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## Note

The journal of *Religious Inquiries* accepts papers on religious studies, the comparative studies of the Western and Islamic theology, mysticism and ethics. The papers received will be published provided that they are written according to the house style of the journal. The authors will bear responsibility for their own papers.

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## Guidelines on Style

- Manuscripts are accepted in English. Any consistent spelling and punctuation styles may be used.
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- Words which have not been assimilated into the English language should be italicized, except for proper nouns.
- Long quotations should be fully indented (e.g. quotes longer than 30 words). The first line of a new paragraph should be indented, except the paragraph following a heading. The tab-key may prove helpful here.
- Please use a comma before the final 'and' in a list. For example: 'one, two, and three' rather than 'one two and three'. Use one space after full-stops.
- Hijri years should be followed by 'AH,' unless it is clear what calendar is being used from the context. For the modern Iranian calendar use 'AH (solar)' or 'Sh.'

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Sadr (2003, 69-71) discusses metaphorical and literal meaning in lesson ten of his Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence.

It is argued that Islamic social customs can only be fully appreciated when sympathy is given to the context within which they occur (Smith 1998).

Griffel (2009) is a study of the classical Islamic theologian, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali. The study includes both biography and philosophical analysis.

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**Chapter in edited books:** Gould, Glenn. "Streisand as Schwarzkopf." In *The Glenn Gould Reader*, edited by Tim Page, 308-11. New York: Vintage, 1984.

**Articles in journals:** Schmidt, Jochen. 2014. "Critical Virtue Ethics." *Religious Inquiries* 3(5): 35-47.

**Webpage:** Losensky, Paul. 2012. *Sa'di*. Accessed January 1, 2014. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sadi-sirazi>.

**E-mail:** Williamson, Brian. 2005. E-mail from Brian Williamson to Catharine White, "New Perspectives." (09:15, 1 January 1999).



## CONTENT

- 9 Late Antiquity and Early Islam**  
Johannes Niehoff
- 31 Jewish Theological Systematization in the Context of Islamic Culture**  
Ali Shahbazi, Hamideh Amiryazdani
- 47 *Isra'iliyyat* or Traditions of Jewish Origin: A Major Instance of Transferred Traditions**  
Sayyid Reza Moaddab, Fazel Asadi Amjad, Hossein Sattar
- 67 Marriage in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism**  
Mansoureh Zarean, Khadijeh Barzegar
- 81 Thinking Towards Peace: On Triades and New Cosmology of the Mesocosm**  
Lenart Škof
- 95 An Investigation into the Pantheon in Bactrian Economic Documents**  
Seyed Saeid Reza Montazeri, Amir Emadaldin Sadri
- 105 Pragmatic Elements of Rawls's Theory of Justice**  
Shahla Eslami



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# Articles

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## Late Antiquity and Early Islam

Johannes Niehoff <sup>1</sup>

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In this paper, an investigation on the relation between state-building and Near Eastern religion is attempted. Analyzing the city-state of Ḥaṭrā (Iraq, close to Kirkuk), it is demonstrated that pre-Islamic state craft in the region was dependent on the initiative of the Parthian monarchy in Iran. The kings of the Arsacid dynasty attempted to bestow the local Arabic tribes in the Jazira with a cultic center that would serve as a stronghold against Rome/Byzantium. The deity most venerated in Ḥaṭrā was the Sungod, Šamaš, the same as in Palmyra (Tadmor), Edessa (Urfā), and Emesa (Homs). It is of crucial importance, that since Constantine the Great venerated the Sungod before becoming a Christian, the combination between Greek and Iranian art on the border of the two empires became the basis of Christian art. Ḥaṭrā, a point of cross-cultural fusion between the East and the West, is now very much endangered as the troops of the “Islamic” State have destroyed the until recently well-preserved ruins.

