Golden Calf and Aaron. Finally, we will consider the question of whether the Sā-mirī could be the origin of the current name of the Samaritans.[4]

I. The Biblical Story of the Golden Calf and the Qurʾānic Story of *ʿIjl al-Sāmirī*

The Golden Calf story is told twice in the Torah.[5] The first story is narrated in the Book of Exodus upon the departure of the Israelites

not mean that the Qurʾān's narratives should be taken as pure historical information ... But it suggests the possibility that the incidents told in the Old Testament did actually happen, albeit in different ways, in different times, and perhaps in different places ... Thus, for scientific consistency, the narratives of the Qurʾān should be assessed by the same criteria used to assess the narratives of the Old Testament ... and one such criterion, before everything else, is archaeological-historical evidence." See Salime Leyla Gürkan, "İbrahim'den Ezra'ya İsrailoğulları Tarihi" (unpublished manuscript in preparation), January 10, 2018, Microsoft Word file.

[4] Samaritans, who are one of the oldest communities in the Middle East, are a small religious-ethnic group today. They publish a monthly magazine called *The Samaritan News* as well as the bimonthly magazine *The Samaritan Update,* an internet newsletter & archive regarding the Samaritan Israelites. According to *The Samaritan Update*, as of 2018, the number of Samaritan population is only 810. They live in two settlements, a mountain village called Qiryat Luza near Nablus and Holon near Tel Aviv. See http://thesamaritanupdate.com/, accessed May 25, 2018. For further information about Samaritans, see James Allan Montgomery, *The Samaritans, The Earliest Jewish Sect: Their History, Theology and Literature* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1907); Reinhard Pummer, *The Samaritans* (Leiden: Brill, 1987); Nathan Schur, *History of the Samaritans* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989); Benyamim Tsedaka, *Understanding the Israelite Samaritans from Ancient to Modern: An Introductory Atlas* (Jerusalem: Carta Jerusalem, 2017).

[5] Exodus 32; Deuteronomy 9:7-21. English translation, known as the New International Version, is used as the reference for quotations from the Bible. *The Holy Bible*: *New International Version* (Michigan: Zondervan, 2011).

from Egypt. According to the Book of Exodus, three months after leaving Egypt, the Israelites arrived in the Sinai desert and resided in front of Mount Sinai. Moses went up to Mount Sinai to meet God, whereupon the Israelites asked Aaron to make a god for them because they feared that Moses would not return from the mountain. Aaron melted the gold he collected from the Israelites and made a calf. When Moses returned from Mount Sinai and saw his people worshipping the Golden Calf, he broke the stone tablets in his hands. Then, Moses burnt the calf, ground it to powder, scattered it in water and had the Israelites drink it. Later, Moses issued a call for those who remained loyal to the Lord. The Levites gathered around Moses and slew three thousand persons who were involved in the incident.

The Book of Exodus gives a detailed account of how Aaron made the calf.[6] He carved it from the collected ornaments[7] like a master sculptor. However, he did not content himself with the calf and built an altar, and the people declared the calf their God and sacrificed to it.[8] Upon accusations by Moses on his return from the mountain, Aaron said he resorted to this method since his people were inclined toward evil and the calf, in a way, came into existence by chance. Thus, the first narrative (32:2-6) differs from the second (32:22-25).

The Torah does not state when the Golden Calf incident occurred in the wake of the Exodus from Egypt.[9] The Golden Calf incident is placed between the laws about the Tent of Meeting[10] (Exodus, Chapters 25-32 and Chapters 35-40) in the Book of Exodus. Thus, the Golden Calf story (Chapter 32) is placed between repetitive law

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6 Exodus 32.

7 Exodus 32:4.

8 Exodus 32:6.

9 According to Jewish tradition, the Revelation at Sinai is based on four principal visits of Moses to Mount Sinai, including a preliminary one. In the Torah, Moses went up Mount Sinai three times. See Mustafa Sinanoğlu, "Eski Ahid ve Kur'ân-ı Kerîm'de Sîna Vahyi," *İslâm Araştırmaları Dergisi* 2 (1998), 3-7.

10 This dwelling is given various names in the Hebrew Bible. It is called by a single word, such as tent (*ohel*), dwelling (*mishkan*), shrine (*miqdash*) or temple (*hekal*), or together with a description, such as the Tent of Meeting (*ohel moed*, Exodus 27:21), the Tent of Testimony (*ohel ha-eduth*, Numbers 9:15, 16:22; II Chronicles 24:6), the House of Testimony (*mishkan ha-eduth*, Exodus 38:21; Numbers 1:50, 53), or the Tent Dwelling (*miskhan ohel*). The sanctuary is also described with the possessive construction of the House of Yahweh (*Beth Yahweh*), Exodus 25:8.

passages, as if the testament is renewed in Sinai. The Book of Exodus ends with the statement that the Tent of Meeting was completed in the first month of year two. Incidents in the Book of Numbers follow the narrative of the Book of Exodus as of the second month of year two, and the Book of Numbers presents the account of the first census among the Israelites. According to the book, the Levites, the protagonists of the Golden Calf incident, were distinguished from other Israelites in this census and allocated to the service of God.

The Golden Calf story is told for the second time in the Book of Deuteronomy. The Deuteronomistic source[11] includes no information about the cloth of Aaron and his lineage;[12] therefore, the inclusion of the Golden Calf in the Book of Deuteronomy is interesting.[13] In this

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[11] Critics of the Bible argue that the Torah consists of multiple resources (Documentary-Supplementary-Fragmentary Hypotheses). According to these hypotheses, Deuteronomistic sources are among the references of the Torah. This source is restricted to the Book of Deuteronomy in the Torah. However, Martin Noth claims that a similar theme and style is used in the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings in the Hebrew Bible. Theologians call this series of sources Deuteronomistic History (DH). See N. Richard Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen, "Martin Noth," in *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (Kentucky: John Knox Press, 2001), 123.

[12] Deuteronomy 9:20-21.

[13] The Book of Deuteronomy does not mention any kohen post (priesthood) rendered exclusive to Aaron and his descendants. It does, however, touch upon Aaron's sin of the Golden Calf. According to Friedman, the Book of Deuteronomy includes the story because it establishes an analogy between Moses and King Josiah. Josiah destroyed Golden Calves made by Jeroboam, just as Moses burnt and scattered the Golden Calf. For Friedman, this story was used to show that Josiah was like Moses. Richard Elliot Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1997), 113. The stages of evolution of the history of the priesthood (Kohen), which started with Aaron in Jewish tradition, is questioned in our day. The most apparent indicator is the presence of a guild of priests called Mushites in addition to Kohens in the history of the Israelites. Western scholars attempt to rewrite the history of the Israelite priesthood on the basis of conflict between the Mushites and Aaronites. See Stephen A. Geller, "Priest and Levites in Hebrew Bible," in *The Wiley-Blackwell History of Jews and Judaism,* ed. Alan T. Levenson (Malden MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 51, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118232897.ch3; Michael David Coogan, *A Brief Introduction to the Old Testament: The Hebrew Bible in Its Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 115. Western researchers propose various opinions

book, Aaron is not clearly stated as the maker of the calf. It reads, "You had made the calf." Aaron's part in the incident is unclear; however, it is stated that he was somehow guilty and that Moses saved him from punishment. According to Deuteronomy, Moses burns the calf before grinding it to powder. Then, he throws the powder from the mountain into some water.[14]

The making of the Golden Calf is mentioned twice in the Qurʾān. The al-Aʿrāf chapter does not indicate who made the calf but states that the Israelites went astray by worshipping the calf and that Moses considered Aaron responsible for the event.[15] Nevertheless, the Ṭāhā chapter clearly indicates that the calf was made by some Sāmirī/Samaritan.[16] Unlike the Old Testament, the Qurʾān talks about the lowing of the calf. According to the Qurʾān, the Samaritan, who perverted the Israelites by making a lowing calf, was eventually interrogated by Moses, whereupon he confessed that he made the calf out of the precious articles he obtained at the time of the departure from Egypt. The Samaritan also said he benefited from the "track of the messenger" while making the calf. He was then dismissed and isolated from the community by Moses. In addition, the calf was burnt and blown into water.

about the center of temple where Mushites carried out their services. In this regard, there might be three priest guilds during the early Israelite period: 1) Aaronites, who were priests in Shiloh and Bethel and considered Aaron their ancestor; 2) Mushites, who were travelling priests and who considered Moses their ancestor; and 3) Sadducees, who were in charge of the Temple in Jerusalem and who considered Zadok their priest ancestor. Following the exile, the Sadducees made Aaron their ancestor, whereupon they became partners with the legacy of the Aaronites. We are in the process of publishing a paper about priest guilds during the early Israelite period. See Kürşad Demirci and Tolga Savaş Altınel, "Erken Dönem İsrailoğulları Tarihinde Rahipliğin Gelişim Sürecine Alternatif Bir Bakış," *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 58, no. 2 (2017), 31-61, https://doi.org/10.1501/Ilhfak_0000001471.

14 Deuteronomy 9:15.

15 Q 7:148-157.

16 Q 20:85-95. In light of differences between these two narratives in the Qurʾān, Bernard Heller asserts that the Qurʾān initially treated the story in line with the Torah before later claiming that the Golden Calf was made by a Samaritan. Bernard Heller, "al-Sāmirī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs, and G. Lecomte, new ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), VIII, 1046.

The principal difference between the Golden Calf stories in the Qur'ān and the Torah is the person who made the calf.

II. Comments on *'Ijl al-Sāmirī*

Classical Orientalists claim that the story in the Qur'ān was derived from available Jewish sources and see the traces of these sources in different narratives in the Qur'ān.

In *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān,* Arthur Jeffery analyzes the word "Sāmirī" and argues that the identity of the protagonist was inspired by the Samaritans in the Book of Hosea.[17]

Your calf is rejected, O Samaria,
My anger burns against them!
How long will they be incapable of innocence?
For it is from Israel.
An artisan made [the calf],
It is not God.
The calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces.[18]

In the passage on Sāmirī, Jeffery also allows for the argument by Sigmund Frankel. According to Frankel, the story of the Samaritan is taken from a Jewish Midrash that attempts to place the great sin of Aaron on a Samaritan. Ignaz Goldziher establishes the connection between the Samaritan sect and the Sāmirī in the Qur'ān on the concept of "not to touch." According to Goldziher, the Samaritan focus on avoiding blending with foreigners inspired Muḥammad to write the story. Abraham Geiger is another Orientalist whose argument is parallel to that of Goldziher. In Geiger's view, the story is created on the basis of Rabbinic sources. The words of Aaron, "*the people ... were about to kill me*,"[19] are taken from sources that relate the slaying of Hur and the fear of Aaron. Geiger also relates the Samaritan to Micah, who made an idol according to the Book of Judges, and states that the name "Sāmirī" is derived from Samuel.[20] In addition, Abraham Geiger uses the detail of the "lowing sound of [the] calf" to associate the story with

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17 Arthur Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1938), 159.