**Keywords:** Ḥaṭrā, Sungod, state-building, Near Eastern religion, Parthian monarchy, Arsacid dynasty.

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In one of the most important inscriptions from Ḥaṭrā (modern Iraq), one reads the following lines (no. 272, 1ff. Vattioni):

1.[bjr]ḥ ḥ šnt CCCC XXXX IIII

šwr' w'bwł' dj bn' bjt 'lh'

nšr[w] mrj' l ḥjjhj wł ḥjj bnjhj

whjhj

2.wł ḥj' mn dj lmr' rhjm bn' bjt

šmš 'lh' rb' ks,,m' bjt šmš

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In English (my translation):

1. “In the month of Iyyar, the year 444  
Built the wall and the door of the House of God  
Naṣru, the lord, for his life and for the life of his sons  
And his brothers
2. And for the life of who is beloved to the Lord, he built the  
house  
of Šamaš the God ... the Temple of Šamaš

The inscription, though engraved on a limestone block broken into three pieces, is not difficult to understand. Its language (and script) is the local dialect of the city of Ḥaṭrā (see below), a variant of the “Reichsaramaeisch” once used by the Achaimenid dynasty of Iran for the governance of their empire. After Alexander, this unified language of Syria (“Aram” in the Bible), Iraq and the whole Near East broke apart into various local dialects/scripts: Nabataean in the South, Edessenian, the local Aramaic used in Georgia (beautiful in the bilingual inscription of Serapitis, in Greek and this “Armazi” variant [Braund, 1994, 214]) and the dialect of Palmyra (Tadmur). While the second part of this article will focus on Nabataean, it is important to know that with the destruction of Ḥaṭrā by the Sasanids, the epigraphical evidence for this language comes to an end (see below).<sup>1</sup> The same happened to the dialect of Palmyra when the Romans under Emperor Aurelian destroyed it. The Aramaic dialect of Edessa (Orhāy, today Urfa in southeastern Turkey), however, suffered a completely different fate. In a complex process of dogmatic ramification, Byzantine and Sasanian religious politics, and the negotiation of ethnic identities, this dialect of bilingual Edessa, where even the Jews wrote in Greek besides Hebrew (Segal 1970, 27; 30 n. 5; 42 n. 3 and pl. 16a and 319), became the liturgical language of both the miaphysite Church of Syria, Turkey, and Iraq (Takrit), and of the “Apostolic Church of the East,” in Iraq and Iran. In their churches, for example in Tehran, one can still hear this variant of Eastern Aramaic,<sup>2</sup> which is today’s Suryānī. These dialects were closely related to each other, mutually understandable and written in

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1. Though very close to Classical Syriac, Hatrean was written in a clearly distinctive script which is attested also in the surrounding places like Hellenistic Assur (Vattioni 1981, 10f.). Typical is the use of /l -/ for the preformative form of the verb, not /n-/ as in Classical Syriac.

2. Closely related to the aforementioned dialects are the idioms of the Babylonian Talmud, the Palestinian Talmud, and the Aramaic ideograms in Pahlavi.

alphabets directly derived from Imperial Aramaic. Biblical Aramaic is also closely related, but represents an older stage of the language. Since Aramaic replaced the older Accadian in this huge territory, one finds many Accadian loan words in classical Syriac. Even here, the word “*bwl*” (portal) goes back to Accadian “*abullu*” and appears also in Palmyra, the Jewish targums and the Babylonian Talmud (see the note by Vattioni 1981, 88).<sup>1</sup> On the same inscription there is the name “*ṭpšr*” which means scribe.

All the aforementioned inscriptional dialects of Aramaic have it in common that they were used side by side with Greek. Actually, the Seleucids, after having gained the throne in Babylon (the ascension of Seleukos Nikator there marks the beginning of the Seleucid Era, also used in the inscription cited above), kept Aramaic in official use, alongside with Greek. This Greek presence was stronger in the West and South (the Nabataeans, see part II) and was less felt in the East. In Ḥaṭrā, there are only few Greek inscriptions. Latin inscriptions are even less common, since the use of Latin was restricted to the Roman army and jurists. Interestingly enough, there are three Latin inscriptions to be found here (Vattioni gives them in the appendix on p.105 and 109). At Ḥaṭrā, all the Greek inscriptions are bilingual and highly instructive from the standpoint of comparative religious studies. The use of Greek alongside with Aramaic, even in the same inscription bears a symbolic importance, as can be best shown by the bilingual market tariff of Palmyra from the time of the Roman emperor Hadrian (no. 629 Dittenberger). Palmyra (like Ḥaṭrā and the Nabataeans) set herself into the tradition stemming from the time of the Achaemenids and Alexander. When giving a trilingual inscription at Naqš-e Rostam, in Greek, Parthian, and Pahlawī, Shapur, the Sasanid king, did exactly the same (as the Parthian kings did when emitting coins with Greek legends).

The other common trait of these inscriptions follows from their representational character. They do not represent the language of the majority of the people, as both Georgian and Armenian (in the Aramaic inscription of the Artaxids) were at this time spoken, not written, languages. The same holds for Ḥaṭrā, Palmyra, and the Nabataeans,

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1. The Classical Arabic word *haykal* goes back to Accadian *ek/gallum* “palace,” again through Aramaic. The normal word for “architect” in Ḥaṭrā is ‘*rdkl*’, from acc. *arad ekalli* “slave of the palace” (see the index by Vattioni 1981).

where the language of the people and probably of all the nomads there was already Arabic in an archaic form. This is clear from many instances and is also to be seen in the inscription cited. Like in many inscriptions from Palmyra and Jordan/Saudi Arabia in the Palmyrenan and Nabataean dialects, many (often all) personal names are Arabic (a forerunner of classical Arabic). Another typical trait is the presence of the *tanwīn*. While in later Nabataean inscriptions, where this habit leads to a somehow mixed language (see part II), in the inscription cited, there is a clear example of both instances in the name of the dedicant, *nṣr[w]* in l. 3. This is clearly the Arabic (also Islamic) name Naṣr. Like in classical Arabic, it is written with the final - /u/ of the *tanwīn*. Though written here correctly, in many later Nabataean inscriptions, the final vowel becomes fossilized, which points to the disappearance of the *i'rāb* among sedentary Arabs before Islam (also referred to in later grammatical tradition). In today's Arabic, the name 'Amr (عمرو) is always written with this final vowel, which is the result of several traits preserved from Nabataean orthography in Classical Arabic.

The reason for this hidden presence of Arabic in all these cities (Ḥaṭrā, Palmyra, al-Ḥijr/Madā'in Šālīḥ, Edessa, Petra, etc.) is that these "Caravan cities" (Rostovtzeff 1932) were founded as centers of independent, or half independent states, run by Arab nomads (transformed into dynasties) on the borders of the dissolving Seleucid Empire and the Parthian monarchy, at the time when the Romans were steadily gaining influence in the Near East. Dura/Europos also belongs to this group, although this town was normally (except in its final phase) directly ruled by the Parthians and was thus, never half-independent (and Greek was the most common language).

Ḥaṭrā has no ancient predecessor, but is situated close to the ancient and Biblical sites of Assur (which is about 50 km to the east) and Ninive, well known by the Biblical book of Jonah (about 80 km towards the north).<sup>1</sup> The Jabal Sinjār, *Singārā* in Late Antiquity, is also close. The territory belongs historically to the Jazira, where there was still enough rainfall for modest agriculture in the north, while the south was the realm of the Arab nomads (Sommer 2005, 356f. and n. 6). In stark contrast to Hellenistic tradition, the plan of the city is circular (pic. no. 1), which comes from the Iranian tradition (Ekbatana [Hamadan], Ctesiphon [the Parthian Capital], as well as Shiz and Gur in Iran). One

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1. For details, see Vattioni (1981, 1, 4).

should remember the later plan of Baghdad. The circumference is impressive, as the inner circle has a diameter of about 2 km (more than Ninive), which was densely settled (Sommer 2005, 358ff.). The grid of streets is irregular; Sommer (2005, 365f.) speaks about the streets and the settlement patterns which [JNP] “vermitteln den Eindruck eines orientalischen Süqs.” The quarters look like cells, which is an indication that Ḥaṭrā was already, from her beginning, inhabited by nomadic tribes. Since there are no datable traces before the first century CE, it is most likely that the foundation of the city was an attempt made by the Parthian kings, who settled Arab nomads in the area, around the time when they conquered Mesopotamia, in order to control the caravan trade between the Romans and their empires. The etymology of the city also points to this conclusion, as Ḥaṭrā means “fenced territory,” the Aramaic word for “city” being *karkhā*. The designation was kept in Arabic/Islamic times as al-Ḥaḍr (see below).<sup>1</sup>

This general character of settlement in Ḥaṭrā was nevertheless no impediment that her architects looked towards the West; houses (of the classical age) were built in stone, and the temple (see below) combined Iranian with Greek elements in an exemplary fashion (Sommer 2005, 365, 388ff.).