18 Hosea 8:5-6.

19 Q 7:150.

20 Geiger, *Judaism and Islám*, 131-132.

the lowing calf in Pirke De-Rabbi Eli'ezer.[21] According to this story, the angel of death called Samael, who entered into the calf and made the latter low, whereupon the Israelites thought the calf was alive. For Geiger, this story evolved into the version in the Qurʾān.[22] Heinrich Speyer finds this relationship to be a rebellion against Moses and claims that Zimri, the son of Salu, who committed adultery with woman from Moab, was transformed into Sāmirī in the Qurʾān. Haim Schwartzbaum uses the detail of the "lowing sound of [the] calf" in Rabbinic narratives about the lowing of Golden Calves made in the time of Jeroboam and considers them the basis for the story in the Qurʾān.[23] All previous researchers reinforced their arguments by establishing a connection between the different incidents since the lands of the Samaritans are not unfamiliar to calf culture.[24]

Muslim scholars looked for a certain historical Sāmirī/Samaritan to clarify the incident. According to some exegetes, the name of the Samaritan was Moses ibn Dhafar[25] or Aaron ibn Jafar.[26] However, the origin of these narratives is unknown, and the attempts to name the Samaritan by exegetes make the issue even more confusing. It should not go unnoticed that the mentioned names indicate that the Samaritan was the namesake of one of two leaders of the Israelites. In particular, the name "Aaron" is seen as an effort toward reconciliation between the Torah and the Qurʾān. On the basis of *'ya for nisba'*[27] at the end of the word *Sāmirī*, scholars have attempted to find an appropriate tribe for Sāmirī.[28]

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21 Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*, 159.

22 Geiger, *Judaism and Islâm*, 132.

23 Heller, "al-Sāmirī," VIII, 1046.

24 I Kings 12:25-33.

25 Mahmut Salihoğlu, "Sâmirî," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (*DİA)*, XXXVI, 78-79.

26 Heller, "al-Sāmirī," amended by A. Ateş, in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1988), X, 148.

27 It signifies possession/relation in Arabic.

28 Al-Zamakhsharī lists these narratives as below: Sāmirī means (1) an Israelite tribe, (2) a tribe among Jews, (3) a person from Bajrma (a village in the watershed of Balih stream near Raqqah), (4) a landlord/aga from Kerman. Abū l-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad al-Khwārazmī al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqāʾiq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa-ʿuyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-taʾwīl*, ed. ʿĀdil Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd and ʿAlī Muḥammad Muʿawwaḍ (Riyadh: Maktabat al-ʿUbaykān, 1998),

Certain modern Muslim scholars propose interpretations of the identity of Sāmirī in the Qurʾān.[29] Based on the evolution of Samaritan references, it is argued that the current Samaritans originate not from the city of Samaria but from Shomronim, which means "observer of law." Nevertheless, the secession occurred during the struggle to become High Priest between Eli, the fifth-generation grandson of Aaron, and Uzzi. Accordingly, some Muslim scholars' arguments are grounded on the mentioned argument. Nevertheless, the adoption of the foregoing claim is no more than a step toward refuting the allegation in the Hebrew Bible about the emergence of the Samaritans.[30] Indeed, the claim regarding the origins of the Samaritans in their own current sources is actually later than the emergence of Sāmirī in the Qurʾān. In fact, the Priest Eli of Shiloh lived toward the end of the age of Judges, much later than Moses.

In his *İslâm Dünyasında Sâmirîler: Osmanlı Dönemine Kadar*, Nuh Arslantaş discusses the possibility that the person who made the calf may have left for Samaria. According to Arslantaş, since the northern Israelites also subsequently made a Golden Calf, the people in this region might have been called *Samaritans*. In addition, Arslantaş establishes a connection between Sāmirī and the modern-day Samaritans and refers to al-Mawdūdī, who studied the origin of the word *Sāmirī* and concentrated on the word *Sumerian*. In the eyes of the author, the Akkadians, who were representatives of Sumerian civilization, may have gone to Egypt. During the rule of the 19th dynasty

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IV, 102 (Q 20:85). Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī claims that Sāmirī was a Copt. Abū Muḥammad Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī al-mushtahir bi-l-Tafsīr al-kabīr wa-Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), XXII, 101 (Q 20:85).

29 ʿAbdullāh Yūsuf ʿAlī, *The Meaning of The Holy Qurʾān, new edition with revised translation, commentary and newly compiled comprehensive index* (Beltsville, Maryland: Amana Publications, 2004), 781-782, footnotes 2605-2608.

30 In consideration of information in the Hebrew Bible, the name of the Samaritans means the owner of the hill where the city of Samaria was founded. This origin was long accepted as correct. The name was considered plausible also because modern-day Samaritans live in Samaria. The first objection to the story of the appearance of Samaritans came from modern-day Samaritans. Islamic Awareness, "'The Samaritan' Error in The Qurʾān?" http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/Contrad/External/samaritan.html, accessed November 4, 2015.

in Egypt, Sumerians were among the groups that left Egypt together with Moses. Therefore, the builder of the Golden Calf was a member of this community.[31]

In conclusion, Western researchers consider the narrative in the Hebrew Bible the benchmark for the stories and attempt to read the differences in the Qurʾān from this perspective. Nevertheless, considering the stories from the perspective of the Qurʾān not only complies better with critical logic but also provides a new opportunity to recognize the original version of the stories. Studies by Muslim scholars of the Samaritan problem, in contrast, are limited to two aspects of the question. They are interested in the identity of Sāmirī and his possible relation with today's Samaritans. Another important aspect of the Sāmirī problem, namely, the reason behind the attribution of the sin of the Golden Calf made by Sāmirī to Aaron, is left unanswered. Therefore, a three-stage approach including the origin of the word, the connection between Sāmirī and Aaron, and his relation with today's Samaritans seems to provide a better step toward a solution.

III. The Meaning of the Word *Sā-mar* and Two Possibilities for the Identity of *Sāmirī* in the Qurʾān

Both the Torah and the Qurʾān include words from Egyptian,[32] the best-known of which is "pharaoh." Meaning "Great House" in Ancient Egyptian, Pharaoh signifies the King of Egypt and is mentioned seventy-four times in the Qurʾān.[33] A similar word is Hāmān. This word has been a point of debate among Orientalists for a long time, and the Qurʾān has been accused of a historical mistake because of "Hāmān."[34] However, the claim by Muslim scholars that Hāmān was a title bestowed to the high priests of Amun is a more accurate argument than the acceptance of an imaginary protagonist in the Book of Esther as if

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31 Nuh Arslantaş, *İslâm Dünyasında Sâmirîler: Osmanlı Dönemine Kadar* (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2008), 50-56.

32 For words such as Moses, Yamm, Tabut, Zaytun, etc., see Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*.

33 Ömer Faruk Harman, "Firavun," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (*DİA)*, XIII, 121.

34 In the Hebrew Bible, Hāmān lived at the time of the Book of Esther – therefore during the time of Babylonian exile. The Qurʾān, in contrast, mentions him among the foes of Moses, like Pharaoh. Q 28:6, 8, 38; Q 29:39; Q 40:24, 36.

he were a real personality.[35] In our opinion, it is necessary to go beyond the limits the Hebrew Bible attempts to maintain find the meaning of *Sāmirī*. Muḥammad Asad, a converted Muslim exegete, provides a guide in his efforts to find an Egyptian origin/root for the word *Sāmirī* in his interpretation of relevant Qur'ān verses.[36]

Sāmirī may also be an Ancient Egyptian word and a construction like *Pharaoh*. Indeed, Ancient Egyptian does include a word that consists of *sā* and *mer* and means "beloved son."[37] *Mer* is a verb that means "to love, to desire, to want." It has many derivatives, such as *mer-t* (love) and *merut* (beloved woman). In addition, *merr* and *meri* are epithets used for many deities.[38] This name is also used among Israelites. For example, Merari, son of Levi, is thought to be named after this root.[39] Miriam is another name related to the root *merr*. It is argued that the name Miriam originates from Ancient Egyptian.[40]

The word *sā* means "son" and is used in various constructions.[41] These words can be used alone or in noun phrases. The chain possessive construction *"sāmar-f"* is used as a title for a high priest and funeral priest of Heru-sherif.[42]

Therefore, the word *sāmirī* in the Qur'ān may originate from the Ancient Egyptian *sā-mar*, which means "beloved son." In

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35 Şaban Kuzgun, "Hâmân," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (*DİA)*, XXXV, 437.

36 According to him, the word should be related to "shemer," which means "foreigner" in Ancient Egyptian. Muhammad Asad, trans., *The Message of the Qur'ān: Translated and Explained by Muhammad Asad* (Gibraltar: Dār-al-Andalus, 1997), 479, footnote 70.

37 Sir Ernest Alfred Wallis Budge, *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary: with an Index of English Words, King List and Geographical List with Indexes, List of Hieroglyphic Characters, Coptic and Semitic Alphabets, etc*. (London: John Murray, 1920), 584.

38 *Ibid*., 310.

39 James Meek Theophile, "Moses and the Levites," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 56, no. 2 (1939), 119, https://doi.org/10.1086/370531.

40 Alan H. Gardiner, "The Egyptian Origin of Some English Personal Names," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 56, no. 2 (1936), 194-196, https://doi.org/10.2307/594666.

41 Budge, *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary,* 583.

42 *Ibid*., 584.

consideration of *nisbah yā* (ي), which signifies the possessive in Arabic, *sā-mirī* may mean "a descendant of a beloved son, his adherent or representative."