Until their recent destruction by the troops of the “Islamic” State, the ruins of Ḥaṭrā were well preserved and thus open to archaeological research, at least until the third Gulf War. British travelers were the first to study the city, as the physician J. Ross discovered the ruins in 1939, which were the object of oral tradition in Arabic literature (see below). The German “Assur Expedition” under W. Andrae conducted the first systematic research between 1906 and 1911, and G. Bell stayed in the city’s remnants, which were getting famous. E. Herzfeld published an article about the city seven years after his treatise on Pasargadae (1914). After the Second World War Iraqi archaeologists took over the excavation process, and in 1987 they were joined by a team from Torino, Italy under the guidance of R. Venco Ricciardi. The tenth volume of “Topoi,” edited by her, and Venco Ricciardi (2001) is dedicated to their work. The Aramaic, Greek and Latin inscriptions have been published by Vattioni (1981).<sup>2</sup>

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1. For an overview of the designations, see Vattioni (1981, 2f.).

2. Sommer (2005, 355) gives a sketch on the history of the city’s exploration. See also Sommer (2003, 4-8).

Fundamental for the religious history of Ḥaṭrā is her character as a “dimorphic society” (Sommer 2005, 355). The plan of the city, the religious architecture (see below), the geographical position at the crossroads of a dozen of streets through the desert (Vattioni 1981, 4, according to Sir Aurel Stein), from Lower Mesopotamia (Ctesiphon and Spasinou Charax), through Takrit, Ḥaṭrā, the Jabal Sinjar, towards Edessa—and thus the Roman Empire (Sommer 2005, 388)—made it a classical “gateway city” between two “Idealtypen”: the Arab Nomads and the sedentary people.<sup>1</sup>

The power that made this process possible, inside the vacuum of authority prevailing in the desert, was the Parthian monarchy. In the beginning, there was a local center under the authority of a simple *mrj*, a “lord” (it is the same word as Syriac *Mar*, used for God, and Arabic *imru*), but during the early second century CE, a qualitative swerve (Sommer 2005, 370) occurred when the “rulers” or “lords” of the city became “king of the Arabs” (*mlk' dy rb* or *rby*).<sup>2</sup> The inscription cited above is in fact the last secure example where the simpler old title is used (Sommer 2005, 370 and n. 61). Thus, this was the first kingdom of the Arabs—in Edessa, the title was *šlīṭ d rb* “ruler of the Arabs,” the title king being reserved for the ruler of the city without the ethnic attribute (Vattioni 1981, 10 and, more explicitly, Sommer 2005, 253f.).<sup>3</sup> The lords, be them *mrj* or *mlk'*, had to take into account the Arab tribes still living outside the city (inscr. no. 79 Vattioni) and one expression of this sharing of power can be seen in the existence of fifteen religious shrines (Sommer 2005, 386) found outside the central temple inside the inhabited area. This impressive building complex (see below) was probably also the economic center of the city (Sommer 2005, 370), and the nomadic tribes from outside were represented by inscriptions written by their members and displayed there. This balance of power between “inside and outside” was one of the main reasons for the success of Ḥaṭrā. How this tribal democracy worked is also shown by two inscriptions which mention an assembly of both “Hatreans, young and old, and Arabs” (nos. 336 and 343 Vattioni; Sommer 2005, 376f.).

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1. Sommer (2005, 356, n. 6) cites Hauser (2000) for speculations concerning the general trend of transformation that occurred in the region during the first two centuries CE.

2. See Sommer (2005, 376ff. and esp. 382f.), which stresses the consent by the Iranian king for the step from tribal leadership to monarchy.

3. The case in Tubach (1986, 14) is different.

With the second century, we now have a significant amount of Greek and Roman historiography at our disposal, which makes the elucidation of this part of Parthian history possible and in which Ḥaṭrā is called either Ἄτρα (ntr. pl.), or Ἀτραί (fem. pl.), while in Latin one finds *Hatra* (Ammian, see below), or *Hatris* in the *tabula* Peutingeriana and the inhabitants are referred to as Ἀτρηνοί, corresponding exactly to Aramaic *Ḥṭrj* (Vattioni 1981, 2f.). Emperor Trajanus (98-117), when beleaguering Ḥaṭrā, was on his way back from Spasinou Charax, the capital of the small kingdom of *Charakene* on the Persian Gulf.<sup>1</sup> Apart from the economic reasons (gaining control over the traffic with India, which was at that time in the hands of the Parthian Monarchy), it was mostly strategic reasons that persuaded the best Roman emperor (*optimus princeps*) to secure the path from Ctesiphon to the Singārā-mountain (see above). This event, which took place shortly before Trajan died, was undertaken when the city was still insignificant. Cassius Dio, a Roman senator of Greek origin from the first half of the third century CE, gives excellent material for the time covered by his work (until 229 CE, the year of his consulate), including information on late Parthian/early Sasanian history. Concerning the city of Ḥaṭrā, he writes, “The city was neither big nor rich” (book LXVIII 31, 1 [Cary; my translation]; see also Sommer 2005, 368f.). This was in fact false at his own time, but true for Ḥaṭrā before it became a hub under the last “lords” or first “kings” (see above)—that is, at the beginning of the second century CE. So, it is quite clear that the Greek senator and consul had an older source in front of him when writing (perhaps an eyewitness account from Trajan’s time). Anyways, this siege was a failure and Cassius Dio meaningfully writes, “It was the Sun God of Ḥaṭrā that protected her” (LXVIII 31, 2-4).

While on his way there (but first going to Ctesiphon), the same historian relates that the tribal kings (*phylarchoi*, the usual Greek term for tribal chieftains acting under Roman/Byzantine supervision, often Arabs), visited Trajan in Edessa/Orhay (see above), in order to pay him homage. Among them was the *phylarchos* of *Arabía* (Cassius Dio LXVIII 21f.). From the list, which is important for the history of the Roman Near East, we can deduce that with this term (*phylarchos* of *Arabía*) the territory of Ḥaṭrā was meant. Thus, we learn from this passage what was the Greek equivalent to the (*mlk' dy*)*rb* mentioned

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1. For the following, see Vattioni (1981, 3ff.).

above. It seems, that these “kings” expected from the *optimus princeps* the same loose subordination that they had experienced under the Parthian king. Sommer (2005, 380f.) perceives the structure of the Parthian Empire as a loose structure of satrapies and kingdoms (Pliny counts 18 in VI 112/XXIX of his *naturalis historia*), controlled by the center in three degrees. Ḥaṭrā, having a king, at least beginning with the 2 century CE, divided along the two seas, belonged to the most independent category, similar to Armenia, where, according to the Parthian and later to the Sasanian court hierarchy, a member of the Royal family of the Arsacids acted as the “vice king,” while the middle category (like Georgia) was formed by territories ruled by indigenous dynasts, although without that title. They are called *vitaxa* by Ammianus Marcellinus (XXIII 6,14), which is a Parthian expression. Michael Sommer’s interpretation of Emperor Septimius Severus’ triumphal title, *Parthicus Arabicus* (381, n. 99, following Hauser) is thus convincing: the kingdom was considered to be the “Parthian Arabs.” The shift from the former title *mrj’* to *mlk’* (see above) was, therefore, a step towards greater independence. This was beyond any doubt connected to the Roman expansion towards Syria and Northern Iraq in the second part of the second century CE, best symbolized by the Parthian war of Lucius Verus (166-169 CE). During which Ḥarrān (in today’s Turkey) was conquered, Edessa became a Roman *colonia* (thus, a Roman city), and the kingdom of Osroene a Roman province (pic. 2).