In our opinion, there are several possibilities with regard to whom *sā-mir* signifies in the sense of "beloved son." First, this word may indicate a representative of the priest system of the firstborn. The idea that Sā-mirī is a firstborn son who is a priest of the Israelites fits well with the context of the Golden Calf incident. Indeed, the Golden Calf incident is one of the milestones in the Israelite history of priesthood. We know that following the Golden Calf incident, the Levites were taken into the service of God against the firstborn sons of Israelites. Their loyalty and heroics in the Golden Calf incident made the Levites the new holders of the priesthood. Why did God need such a reassignment? The previous priests, who consisted of firstborns, must have committed a fault to deserve such punishment and reassignment. Otherwise, it would be a unilateral decision to opt for this reassignment.

The details of the Golden Calf event are likely to support the foregoing interpretation. According to the Torah, the event of the Golden Calf was followed by a kind of civil war in which people went from door to door and were tasked with slaying their brothers, neighbors, and relatives and even became enemies with their true siblings and sons.[43] In a similar expression, the Qurʾān says "kill yourselves."[44] Therefore, since the maker of the Golden Calf is a firstborn son and is supported by firstborns, we can talk about a civil war that concerns every family. The killing of approximately three thousand persons (siblings, neighbors, and relatives) by the Levites in the Book of Exodus complies with this interpretation.

As a second option, the word *sā-mir*, which means "beloved son," can signify Joseph. Indeed, Joseph is the most beloved son of his father. Moreover, Joseph has obtained the right of the firstborn from Reuben.[45] Therefore, Joseph is suitable for both possible meanings of *sā-mir* because he is both beloved and the firstborn son of his father.

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[43] Exodus 32:28-29.

[44] Q 2:54. For a comment about the possibility that this may be a battle among Israelites, see al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, I, 269 (Q 2:54).

[45] The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (he was the firstborn, but when he defiled his father's marriage bed, his rights as firstborn were given to the sons of

Almost every detail in the story of the Golden Calf bears traces of Egyptian culture. The calf is reminiscent of the Egyptian deities Apis[46] or Mnevis,[47] both in the form of a bull. The use of gold in making the calf recalls Ptah, the god of craftsmen in Ancient Egypt.[48] In addition, the introduction of Aaron as a sculptor and the lowing of the calf recall Egyptian animation rites. The Egyptians had special sculpting methods as well as some techniques that made sculptures look alive.[49] Therefore, if we search for traces of Egyptian culture in the builder of the calf, we will inevitably note Joseph as the most suitable ancestor since his lineage has Egyptian origins because his wife was from this land. Joseph grew up in Egypt, where he married the daughter of a priest. Upon marriage, his name was also changed.[50] Consequently, Ephraim and Manasseh, who are descendants of Joseph, are matrilineal Egyptians.

This possibility seems even more probable since Jeroboam, who built Golden Calves for the second time in the history of the Israelites, was a member of the Tribe of Ephraim.[51] According to the Hebrew Bible, because the kingdom was divided in two following King Solomon, Jeroboam made two Golden Calves in northern Bethel and Dan to establish alternative religious centers to Jerusalem. The common feature of the calf made by Aaron and the two golden calves by Jeroboam is that both stories are used for the same purpose.[52] The

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Joseph son of Israel; so he could not be listed in the genealogical record in accordance with his birth right, and though Judah was the strongest of his brothers and a ruler came from him, the rights of the firstborn belonged to Joseph.), I Chronicles 5:1-2.

46 The Bull God is the living form of Ptah, the deity of the city of Memphis. George Hart, *The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Routledge, 2005), 29.

47 Sacred bull of Sun God of Heliopolis. Mnewis is also written as *mer-wer*. See *ibid*., 95.

48 *Ibid*., 130.

49 Budge, *Egyptian Magic* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1901).

50 Genesis 41:45.

51 I Kings 11:26.

52 The most striking similarity between Aaron and Jeroboam is that the sons of both are called Nafab and Abihu. For others, see Moses Aberbach and Leivy Smolar, "Aaron, Jeroboam, and the Golden Calves," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 86, no. 2 (1967), 129-140, https://doi.org/10.2307/3263268.

sin of the Golden Calf is an argument that bears traces of Egyptian culture, exploited by southerners against the Tribe of Ephraim who were matrilineal Egyptians.

In conclusion, the story of the Golden Calf relates that the person who made the calf was a representative of the priesthood system based on the firstborn, whereupon God took his post as priest and granted priesthood to the Levites since they abided by Moses on this occasion. Another possibility is that a descendant of Joseph under the Egyptian influence made a calf similar to Apis or Mnevis and thus perverted the Israelites.

IV. The Relation between Aaron and Sā-mirī

The Qur'ān indicates Sā-mirī as the maker of the Golden Calf, whereas the Torah shows Aaron as the perpetrator; this is probably because of a connection established between Sā-mirī and Aaron. The connection between Sā-mirī and Aaron during the struggle for power between the priest groups was used to show Aaron as the maker and perpetrator of the Golden Calf. Groups of priests against Aaron may have used this sin in their struggle as an element of anti-propaganda against Aaron and his descendants.

Both meanings of the word *Sā-mir* (a representative of the priesthood system of the firstborn son or a descendant of Joseph) are suitable for the establishment of a connection between Sā-mirī and the Prophet. Following the revelation in Sinai, the Levites were taken into the service of God. We understand that the priesthood among the Israelites in Egypt was based on the principle of the firstborn[53] since it was given to the first son of each family.[54] Presumably, Aaron was among the leaders of this community where the oldest son was the priest of the family.[55] These firstborn priests, led by Aaron during the

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[53] The Lord said to Moses, "Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether human or animal." Exodus 13:1.

[54] Numbers 3.

[55] According to the Torah, Aaron is the elder brother of Miriam and Moses and the firstborn son of Amram and Jochebed (Exodus 6:20; Numbers 26:59). Nonetheless, the beginning chapters in the Book of Exodus imply that Moses was the firstborn son of the family, and the name of his older sister is not given (Exodus 2:1-10). Therefore, it is controversial whether Aaron, Miriam, and Moses were siblings.

sojourn of Moses on Mount Sinai, were involved in the sin of the Golden Calf. Therefore, Aaron was held primarily responsible for the sin even if he did not make the Golden Calf in person. At this point, we can even consider that Nadab and Abihu, the first two sons of Aaron, were also involved in the sin of the Golden Calf. The Torah relates how Nadab and Abihu were sentenced to death by God during the early days of the Tent of Meeting for presenting an incorrect sacrifice. Nevertheless, the death sentence is too heavy for the presentation of an incorrect sacrifice.[56] Therefore, the true reason for the punishment of the two sons of Aaron may be their making of the Golden Calf. According to the chronology in the Torah, there were approximately six months between the Golden Calf event and the punishment of Nadab and Abihu. However, the assignment of the Levites, the heroes of the Golden Calf incident, as servants of God instead of the firstborn sons occurred approximately the same time later. The Levites replaced the firstborns only after the first census in the desert – in other words, approximately six months after the sin of the Golden Calf and a month after the punishment of Nadab and Abihu.[57]

In principle, there is a common point between the sons of Aaron and Sā-mirī in terms of "untouchability." According to the Torah, during their interment, Moses told his people not to touch their bodies and to carry them in their coats out of the camp.[58] The Qur'ān also talks about the untouchability of Sā-mirī, who was punished by Moses, in

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[56] Levites 10:1-20. To explain the death sentence on *Nadab* and *Abihu* and why they deserved the sentence, there are comments that they deliberately violated or undervalued the commandment of God; nevertheless, such arguments are insufficient to find a balance between the crime and punishment since the latter seems too heavy for the former. Ed Greenstein, "The Incident of Nadav and Avihu: A Mysterious Transgression or a Mysterious Deity?" https://thetorah.com/nadav-and-avihu-mysterious-transgression-or-deity/, accessed April 28, 2017.

[57] See Sinanoğlu, "Eski Ahid ve Kur'ân-ı Kerîm'de Sîna Vahyi," 3-7. In terms of this problem, the Revelation at Sinai includes chronological problems. Indeed, in the Book of Exodus, the duties of Kohens who adhere to the Revelation at Sinai are analyzed, where the Levites are tasked under the leadership of Ithamar, the fourth son of Aaron; see Exodus 38:21. Thus, according to the Revelation at Sinai, Ithamar is assigned as Kohen, skipping the two sons of Aaron – who were already slain.

[58] Levites 10:1-4.

the sense of damnation.[59] In brief, the grounds for the accusation of Aaron in this event may be that his two eldest sons pulled the Israelites into a great sin.

The second possibility, that Sā-mirī, the maker of the calf, was a descendant of Joseph, also allows for a connection between Aaron and Sā-mirī. We base this connection primarily on the assumption that Aaron may be a descendant of Joseph. Therefore, we refute the accuracy of certain information about the lineage and priesthood of Aaron in the Hebrew Bible.

The Hebrew Bible indicates that Aaron is a descendant of Levi, son of Jacob.[60] According to the Torah, Aaron is a Levite and therefore from the Tribe of Leah.[61] However, because the present Hebrew Bible was established under the political influence of the Tribe of Judah, namely, the descendants of Leah, this information about lineage may seem suspicious. Our doubts are reinforced by the efforts to erase the traces of the Tribe of Rachel from the history of the Israelites. The rivalry between the Tribes of Leah and Rachel – in other words, between the descendants of Judah and Joseph – is observable in every chapter of the Hebrew Bible.

For example, the Hebrew Bible includes a story that states that the lineage of Judah continues through his daughter-in-law.[62] It is noteworthy that this story is located in the middle of the story of Joseph.[63] The objective of this location is to emphasize the importance

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59 Q 20:97.

60 Exodus 6:14-27; I Chronicles, Chapter 6.

61 Genesis 29:31 - 30: 22; 35:16-18.

62 According to this story in Genesis, Chapter 38, Er, the firstborn of Judah, does evil before God and dies. His brother Onan becomes obliged to marry Tamar, the wife of Er. Onan prevents the birth of any children since the lineage will belong to his brother Er. God then kills Onan as well. Judah sends her daughter-in-law to her father's house to wait for his third son. Taking advantage of the death of Judah's wife, Tamar gets rid of her mourning clothes. She wears a veil as a disguise and sleeps with her father-in-law, whereupon she has two sons. Peres, the older son, becomes the ancestor of David.