It was with the first emperor from the Severian dynasty, Septimius Severus (193-211 CE), that the second attempt at taking Ḥaṭrā by siege (197-199 CE) was undertaken. Cassius Dio is once again the most important source (LXXVI 10f.). It is likely that the inhabitants of the city were not unknown to Severus, since the king of the city (Barsemia) had sent bowmen to help his rival, Pescennius Niger, against Severus. It is important, that this Arab king under Parthian suzerainty sends his troops, trained in the Iranian technique of shooting arrows from a horse, as far west as Antiochia. At this time, only Laodikeia remained with Severus, who in the aftermath made this city (today’s Lattakia) the provincial capital of the region, divesting Antiochia of all her honours (Vattioni 1981, 5; Tubach 1986, 58). This attempt to take Ḥaṭrā once again failed, and once again, according to Dio, by the protection of Ḥaṭrā’s Sungod.



About one and a half centuries later in 363, when Emperor Julian was killed under mysterious circumstances close to the Euphrates during his war against Shahpur II, the Roman army, while on its way back through the desert passed through Ḥaṭrā, led by the new Emperor Jovian. Ammianus Marcellinus writes (XXV 8, 5 Seyfarth, my translation):

Free from this suspicion, in long marches, we came close to Hatra, an old city, situated in the middle of solitude, deserted since a long time, which the bellicose emperors Trajanus and Septimius Severus, in order to extirpate it, had almost destroyed with their hosts, as we have described when relating their deeds.<sup>1</sup>

What had happened? Ardašīr-i Pabagān, having overthrown the last Parthian king, Artavanos V (as can be seen in Naqš-i Rostam, on the western older reliefs), turned to Ḥaṭrā, probably in 228 CE. His siege failed again and, again, the indefatigable Cassius Dio is our witness (LXXX 3. 2).<sup>2</sup> The reaction of the Hatreans is now very significant, and for the first time the city receives a Roman garrison (Sommer 2005, 355, 375f.). Already in 231/32, thus, briefly after the Sasanian overthrow of the Parthians, Emperor Alexander Severus, the son of an Arab mother (from Emesa, today's Ḥoms), built a road at Singār on his way towards the city (Maricq 1957, 294). This was the first Roman military expedition towards the East to fight against the new power of the Sasanids. In 238, the *legio I Parthica* is stationed there: since, in two of the Latin inscriptions mentioned above (nos. 2 and 3 in Vattioni 1981, 109) a tribune of the ninth cohort that consisted of Mauri (thus, Berbers) under emperor Gordian is mentioned (*tribunus militum IX cohortis Maurorum*), we can date them exactly to the time after the ascension of Gordian (who was later killed in his expedition against Shahpur I, as depicted in the Sasanian reliefs preserved at Tang-i Chaugan, Fars). Shortly after his ascension to the throne, probably in the spring of 240, after a longer siege, the city fell to the Sasanians, never to recover again (Tubach 1986, 224ff.). So, Ḥaṭrā in Iraq was for ten years a Roman city.<sup>3</sup>

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1. This part of Ammianus' "History" is lost.

2. To this last episode in the history of Ḥaṭrā, A. Maricque has dedicated an article in 1957.

3. Vattioni (1981, 6) writes: "Sotto il timore dei Sassanidi, Hatra si allea con i Romani che sono già arrivati a Singara."

How this event became famous in later historical records, can be seen through the Medieval Arabic memory written down in Islamic times (see below), in which one can also observe the growing oral history concerning this mysterious event. Its importance even for contemporaries can be seen in the Mani codex from the famous Cologne papyrus, published by Koenen and Heinrichs in 1975. Here, Mani, who was from Babylonia (and therefore, from the region), speaks about his second revelation (probably April 23, 240): “When I became 24 years old, in the year when the king of Persia Ardašīr subjected the city of Ḥatrā, the same year when his son Shahpur put on the biggest diadem, the day of the moon [thus, a Monday], in the (Coptic) month of Pharmuti ... the all merciful lord had pity on me and called me to his grace and ordered me ...” (Heinrichs 1970, 120ff.).<sup>1</sup>