63 Chapter 37 of Genesis begins the story of Joseph; however, Chapter 38 suddenly changes to the story of Judah and Tamar, before Chapter 39 resumes the story of Joseph.

of Judah and particularly of Tamar.[64] Tamar is introduced as a descendant of the famous priest Sam in Jewish tradition[65] to place her before the wife of Joseph. In our opinion, one of the reasons behind the inclusion of this story in the Torah is to emphasize that the sons of Judah are the descendants of a powerful woman.[66] This story is the account of how Tamar obtained her share even though Judah and his sons did not do their part. The Torah argues that the Tribe of Judah are descendants of powerful women such as Sarah, Rebecca, and Tamar. Joseph, the ancestor of the rival lineage, was married to the daughter of an Egyptian priest, whereas the sons of Judah are shine thanks to this powerful woman (Tamar).[67]

The Israelites are described as a slave community that lived in the suburbs of the Egyptian city of Pi-Ramses and worked on the construction of the pyramids.[68] Nevertheless, we know that some

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64 Even though, at first glance, this story seems about an incestuous relationship and criticizes Judah and David, the true message here is that the continuation of a lineage is valued over anything. In this regard, the continuation of the bloodline eliminates the evil in the relationship between a woman and her father-in-law.

65 Esther Blachman, *The Transformation of Tamar (Genesis 38) in the History of Jewish Interpretation* (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 239.

66 In our opinion, another reason is to seek a historical ground for Levirate marriage (a type of marriage in which the brother of a deceased man is obliged to marry his brother's widow).

67 Jewish myths try to transform this marriage of Joseph into a sincere one. According to the legend, Asenath, whom Joseph marries, is the daughter born of the seduction of Dinah, mentioned in the Torah, by Shechem. Asenath was adopted in an extraordinary manner (according to a narrative) or was found alone by a priest in Egypt (according to another narrative). Later, Joseph recognized this illegitimate niece and married her. Tamar Kadari, "Dinah: Midrash and Aggadah," in *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*, http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/dinah-midrash-and-aggadah, accessed November 5, 2015.

This myth includes a double meaning that we encounter in the stories of Judah and Levi. Does the story of such a marriage condemn or praise Joseph? Indeed, upon this marriage, the matrilineal lineage of Joseph is based on an illegitimate mother. Furthermore, the father of Asenath is a local of Shechem. In contrast, the marriage of Joseph turns into a marriage of uncle and niece.

68 "Certain researchers on early history of Israel concluded that only very few among old Israelites were actually slaves in Egypt." See Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* 82.

Israelites settled in Heliopolis, the city of Joseph,[69] and that the Israelites included people close to the court.[70] Therefore, the existence of the descendants of Joseph in Heliopolis is overlooked, as are the Israelites close to the court.

Likewise, there seems to be an effort to establish a kind of balance between the Tribes of Judah and Joseph during the settlement in the desert and the holy land. During the Battle of Rephidim against the Amalekites,[71] Aaron is one of the persons to keep up the hands of Moses, who was tired of praying, whereas the other is Hur from the Tribe of Judah.[72] Likewise, in the story of the twelve spies, Joshua, who

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[69] This city, also called *Iunu* and *On,* is currently located in a suburb of modern Cairo. See Margaret R. Bunson, "Heliopolis," in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt, third edition* (New York: Facts on File, 2012), 180-181; James P. Allen, "Heliopolis," in *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Ancient Egypt,* ed. Donald B. Redford et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), II, 88.

[70] Miriam is the leading personality among these. She expressed her opinion about finding a wet-nurse for Moses, who was taken out of the river by the family of the Pharaoh, and offered her birth mother as a wet-nurse. Miriam's access to the court and respect for her opinion seems improbable since she belonged to a community of slaves. Another notable personality is Korah. According to the Torah, Korah was a man who revolted against Moses with regard to the priesthood of Aaron. However, the Qurʾān sees Korah in a very different manner and unites with the Haggadah at some point. The Qurʾān introduces Korah as a very rich man from the tribe of Moses and says he was punished for impertinence due to his riches (Q 28:76-82). The description of Korah in the Haggadah as the Treasurer of the Pharaoh matches the identity of Korah in the Qurʾān. See Aaron Rothkoff, "Korah (In the Aggadah)," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. Fred Skolnik, second edition (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2007), XII, 298-299.

[71] Exodus 17:8-16.

[72] The name *Hur* is mentioned no more following the event of the Golden Calf. According to Talmudic comments, he was slain for opposing the Israelites during the event of the Golden Calf. *Sanhedrin* 7a. Hur has a very confusing genealogy and is associated with many persons, including Miriam, Caleb, and Bezalel. Hur is the son of Miriam and Caleb. Although this is not certain, it was probably the grandfather of Bezalel who built the Ark of the Covenant. See *Sanhedrin* 69b, *Sotah* 11b.

Even though he is introduced as a descendant of Judah, his closeness to Miriam and the Ark of the Covenant suggests the possibility of his belonging to another lineage. Because he is assigned by Moses as a stand-in and presented as one of those who lifted the hand of Moses, he might be a consequence of efforts to create

is the successor of Moses and a member of the Tribe of Ephraim, is put on par with Caleb from the Tribe of Judah. Unlike the twelve spies, only Joshua and Caleb have entered the holy land with a new generation. In these stories, Hur is rendered equivalent with Aaron, whereas Caleb is shown as equivalent with Joshua.

Saul, who is the first-ever king of the Israelites and a descendant of Benjamin, has never been respected as much as David. Together with David, the sons of Judah rose to power among the Israelites, and the Hebrew Bible presents the following religious discourses in favor of the mentioned power.

God rejected the tent of Joseph,
He did not choose the tribe of Ephraim;
But he chose the tribe of Judah,
Mount Zion, which he loves.[73]

The kingdom was divided as of the rule of Solomon; thus, the struggle between the tribes of Judah and Joseph took the form of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Following the Babylonian exile, the Tribe of Judah considered the Tribe of Joseph among the ten lost tribes; accordingly, the Samaritans, who claimed to be the descendants of Joseph, were not allowed to participate in the construction of the Second Temple. In short, the Hebrew Bible includes an effort to strengthen one of the Tribes of Leah against the sons of Rachel, to overlook the details and achievements of the sons of Rachel, and to make readers believe that the sons of Rachel are lost.

The change in the bloodline of Samuel, the final ruler in Israelite history, is the most significant example of this approach. There is an effort to introduce the latest ruler-Prophet Samuel as a Levite, even though he is among the sons of Ephraim.[74] Aaron might have also been transformed into a Levite in a similar way, as though he is actually among the sons of Ephraim.[75] Pursuant to this approach, Aaron is

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a personality from the lineage of Judah (!) as an alternative to Aaron. A similar possibility is plausible for Caleb and Joshua. See Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* 203-204.

73 Psalms 78:67-68.

74 Cf. I Samuel: 1 and I Chronicles 6:33.

75 The earliest mention of Aaron is in Exodus 4:14: "Then the Lord's anger burned against Moses and he said: "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see

shown to be of Levite descendant, whereupon the Tribe of Rachel will be completely erased from Israelite history.

It is meaningful that Levi, among the other sons of Leah, is chosen as the ancestor of Aaron. Thus, the inhabitants of Samaria are given a message by means of Levi, who is among the culprits of the massacre in Shechem. During the time of Jacob, the locals of Shechem wanted to be circumcised and unite with the Israelites. However, they were put to the sword in a massacre led by Levi and Simeon. The local Samaritans (in other words, the Tribe of Joseph) wanted to unite with the south following the Babylonian exile, but they were not allowed to do so.[76]

There is no strong evidence to prove that Aaron was a descendant of Joseph.[77] Nevertheless, a detail in both sacred texts about the Golden Calf story reminds us of the conflict between the Tribes of Rachel and Leah, leading to the conviction that Aaron might have taken sides with the Tribe of Rachel.[78] Both the Hebrew Bible and the Qurʾān talk in the Golden Calf story about a group of foes that intimidates Aaron:

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you." The identification of Moses' brother as Levite is another question. Indeed, this description is unnecessary for brothers; moreover, it may be proof that being Levite means being a prophet. Also see Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple-service in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1985), 68.

[76] In our opinion, the difference between the Tribes of Ephraim and Judah during early Israelite history is the Egyptian influence on the former. The revilement of Solomon toward the end of his kingdom or the accusation of Jeroboam for making the Golden Calf should be evaluated within the context of criticisms of Egyptian influence. The sons of Judah, who were self-enclosed, remained nomadic and thus had an anthropomorphic conception of God, disliked and criticized the sons of Ephraim, who were outward, under Egyptian influence and had a relatively more abstract conception of God.

[77] Modern-day Samaritans do not consider Aaron a descendant of Joseph; thus, our assumption seems weaker.

[78] The history of the Israelites highlights a dual separation between the Sons of Jacob. This duality can be presented as follows: The Sons of Ephraim vs. the Sons of Judah, farmers (settlers) vs. shepherds (nomads), northerners (Kingdom of Israel) vs. southerners (Kingdom of Judah), those influenced by Egyptian culture vs. those influenced by Babylonian culture, those coming from Egypt vs. those coming from Canaan.

> ... Moses saw that the people were running wild, for Aaron had let them run wild, to the derision of enemies.[79]
>
> Aaron said, "O son of my mother, indeed the people oppressed me and were about to kill me, so let not the enemies rejoice over me and do not place me among the wrongdoing people."[80]

In our opinion, the enemies mentioned by Aaron note the distinction between the Tribes of Leah and Rachel. Our presumption is based on the address by Aaron to Moses, "O son of my mother." All Israelites are descendants of the same father (Jacob). It is their mother who makes them different. By saying "O son of my mother,"[81] Aaron might be asking for mercy from Moses, who is a descendant of the same mother (the Tribe of Rachel) against the descendants of other children (the Tribe of Leah). More precisely, the *mother* in "O son of my mother" is probably no one but Rachel.

The same fact is repeated in the story of Joseph in the Qurʾān.[82] Asking his brothers to bring his other brother (Benjamin), Joseph does not say "bring me your brother" but "your paternal half-brother."[83] As the story goes, the youngest brother (Benjamin) is accused of theft, whereupon the other sons of Jacob say, "His brother had also stolen," meaning Joseph but not themselves. These details can be interpreted as follows. Contrary to common belief, Aaron and Moses are descendants of Rachel. In the story of the Golden Calf, Aaron addresses Moses as "O son of my mother" to take refuge in the family of Rachel against the sons of Leah.[84]

This call of Aaron to Moses can be interpreted in another manner. More precisely, Aaron might have meant Leah with the word *mother*. In this case, the chapter notes the fact that Aaron and Moses are

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79 Exodus 32:25

80 Q 7:150.

81 Q 20: 94; Q 7:150.

82 Joseph 12:77.

83 Joseph 12:59.

84 This interpretation presents a new approach to Qurʾān verses that propose that Moses and Aaron are brothers. Contrary to the Torah, the Qurʾān gives no details about the brotherhood of Aaron and Moses. There is no information about the identity of their mother or father or the basis for their brotherhood. Therefore, Aaron and Moses may be maternal half-brothers, or the word "brother" might have been used for them since they were from the same tribe.

descendants of Leah. Indeed, this comment complies with the genealogies in the Hebrew Bible. However, the accusation of the northern Israelite Kingdom for the Second Golden Calf seems to position Aaron closer to the descendants of Rachel. Certain Western scholars claim that the Tribe of Joseph were the only Israelites leaving Egypt and that this bloodline united with other Israelites in Canaan; this approach is also suitable for the argument that Aaron was a descendant of Joseph.[85]

It is possible to make similar uncertain deductions about Aaron's blood ties with Joseph. Beyond such deductions, the connection between Aaron and the lineage of Joseph is essentially established by Shiloh,[86] the first temple hill where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. Therefore, it became sacred to the Israelites long before the sanctuary in Jerusalem. This temple was administrated by Aaronite priests just like Bethel. Therefore, the Sadducee[87] priests in Jerusalem have

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85 In *Musa ve Yahudilik*, Hayrullah Örs also indicates that the Israelites in Exodus are exclusively the House/People of Joseph. Örs thinks that the Sons of Joseph and the Kohens from Egypt came together with the communities who spoke the same language on the east and west of the Jordan River and formed the Israelites as we know them. For Örs, this is why Joshua had the Israelites circumcised after passing the Jordan River. According to him, those from Egypt and the locals influenced one another, whereupon they began to call God Jehovah, after a deity of one of these tribes. See Hayrullah Örs, *Musa ve Yahudilik*, 4th ed. (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2000), 155.

86 Shiloh is located between Jerusalem and Shechem (Nablus) where Mount Gerizim, the holy mountain for the Samaritans, exists. Presumably, it is the modern archaeological site called Khirbet Seilun.

87 Zadok is the mystical priest of the time of David and Solomon. He was a priest together with Aviathar, another priest from Shiloh, under the rule of David. However, because Aviathar was exiled during the period of Solomon, Zadok was consecrated by the King and became the high priest of the Temple. Ezra bases the genealogy of Zadok on Aaron (Ezra 7:1-6), but his past is actually unknown. Wellhausen thinks Zadok was a local of Jerusalem and therefore a Jebusite; see Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, trans. J. Sutherland Black and Allan Menzies (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885), 79. Mystery about Zadok includes his lineage as well. In *Missing Priest*, Alice Hunt claims that the term "Sons of Zadok/Zadokites" is pure fabrication. According to her, in the history of Kohens, we can talk about no dynasty prior to Onias, whose rights were extorted by the Hasmoneans. The greatest evidence of this fact is the absence of any information about the Sons of Zadok in pre-exile sources even though they had

ascribed the sin of the Golden Calf, which was actually made by Sāmirī of Joseph's lineage, to the Aaronic priests who were in charge of the Josephite temple[88] (in the land of the Tribe of Joseph) and their ancestor Aaron as an inevitable consequence of the struggle between the rival groups of priests.

The Torah insistently indicates that the priesthood of Aaron began on the piedmonts of Sinai. The Torah does not mention the priesthood of Aaron before his consecration as Kohen. Nevertheless, we have some doubts about this problem. Certain researchers, who look for the roots of Moses and monotheistic beliefs in Egyptian culture,[89] propose assertive claims on the question. According to them, Moses started a rebellion as a priest, called Osarsiph, from Heliopolis and realized the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt.[90] Pursuant to the same point of view, both Aaron and Miriam are well-educated Egyptians. Aaron is a member of the guild of priests in Egypt; this is why he became the first priest of the Israelites. Likewise, Miriam sings in Exodus since she was a former singing nun in the temple.[91]

In our opinion, it is not accurate to claim that the Israelites were a people completely isolated from Egyptian culture and traces; likewise, it is inaccurate to argue that all of the leaders who led the Israelites out of Egypt were Egyptians. Indeed, the quest for Egyptian roots for Moses is based on the effort to confine the monotheistic belief of Israelites to Egypt. In light of this effort, there is a counter-effort to refuse any religious experience in Egypt and to accept the revelation at Sinai as the beginning of the religion of the Israelites. In fact,

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administrated the Temple since the time of David. Alice Hunt, *Missing Priests: The Zadokites in Tradition and History* (London: T & T Clark, 2006).

88 Donald G. Schley, *Shiloh: A Biblical City in Tradition and History* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 187, 197.

89 The famous Egyptologist Jan Assmann asserts that Moses might be an Egyptian. See Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

90 The Egyptian historian Manetho claims that Moses was an Egyptian priest. The work by Manetho on the history of Egypt has not reached our day; his views have been transferred by means of the works of Josephus, the famous Jewish historian; see Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion*, in *Josephus Complete Works,* trans. William Whiston (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1970), 1.26.

91 Budge, *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 41-42.

however, the Israelites did have religious experiences in Egypt in the time of Joseph. At this point, we believe that Heliopolis was the binding element between Joseph and Moses. Among the Israelites, the existence of persons under Egyptian influence or who are matrilineal Egyptians explains the origin of the Egyptian-based names of the so-called Levites, Aaron above all.[92]

The following words, addressed to Eli in the Book of Samuel, give a hint of the priesthood of Aaron, the ancestor of Eli, in Egypt:[93]

> 27. Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "This is what the Lord says: 'Did I not clearly reveal myself to your *ancestor's family* when they were in Egypt under Pharaoh? 28. I chose your ancestor out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod in my presence. I also gave your ancestor's family all the food offerings presented by the Israelites. 29. Why do you scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?'"[94]

Among the Israelites, Aaron is a descendant of a lineage that bears Egyptian traces and served as priest in Egypt. When Sā-mirī, another descendant of the same bloodline, made the Golden Calf, the blame was put on his kin Aaron. In this context, a detail in the Qurʾān may lead us to the following prediction regarding why the sin of Sā-mirī is identified with Aaron. In the Qurʾān, the word "messenger" in the expression *track of the messenger* by Sā-mirī as an inspiration for making of the calf might refer to Aaron. Islamic sources attempt to relate the identity of this messenger through a narrative from Ibn ʿAbbās. According to the narrative, the messenger signifies Gabriel. Most exegeses indicate even today that the *track of the messenger*

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92 Ahira, Assir, Hori, Hur, Merari, Miriam, Phineas, Puah, and Putiel are examples of these names. James K. Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 222-226.

93 On the contrary, Wellhausen considers Eli a Moses follower and thinks that this expression includes a reference to the priesthood of Moses in Egypt. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, 79.

94 I Samuel 2:27-29.

means the footprints of his horse.[95] Recently, there have been comments that the messenger signifies Moses.[96] Nonetheless, such arguments fail to notice the dialogue between Moses and Sā-mirī. Aaron, in fact, is the only messenger in whose absence such talk may occur. The use of Aaron's knowledge in making the Golden Calf might have led to the reference to him about this sin.

In short, Aaron might have been accused because of the offense committed by his sons, for his inability to prevent the making of the Golden Calf as a leader, or even for providing the knowledge (track) for the making of the calf. In terms of the history of the Israelite priesthood, Aaron is a leader who is praised by his supporters and reviled by his foes. Most probably, the Sadducees, who accepted Aaron as their ancestor following the exile, made him their first high priest (Kohen), whereas the rival priest group that praises Moses or those from Jerusalem tried to discredit him as the maker of the Golden Calf.

As a result, there is a connection between Sā-mirī and Aaron in terms of the firstborn sonship and descendance of Joseph. Aaron, one of the leaders of the firstborn system, was acting for Moses when the Israelites committed the sin of the Golden Calf; accordingly, Aaron was held responsible for the offense. Moreover, the sin was put on the shoulders of Aaron because of the role of his first sons Nadab and

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95 Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr ibn Yazīd al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī al-musammá Jāmīʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Cairo: Dār Hijr, 2001), XVI, 149-150 (Q 20:96).

96 See Asad, *The Message of the Qurʾān*, 480-481, footnote 82. There is an interesting narrative quoted from al-Bīrūnī. According to a narrative by Jewish Yaʿqūb ibn Mūsá al-Niqrisī, the "track of the messenger" is the picture of calf that Moses drew to take the coffin of Joseph out of the Nile. While leaving Egypt, Moses drew a picture of a fish to take the casket of Joseph out of the Nile; he wrote something on the paper before reading and throwing it into water. Then, he drew a calf, wrote something and read it; he was about to put the paper into water as casket surfaced, and he left the paper aside. However, one of the attendants took the paper. According to the narrator, this is the track of the messenger is this paper. Abū l-Rayḥān Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Bīrūnī, *al-Āthār al-bāqiyah ʿan al-qurūn al-khāliyah* [*Chronologie Orientalischer Völker*], trans. C. Eduard Sachau (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1923), 276. The narrative does not indicate who took the paper during the removal of the casket of Joseph. Later, however, Aaron is shown as the one who took it. This fact may be a sign of certain probable changes in Jewish sources with regard to the builder of the Golden Calf.

Abihu in the incident and their punishment of death by God. Another point of connection is the possibility that Aaron, like Sā-mirī, is a descendant of the Sons of Joseph. Even though there is no certain proof of this, we may draw such a conclusion since we encounter traces of historical conflict between the Tribes of Rachel and Leah in the Golden Calf incident.

V. Possible Bloodline of the Beloved Son: Modern-day Samaritans

The meaning "beloved son" and/or "firstborn son" of the word *Sā-mirī* includes certain aspects that are applicable for today's Samaritans. First, Joseph, who is the beloved and firstborn son of Jacob, has a privileged place in the heart of Samaritans. Modern-day Samaritans believe that they are descendants of the Prophet Joseph. Jews claim that following Babylonian exile, ten Israelites tribes were lost;[97] nevertheless, Samaritans have accepted Joseph as their ancestor among the twelve ancestors of the Israelites. Current Samaritans – except for Kohens, whom they consider of Levite descent – claim that they are descendants of Joseph through the sons of Ephraim and Manasseh.[98] This argument is supported by the fact that their land, Samaria, is given to the descendants of Joseph during distribution of promised lands among the Israelites. In genealogical terms, the conflict between the Samaritans and the Jews transformed into conflict between the descendants of Judah and Ephraim (the son of Joseph who was blessed as the firstborn).