One point of great significance for this paper is the religious importance of the city of Ḥatrā for the development of Arabic states on the border between the Iranian (Parthian, Sasanian) and Roman/Byzantine empires. On the political side, since our written sources are limited to (mostly) Aramaic inscriptions, references in Greek/Roman historiography,<sup>2</sup> and the later historiography in Arabic, which has more of an anecdotic character, it is only with great difficulty that we can follow the process of state formation in the desert. But, as Sommer (2005, 381) correctly remarks, at some point between 137/138 and 176/177 CE the rulers of the city changed their official title to “king,” which was done by instigation from the side of the Parthian kings. This process was somehow interlinked (one would like to know more) with the economic growth of the city (Sommer 2005, 270). Thus, a territory that was already known as *Arabía* before this stage (see above, on the visit of Emperor Trajan in Edessa) obtained a proto-statal existence (Sommer 2005, 378 with n. 91). The title “king of the Arabs” would be picked up by such rulers as the Sasanian vassal Imru’ al-Qays in his tomb inscription, now in the Louvre, from an-Namara (to the east of Damascus), dated 325 CE where he claims to be *mlk kll ‘rb*; a title with a long career (Retsö 2003, Index). And this ethnogenesis happened centuries before the beginning of Islamic revelation.

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1. Vattioni (1981, 6-8) discusses the different traditions and synchronisms about this important element in Manichaean salvation history. See also Tubach (1986, 225, n. 57).

2. The evidence in Syriac Christian writings is scarce (Tubach 1986, 228ff.).

That the authorities (including the Parthian authorities) developed techniques to cope with one of the biggest traditional dangers on the borders between both the Graeco-Roman and Fertile Crescent with the Arabic desert can be demonstrated by a couple of Aramaic inscriptions (79, 80, 336, and 243 Vattioni). This helps to shed light on the genealogy and the functions of a clan of Bedouins, who held a special role in Ḥatrā (Sommer 2005, 376f.). The importance of all of these inscriptions is shown by the fact that they were all on display on the wall enclosing the temples. The common ancestor, named Šamšbarek (literally, “The Sungod blessed [him]”) led an assembly of the people of “the inhabitants of the City, old and young, and the Arabs” (336, 3ff.), who issued a law, to which we will come back later. It is, however, important that this Šamšbarek, being an Arab, led an assembly of both sedentary and nomadic people. He held the title, common in Ḥatrā, of a *rbjt'* (leader of the house) (see the index by Vattioni, s. v.) and certainly acted both with and by the consent of Lord/*mrj'* or the king/*mlk'*. By these and similar integrational processes, a conflict between nomads and sedentary people was avoided. This strategy had a strong religious aspect which is made clear by the inscription's location (see below).

Parthian is also architecture, as can be seen by the older layers, which are kept in brick, while the official one, stemming from the boom period (about 100 to 240 CE) is in stone, combining Hellenistic and Parthian elements in an aesthetically convincing manner (all temples in the center are in limestone). It is improbable that their architects were locals and one is tempted to imagine Ctesiphon in this manner (Sommer 2005, 357ff., esp. 365). The Parthian hand is also detected in the territory of the city. In stark contrast to Classical-Greek cities (but similar to Hellenistic cities), it was the king who marked the territory. In the wonderful volume by Kennedy and Riley from 1990 (fig. 164 and 186), one finds photographic images taken from the air of two Parthian castles to the northeast of the city, Jaddala 1 and 2. Sommer (2005, 380 n. 97) mentions another, Khirbet Qbr ibn Naif, which is to the west of the capital. So, it is quite clear that the dynasty secured the city against both Bedouin attacks and against the Romans from the west. It is easy to imagine the Arab/Parthian bowmen stationed in one of these castles (or another one, still to be found) defending their city. In fact, as Cassius Dio remarks, when Trajan attacked the city during the last year of his reign, Ḥatrā was defended by her castles and by her

troops. Furthermore, it was that lord Našrw (cited in the inscription above) who was ruling there.