Like his father Joseph, Ephraim, the prominent ancestor of the Samaritans, is blessed as the firstborn son even though he actually was not;[99] therefore, the name of the Samaritans might rather signify

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[97] II Kings 15:29; 17:6; 18:11. For Apocryphal books and Haggadic comments, see Joseph Jacobs, "Tribes, Lost Ten," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, XII, 249-253.

[98] Like the Jews, modern-day Samaritans include those who believe they are descendants of Benjamin; however, there have been no Samaritan sons of Benjamin since 1892. Monika Schreiber, *Comfort of Kin: Samaritan Community, Kinship, and Marriage* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 24-34, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004274259_010.

[99] Joseph is the firstborn child of his mother Rachel but the eleventh child of his father Jacob. Deuteronomy 21:15-17. The Zohar presents an interesting comment on the issue: If Laban had not deceived Jacob, Joseph would actually have been the

"beloved son." According to the Torah, Joseph brought his sons Ephraim and Manasseh before his father Jacob for consecration. He placed Manasseh and Ephraim on the right and left of his father, respectively, pursuant to birth order. Nevertheless, as Jacob extended his hand crosswise to begin consecration, Joseph thought his father was mistaken and tried to intervene. Jacob, however, insisted he was aware of what he was doing and consecrated Ephraim as the firstborn son.[100] Therefore, modern-day Samaritans are descendants of Joseph, the "beloved son" of Jacob, and of Ephraim, who is also consecrated as the "firstborn son"[101] by Jacob. Thus, Samaritans have an ancestor who meets both meanings of the word *sā-mar*.

Today, Samaritans believe that the tomb of the Prophet Joseph is located in the valley between Mount Gerizim, the holy mountain for Samaritans, and Mount Ebal.[102] According to the Book of Joshua, the remains of Joseph were brought from Egypt and buried in Shechem, the holy city of the Samaritans.[103] Samaritans believe that the Temple was built not in Jerusalem[104] but on Mount Gerizim in Shechem.[105]

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firstborn son. Jacob married Leah because he mistook the latter for Rachel, whereupon Reuben was born. Zohar: Vayechi 29:262.

100 Genesis, Chapter 48.

101 In the Book of Jeremiah, Ephraim is also identified as the firstborn son of God: "For I am the father of Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn son." (31:19)

102 Alan D. Crown, Reinhard Pummer, and Abraham Tal, eds., *A Companion to Samaritan Studies* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1993), 207.

103 "And Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. This became the inheritance of Joseph's descendants." Joshua 24:32.

104 According to the Samaritans, God ordered David to build the Temple in Nablus, but David disobeyed and constructed the Temple in Jerusalem. This is why Samaritans call Jerusalem "The Cursed City." They also claim that God talked to Moses on Mount Nablus. Samaritans end their common history with Jews at the time of Eli, during the age of Judges; therefore, they reject the holiness of Jerusalem and feel hatred toward David, who built the Temple in Jerusalem instead of Shechem. See Arslantaş, *İslâm Dünyasında Sâmirîler,* 51.

105 The Hebrew Bible relates that Abraham settled for a while in the oak forest of More in Shechem (Genesis 12:6). Jacob bought a tract from Hamor, the father of Shechem, and built an altar (Genesis 33:20). This tract in Shechem was given by Jacob to Joseph. It is also indicated that during his sojourn in Hebron, Jacob sent Joseph to Shechem to bring word of his brothers (Genesis 37:12).

According to the Samaritan faith, Joshua constructed a temple on Mount Gerizim in the second year of the arrival of the Israelites in Canaan[106] and placed the Ark of the Covenant in this temple. Eli, a descendant of Aaron's son Ithamar, broke with Uzzi, the legitimate Kohen in Shechem, and this secession produced the holiness of Jerusalem. Shechem regained importance when it was made the administrative center of the northern Israelite kingdom founded by ten tribes led by Jeroboam; thus, the temple in the city was renewed.[107] This temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. There are debates about the exact date of the second construction. Nevertheless, the temple on Mount Gerizim was devastated once again by John Hyrcanus, the famous ethnarch of the Hasmoneans.[108] The Tomb of Joseph, the holy site of Samaritans near Mount Gerizim, was also considered important by Christians. The Roman Emperor Theodosius II (408-450) forced the Samaritans to open the grave of the Prophet Joseph and sent his remains to Byzantium.[109]

The motif of Joseph is still extant in the faith of modern-day Samaritans. The Messiah, named Taheb, will be a descendant of Joseph according to Samaritan belief.[110] The name of this restorer prophet,

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[106] The Book of Joshua tells the story as follows: "On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he reaffirmed for them decrees and laws. And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God. Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak near the holy place of the Lord. "See!" he said to all the people. "This stone will be a witness against us. It has heard all the words the Lord has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God" (24:25-27).

[107] I Kings 13:25.

[108] Nuh Arslantaş, *İslâm Dünyasında Sâmirîler*, 116.

[109] *Ibid*., 44. Some Muslims think that the grave belongs to Sheikh Yūsuf al-Dīk, a wise man who lived in the Middle Ages.

[110] Arslantaş (2008, 119) indicates that Taheb is to be a descendant of Joseph and Moses. However, it would be controversial to declare that Taheb was a descendant of both Joseph and Moses. Indeed, modern-day Samaritans believe that Moses and Aaron are descendants of Levi. A manual published by Samaritans emphasizes the genealogy of Joseph with regard to the savior; thus, Taheb cannot be a Kohen but a Prophet, just like Moses. The description of Taheb at the end of the manual eliminates any confusion: Taheb will be a descendant of Joseph or Levi, it says. See Shomron & Osher Sassoni, *The Samaritan Israelites and Their Religion: Educational Guide, vol. 1* (Holon, Israel: n. p., 2004), 30, available at

based on a reference to Deuteronomy 18:18,[111] is unknown; nevertheless, he is believed to be someone like the Prophet Moses. Taheb will come from the East, rule on Mount Gerizim, restore the former glory of the Israelites and bring back the Ark of the Covenant, which was lost during the time of Uzzi. Upon the arrival of Taheb, the age of Fanuta (Displeasure) will come to an end, and the age of Rahuta (Pleasure and Peace) will be restored.[112] Unlike the Jews, the Samaritans do not consider David the everlasting ruler and identify the Holy Kingdom with the rule of the Prophet Joseph in Egypt. According to Samaritan sources, Taheb will be a prophet and a powerful king, just like Moses, and will rule the entire world with his kingdom. Under his rule, Samaritan Hebrew will become the universal language of the world. When Taheb dies, he will be buried on Mount Gerizim, next to Joseph.

In short, modern-day Samaritans might be called "Sā-mirī" in consideration of their ancestors, holy sites and messianic faith, and with reference to Joseph (and also Ephraim), who is the "beloved" and is made the "firstborn" son.

Modern-day Samaritans may also be related to the meaning "firstborn son" of the word *Sā-mir*. Nevertheless, we will not claim that the privilege of being the firstborn son was adopted by the Jews after the Samaritans. Indeed, the privileged status of the firstborn son was already in place in the period of the ancestors, as observed in the example of the Prophet Abraham.[113] Furthermore, it is based on a mindset that is present in other communities outside the relevant region.[114] Moreover, following Babylonian exile, the Jews revised

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http://shomron0.tripod.com/educationalguide.pdf. It is coherent that Father Raba is likened to Taheb even though he is actually a Kohen.

111 "I will raise up for them a prophet like you among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him."

112 Sassoni, *The Samaritan Israelites*, vol. 1, 4-5, 13.

113 With regard to the sacrifice by the Prophet Abraham of his son to God, see Ömer Faruk Harman, "Hz. İbrahim, Hz. İsmail ve Kurban," in *1. Hz. İbrahim Sempozyumu Bildirileri*, ed. Ali Bakkal (Şanlıurfa: n.p., 2007), 155.

114 Ömer Hilmi Budda, "Sami Dinlerde Kurbanın Mahiyet ve Faaliyeti - IV: İlk Mahsulat Kurbanı," *Darülfünun İlahiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 4, no. 17 (1930), 57-71; Fara: The firstborn calf of a camel. In the Age of Ignorance (*Jāhiliyyah*), the heretics sacrificed camels to their idols, saying, "The milk of his mother will become more

ancestral stories in the Torah on the basis of firstborn sonship pursuant to the "Holy Seed" approach,[115] and almost all of these stories are included in the current Samaritan Torah.[116] Consequently, their inclusion prevents the establishment of a complete connection between modern-day Samaritans and *Sā-mar*, in the sense of "firstborn son." On the grounds of the struggle for the seat of Chief Kohen, we will call modern-day Samaritans as "supporters of the firstborn son."

According to Samaritan sources, Eli, charged in Shiloh, disclaimed Uzzi, the legal Chief Kohen of the Temple on Mount Gerizim. A separation then emerged between the Israelites.[117] Eli went to Shiloh together with his supporters and became the Kohen, which led to the disintegration of the Israelites. According to the Samaritans, Uzzi should have become the Chief Kohen as the son of the former Chief Kohen Bukki; nevertheless, because Eli rejected this process, he caused disaccord. In the eyes of the Samaritans, the legitimate Chief Kohen was not Eli but Uzzi since the latter is a descendant of Eleazar, son of Aaron. Eli, in contrast, is a descendant of Aaron's second (fourth) son Ithamar. Therefore, according to Samaritans, the descendance of Uzzi from Eleazar, the firstborn son (the third and oldest surviving son) of Aaron, is a reason for his legitimacy, and they take sides with firstborn sonship through Eleazar.

It is very troubling that Eli became the Kohen in Shiloh together with the Ark of the Covenant. Indeed, it remains unclear when the administration of the Ark of the Covenant passed from the descendants of Eleazar to those of Ithamar. Jewish tradition shares the same names as Samaritans with regard to the first Kohen leaders, beginning with Aaron. Nevertheless, the Book of Samuel speaks of the ruling of the Ark of the Covenant by Eli, apparently supporting the story of secession in Samaritan sources. According to the Book of Samuel, it was misfortunate that the Ark of the Covenant was seized by the

productive." Halit Ünal, "Atîre," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (*DİA)*, IV, 79.

[115] The chain of Holy Seed, which is attempted to be established with regard to the Israelite conception of being chosen, is discussed in another paper.

[116] This is a different version of the Torah. It is written in Samaritan Hebrew with the Samaritan alphabet. This version of the Torah is closer to the translation of the Septuagint than the Masoretic text.

[117] Abū l-Fatḥ, *The Kitāb al-Tārīkh of Abu l-Fatḥ,* trans. Paul Stenhouse (Sydney: Mandelbaum Trust, University of Sydney, 1985), 47.

Palestinians in the time of Eli. The Ark of the Covenant was regained by the sons of Eleazar, namely, Zadok, whereupon the post of Chief Kohen was restored to its true possessors. Nonetheless, it is unknown how the leadership of the Kohen, which passed from Aaron to Eleazar and then to Phinehas, was obtained by the descendants of Ithamar. Aware of this problem, the authors of the Books of Ezra and Chronicles presented different lists of Kohen leaders that exclude Eli, and anonymous people are used to fill the period between Uzzi and Zadok.

The Eli story in Samaritan sources calls into question the reliability of the Jewish Kohen leaders list. Samaritans grounded the legitimacy of the priesthood of Uzzi in his descendance from Eleazar, the surviving son of Aaron. Nevertheless, in *Kitāb al-Tārīkh*, Abū l-Fatḥ indicates that the struggle for priesthood actually occurred between the sons of Phinehas and Ithamar. Consequently, lists of Kohen leaders by both sects seem inaccurate.[118]

Finally, modern-day Samaritans are a group related to both meanings of the word *Sā-mar*. If *Sā-mar* means the Prophet Joseph, the beloved and firstborn son of Jacob, then the Samaritans, who consider Joseph their ancestor, are the group that most deserves to assume the name "sons of Joseph." The name *Sā-mar* in the sense of "firstborn son" also complies with modern-day Samaritans. Samaritans ground the story of their separation from the Jews on the dispute between the descendants of the sons of Eleazar and Ithamar of Aaron. Taking sides with Uzzi, who is a descendant of the eldest son of Aaron, Samaritans are, in a sense, supporters of the firstborn son.

Conclusion

The origin of the word *Sāmirī* is important to identify the Sāmirī/Samaritan in Qurʾān. In this regard, the Ancient Egyptian word *Sā-mar* (beloved son) provides us with two possibilities. According to the first possibility, a Samaritan in the Qurʾān is a member of the

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[118] *Ibid*., 47. In our opinion, this list is established through a combination of Moses-follower priests with Aaronites among the earliest Kohen leaders. For a list of Kohen leaders between Aaron and Zadok (pre-monarchic period) see Emil G. Hirsch, "High Priest," in *Jewish Encylopedia,* VI, 391-392; Arslantaş, *İslâm Dünyasında Sâmirîler*, 211. There are differences in Josephus' lists of Kohen leaders; cf. Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, in *The Complete Works of Josephus,* 5.11.5; 8.1.3.

priesthood system prior to the Kohen among the Israelites; in other words, he is a firstborn son. However, the firstborn priests were involved in the sin of the Golden Calf, whereupon God dismissed them from the priesthood and granted the office to the Levites. Presumably, Aaron's firstborn sons, who were punished and executed by God, were also involved in this sin. Accordingly, they were mentioned together with the name of Aaron. In the fight for priesthood between Eli and Uzzi during the age of Judges, modern-day Samaritans take sides with Uzzi since he is a descendant of Eleazar, the eldest surviving son of Aaron. Therefore, they can be called supporters of the firstborn son in this regard.

The second possibility is that the Samaritan was a descendant of Joseph, who is both the firstborn and the beloved son of Jacob. In this case, an Israelite who was half Egyptian through his mother made the Golden Calf, which bears traces of Egyptian culture and caused the Israelites to rebel against God. Then, as a result of the conflict between Judah and Israel, Sadducee priests in Jerusalem used the abovementioned incident as a trump against the Aaronites who administrated the Josephite Temples (Shiloh-Bethel) in the north. The sin of the Golden Calf became a smear campaign against the Tribe of Joseph and the Aaronites, who were probably descendants of the former. Modern-day Samaritans, therefore, became the first-hand owners of this name because they are descendants of Joseph and Ephraim, the beloved son and grandson of Jacob, respectively.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Scripture, Poetry and the Making of a Community: Reading the Qurʾān as a Literary Text, by Angelika Neuwirth

Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila

The Quṣṣāṣ of Early Islam, by Lyall R. Armstrong

Mohammad A. Rihan

Scripture, Poetry and the Making of a Community: Reading the Qur'ān as a Literary Text, by Angelika Neuwirth (Qur'anic Studies Series, 10) (New York: Oxford University Press in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2014), xl + 470 pp., ISBN: 978-0-19-870164-4, £ 80.00

Over the last decades, Professor Angelika Neuwirth (Freie Universität, Berlin) has become one of the leading figures of Qurʾānic studies and the *Corpus Coranicum* project led by her is a major attempt to develop the field.

Scripture, Poetry and the Making of a Community collects together twelve articles published by Neuwirth in 1991-2009, adding two new articles that do not seem to have been published elsewhere, as well as an Introduction. Many of the articles have been revised for the new publication and several appear here for the first time in English.

The articles are divided into three sections. The first four form a section on "Pagan and monotheistic frameworks," the following six are on "The liturgical Qur'an and the emergence of the community," and the final section "Narrative figures between the Bible and the Qur'an," closes the book with five articles. Obviously, there is a lot of overlap between the themes of the articles published in the three sections. As the other articles have been earlier published and are easily available elsewhere, the present review will concentrate on the new articles.

The two new articles are no. 2 "From tribal genealogy to divine covenant: Qur'anic re-figurations of pagan Arab ideals based on Biblical models" and no. 9 "A discovery of evil in the Qur'an? Revisiting Qur'anic versions of the Decalogue in the context of pagan Arab Late Antiquity," both originally written by Neuwirth in German and here translated into English by W. Scott Chahanovich.

"From tribal genealogy to divine covenant" (pp. 53–75) studies how genealogy lost some of its earlier importance in the growing Muslim community. The idea is by no means new, but Neuwirth analyzes a number of Qurʾānic texts to show the processes behind this gradual change. While her analysis is convincing in an overall way and the discussion of the Qurʾānic texts themselves very insightful, there are

Ilahiyat Studies
Volume 9 Number 1 Winter / Spring 2018
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p-ISSN: 1309-1786 / e-ISSN: 1309-1719
DOI: 10.12730/13091719.2018.91.176

also a number of details which are either taken for granted or considered proven by earlier studies which are not conclusive.

Thus, to make the contrast between the old and the new models of thought as sharp as possible, Neuwirth (p. 53) summarizes the old ideas of nobility "in the Arabian milieu" as resting "at the heart of the concept of *muruwwa* (heroism), the dominant behavioural code which was strongly imprinted with Bedouin values."

The *muruwwah* forms, without doubt, the "dominant behavioural code" in pre-Islamic poetry, but it is a long shot to assume that it must have been the dominant code also in the towns and among the agriculturalists, especially as Neuwirth elsewhere assumes that Biblical stories were well known on the Peninsula and monotheist religions had already started infiltrating there, even the Meccans becoming "monotheistically inclined" (cf. below). It is also dubious whether we can read poetry as indicative of the Bedouin code in real Bedouin life as such.

It is not a question of some individual cases, either. In the same article, we find *al-abtar* (Q 108:3) translated as "cut off" (which most probably is correct), but then the further conclusion is given without any supporting evidence: "... spiritual abundance compensates for the poor pedigree for which he [i.e., the Prophet] was derided (as we may infer from Q. 108:3)" (p. 55). This is an inference which reads more into the brief and enigmatic passage than the text itself allows. We know that the Prophet (assuming in the first place that this refers to the Prophet and not to Everyman) was cut off – but from what and because of a "poor pedigree" or for some other reason, remains unclear.

Speculation all too often takes the role of evidence. Neuwirth continues, p. 56, by analysing Q 102 to refer to "ancestry worship" (on the basis of *zurtum al-maqābir*). This leads her to interpret Q 56:47-48 in similar terms:

> Thus Q 56:47-48 reports that they scoff at the notion that their ancestors will be raised from the dead: *What, when we are dead and become dust and bones, shall we indeed be raised up? / What, and our fathers, the ancients?* Resurrection, an event making all men equal, would deprive their forefathers of the privileged status they continue to enjoy post-mortem.

The most unforced reading of the passage is to take it as referring to the absurdity of the idea that dead people would be resurrected and

the utter absurdity of those being resurrected who had been dead for ages. To read a deprivation "of the privileged status" into this is again making far-reaching conclusions based on little concrete evidence.

Similar stretching of the evidential basis is common in the article. The eschatological passages Q 80:33-37 and Q 70:8-14 are interpreted by Neuwirth to refer to the collapse of clan solidarity and the powerlessness of the tribal system in the individual calamity of the Day of Judgement (pp. 57–58). The passages certainly emphasize the individuality of the horrors, but I fail to see any signs of clans and tribal society in them. They do, obviously, say that "a man shall flee from his brother, his mother, his father, his consort, his sons" and that "no loyal friend shall question loyal friend" and "[t]he sinner will wish that he might ransom himself from the chastisement of that day even by his sons, his companion wife, his brother, his kin who sheltered him, and whosoever is in the earth."

The first passage, however, speaks only of the immediate family and the second only makes a passing mention of "kin" between the immediate family and humanity in general. Both passages would equally well work in an agrarian context without any trace of tribal society or in a modern urban context, for that matter.

Philological material is also used somewhat impressionistically. On pp. 62–63, Neuwirth analyzes the term *dhurriyyah* (progeny). She starts with an undocumented claim that the word derives from "*dharrah*/*dhurrah*, meaning 'grain seed'." As is well known, there, sadly, is still no proper etymological dictionary of Arabic, but all lexicographical evidence for *dhurriyyah* points rather to the semantic fields of "scattering; putting forth" than of "seed," related though they naturally may be. The etymological cognate seems to be Hebrew *zārā* "scatter," not *zeraʿ* "seed." It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that "grain seed" has been selected as the etymon for *dhurriyyah* to make the word fit with the Hebrew *zeraʿ*, which does mean "grain seed" and supports Neuwirth's argument.

Indeed, Neuwirth notes that "[i]t is phonetically near, though not etymologically related, to the Hebrew word *zeraʿ*, 'seed,' *zeraʿ* is used in the Biblical patriarch narratives as a circumscription of 'progeny'." There is a phonetic similarity between the two words, but only a vague one, as the phonemes Dh and *ʿayn* were clearly distinguished in the early seventh century from Z and *hamzah*/vowel length and the distinction between *ʿayn* (ʿ) and *hamzah* (ʾ) is still retained in almost

all Arabic dialects and when Dh vanished from most of them it coalesced with D, not Z.

Despite the vagueness of the evidence, "progeny" becomes a "Biblicising concept" on p. 63. The word is indeed used in conjunction with Noah and Abraham in the Qurʾān, as mentioned by Neuwirth, but also in other connections, which is not specifically mentioned by Neuwirth.

By piling together such passages which can, certainly, be read in the context of the collapse of a tribal society, but by no means need to be read so, the article creates a very strong feeling of a gradual change from the values of a tribal society to individual responsibility and the idea of a prophetic succession. Although in general lines this probably is what happened, the evidence adduced for this process remains vague and inconclusive.

The second new contribution, "A discovery of evil in the Qur'an? Revisiting Qur'anic versions of the Decalogue in the context of pagan Arab Late Antiquity" (pp. 253–274) compares the Decalogue with three passages of the Qurʾān (Q 17:22–39; 6:151–153; 2:83–85) and follows the development of the Decalogue in the Qurʾānic context.

Juxtaposing the three texts is revealing, and it is interesting to see how the later passages concentrate on some of the commandments presented in the probably oldest and certainly longest text, Q 17:22–39. While again interpretatively insightful, the article shows similar signs of a rather cavalier attitude toward concrete evidence. Thus, Neuwirth analyses Q 17:29 (against excessive spending) in terms of the character of the *ʿādhilah* in poetry, where it is her role to warn the poet of extravagant generosity and nonchalance about wealth (p. 263). All this is based on one sentence (*fa-taqʿuda madhmūm^{an} makhdhūl^{an}*), which expresses a very universal idea: if you waste all your money, you'll soon find yourself reduced to poverty and people will blame you.

To make the case more concrete, one would have welcomed a detailed analysis of the vocabulary and the syntax (do they mirror poetic conventions?), instead of a sweeping reference to the theme on a very general level. Neuwirth does refer to her *Der Koran als Text der Spätantike* (2010): 697–698, but there is no concrete evidence for this to be found there, either. A certain similarity there undoubtedly is, but it is still a far cry from the conclusion:

> The Qur'anic Decalogue's strategy – of drawing upon both the Biblical Decalogue text and the poetic topoi in order to formulate norms to be heeded by a Meccan society that was monotheistically inclined but still accustomed to receiving messages through poetry – has to be acknowledged as a particularly effective strategy for appropriating authority.

Poetic topoi are taken up in the article and used to interpret the Qurʾān, which is highly commendable but should be based on careful and detailed comparisons. Thus, p. 264, identifies "Satans" in Q 17: 26–27, not with "the evil one in Christian understanding, but rather one of the demons (*jinn*), who, according to pre-Islamic belief, inspire the poets and who are thus partly responsible for the exalted heroic world view of the *jāhiliyya* expressed in poetry." This interpretation leaves unexplained the sentence *wa-kāna l-shayṭānu li-Rabbihī kafūr*^{an}, which clearly refers to one Satan and alludes to Islamic ideas of the relations between Satan and God. It also makes a semantic jump from poets propagating extravagance as part of the *muruwwah* ideology to poets themselves being extravagant (*inna l-mubadhdhirīna kānū ikhwān al-shayāṭīn*) without any comment. How real the belief in demons inspiring the poets actually was, is another matter that would need some investigation.

A few lines later, Neuwirth summarises "poetry's anthropocentric world view, wherein heroic man autonomously rules over his own world." The role of Fate in pre-Islamic poetry may have been exaggerated by some scholars, but, on the other hand, it is hardly just to speak about "heroic man autonomously" ruling his world. The pre-Islamic worldview, of which we know unfortunately little, was hardly at either of the two ends, fully fate-governed or absolutely autonomous.

The already published articles are here conveniently put together and they are now easily available, especially for the English-speaking reader. Despite the sometimes cavalier attitude toward evidence, the articles are well worth reading, with a multitude of thought-provoking ideas and interesting interpretations.

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The Quṣṣāṣ of Early Islam, by Lyall R. Armstrong, (Islamic History and Civilization: Studies and Texts, 139), (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2017), xii + 341 pp., ISBN 978-90-04-33551-6 (hb) & 978-90-04-33552-3 (e-book), €135.00 / $165.00 (hb)

This meticulously researched, thoroughly developed book about *quṣṣās* and *qaṣaṣ* in the Islamic traditions represents a long established literature discussing the elusive nature and role of *quṣṣāṣ* in the classical period of Islam. I. Goldziher, J. Pedersen, Ch. Pellat, C.E. Bosworth, K. ʿAthamina and many others in both the Western world and the Arab world have previously attempted at finding some answers. Armstrong's book however is probably the most accomplished version of them all due perhaps to the diligence and erudition of what is originally a PhD dissertation.

Written in five chapters (in addition to an introduction, a conclusion and an appendix revealing the biographical sketches of many *quṣṣāṣ* up to the year 750 AD) the author attempts to draw a detailed portrait of the *qāṣṣ* in early Islamic period (up to the late Umayyad period). He tries to provide some answers concerning the identity of *quṣṣāṣ*, their origins and their function, their affiliations with the reigning religious and political currents and he even identifies the nature of their *qaṣaṣ* which is according to him either religious, martial, or religio-political. He depicts in details their skills and conduct and the amount of their knowledge and oratory skills that included their linguistic abilities (*lisān*), rhetorical skills (*bayān*), and religious knowledge (*ʿilm*), then he attempts to analyze their role whether they were considered innovators (*aṣḥāb bidʿah*) or religious conformists. Armstrong attributes this contrast of either both images to the evolving nature of their work and the diverse influences of the community. He concludes that some were innovators and others were conformists, but he believes, based on data he collected, that most of them were mainly conformist scholars working within an evolving religio-political environment that sometimes questioned their value in the society.

Moreover, the author demonstrates that the good reputation of a *qāṣṣ* is related to his performance which in its turn depended on his skills. If he balanced the above mentioned three skills and kept his

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p-ISSN: 1309-1786 / e-ISSN: 1309-1719
DOI: 10.12730/13091719.2018.91.177

sessions under reasonable control he could join the ranks of best scholars. Armstrong finally describes how the *quṣṣāṣ*, from different parties, were seriously involved in the political and religious debate during the Umayyad period.

The scope of research undergone by Armstrong to complete his work is impressive. He resorts to all possible primary sources in Islamic history to complete his research such as *ḥadīth*, chronicles, Qurʾān commentary, and biographical dictionaries and others thus showing a great mastery of his sources. But he limits his research to those texts that denotes clearly one of the derivation of the word *quṣṣās* such as *qaṣaṣ*, *qiṣṣa,* or *qaṣṣa* in order to avoid confusion as he says.

In general, this book is an attempt to rectify the misconceptions about the *quṣṣāṣ*. He concludes that they were not unreliable fabricators of traditions or simple storytellers but many of them were predominantly mainstream scholars with various religious backgrounds either in the field of Qurʾānic commentary, trustworthy *ḥadīth* transmission, or were reputable jurists (*fuqahāʾ*) and judges (*quḍāt*), orators (*khuṭabāʾ*) and others; accordingly they were by no means simple popular religious teachers or populist storytellers targeting the simple masses and thus had their important contribution in the evolution of the foundations of the Islamic religion and culture.

Armstrong has succeeded to a good extent in bringing out a better understanding of the definition and role of the *qāṣ* that remained ambiguous and prone to many misconceptions in modern and classical academia, however, the full meaning remains elusive due to its versatile nature and function as corroborated by the author himself. For instance, Armstrong asserts, the *qāṣṣ* could be of a certain group of people, i.e. "the common folk" (*al-ʿāmmah*) or "the community" (*al-jamāʿah*) or a certain leader. The type of relationship expressed by the designation can only be determined based upon the associations between the two parties. Some appear to have been martial or ideological spokespeople to certain leaders, or seem to have been personal *qāṣṣ* of the court, or could be men of religion who taught the people of a certain region or city. Their roles varied, their discourses changed too, consequently, the definition itself evolved through time and geographical space.

Despite the magnitude of the monograph and the extensive research conducted by its author and the different attempts to analyze and reconcile the obvious contradictions of the concept *qaṣaṣ* and *quṣṣāṣ* the final image remains unclear. What is really a *qāṣṣ* and what makes a *qiṣṣah*? The answer, I believe, remains indefinable. The book resembles more a long historical sketch than an analytical attempt to reconsider the term itself. Naturally this is perhaps due to the ambiguous and evolving nature of the sources themselves. Our historian tried to reach some final conclusions which seemed more imposed than true necessary; the *quṣṣāṣ* were religious motivators that resemble the modern day preachers, Armstrong concludes, who were more adept at the spoken word and its impact on the audience. But the *quṣṣāṣ* often were also *qurrāʾ*, *ḥadīth* transmitters, military commanders, political leaders, and activists. Did people listen to them as *quṣṣāṣ* or because they held other positions? The nature of their careers reflected conflicting objectives for their *qaṣaṣ*, one might say a *qiṣṣah* to send a political message while another might state hundreds of them as part of a religious career. Was Abū Sufyān for instance a *qāṣṣ* since sources depicted him *yaquṣṣ* during the battle of al-Yarmūk? (in case this incident really happened!). Why did people listen to him? Is it because he was a *qāṣṣ* or was he an important leader who exercised a lot of influence on many Syrian tribes who shifted alliances from a pro-Byzantine to an anti-Byzantine stance? Are his stories equal in eloquence and spirituality to those uttered by *al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī* for instance? These remarks notwithstanding the work of Armstrong remains an important contribution that brought serious clarifications to our shortcomings in this field and represents a solid bedrock upon which historians can build on in the future.

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A Journal on Islamic and Religious Studies
www.ilahiyatstudies.org
Volume 9, Number 1, Winter / Spring 2018

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İlahiyat Studies

A Journal on Islamic and Religious Studies

ISSN: 1309-1786

Volume 9 Number 1 Winter / Spring 2018

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ISSN: 1309-1786

13091786201891