In stark difference to the Syriac scarcity, Ḥatrā (and especially her last days) is well attested in the later Arabic and Persian traditions, which are only loosely linked to historical facts. A. Christensen wrote a paper in 1936 on the topic of the “princess on a leaf of myrtle/la princesse sur le pois,” and Tubach (1986, 236ff.) summarized this tradition, which ended up in a folk tale: the Arabic tradition, in part following the Ḥvadāynāmag, transformed the historical king Sanaṭrūq II into Sāṭirūn. He was given a new Arabic name (Ḍayzan) and his daughter fell in love with Shahpur I. They gave her a name as well (Naḍīra) and her story turned folk tale, became popular as far as Denmark. Apart from the transmission of this story (also in Pahlawī), there are two important elements: the image of Ḥatrā as immensely rich (which was probably true) and the “Arabization” of the last king, which is comparable to Yemen, where the Jewish king Yosef also received an Arabic name (Dhū Nuwās).

This Parthian component of Ḥatrā’s culture was not only restricted to political dominance and perhaps administrative protection (summarized by Sommer 2005, 379ff.) but also important for the military aspect (see above, on the bowmen). However, it can also be shown that it reached other sectors of the society: onomastics and dynastic titles. Again, we desperately need the help of the inscriptions, since the other sources are so incomplete.

Sommer (2005, 371ff.) gives a commented list of the rulers of Ḥatrā, in which he attempts to epigraphically establish a chronology of reigns, a dynastic genealogy, and a chronological framework (which he successfully accomplishes).

The first ruler, WRWD, to be dated at the beginning of the second century CE, clearly bears an Iranian name; it is the same name as is attested among Parthian kings, *Orodes* in Greek. Significantly enough, his son and successor has an Arabic name (M’NW, common also in Edessa), and it was he who gave homage to Trajan in that city (see above), according to Cassius Dio.

The son and successor of Našrw also has an Iranian name (always according to Sommer), and again it is a Parthian royal name: WLĠŠ, appearing as *Vologaeses* in Western sources. So, apart from Arabic and

Aramaic names (maybe aramaized Arabic names?), at least two members of the ruling dynasty had Iranian names of a royal sound. That is no small claim to Iranian dignity from a former Bedouin tribe.

More important still is the use of a classical middle Iranian term for the heir apparent, also known in other Arabic kingdoms of the borderline: *pšgrb'* "the prince" (attested with its variants four times in the corpus of Vattioni [1981], index, where attestation no. 36, 4 is missing). As it is to be expected, the title normally appears in a royal context. Since, in the city of Ḥatrā, the official religious cult was in the hands of the dynasty, the archaeological context is also religious (no. 195 is from the temple of the Sungod). The same holds for Edessa, where the title is engraved on one of the Old Syriac inscriptions, found on one of the two columns of the former royal palace, which is now the sanctuary of Abraham (Drijvers and Healy 1999, no. As 1, 45ff. [with comm. and the Parthian origin of the juridical team]). That it dates exactly from the time when the "Blessed City" was under Roman rule (for the first time) is hardly a coincidence. It is significant that both Arab dynasties used Iranian titles for expressing dynastic continuity.

The religion in Ḥatrā is far from being understood today and religious historians have to base their speculations on the inscriptions, the complex interaction of architecture and their texts (most inscriptions were found in the central sanctuary), and the scattered allusions from Greek and Latin writers. All assignation of a certain temple to one deity remains hypothetical and we have no religious literature from Ḥatrā (Tubach 1986, 46, 50). Crucial for the religious life of the city was the precinct situated in its center. After the comprehensive description and analysis by Parapetti and Venco Ricciardi from 2000 and the historical analysis by Sommer (2005, 359-66),<sup>1</sup> we have sufficient knowledge of it. It was probably built in subsequent phases during the second century CE (thus, when Ḥatrā became a commercial hub) and consisted of two parts enclosed by a wall and divided inside by another wall (see the plan in pictures no. 1 and 3, taken from Sommer 2005, 359). Almost all temples were in the smaller, eastern part of the sanctuary, the *bjt 1h*. This designation, constantly used by Sommer, occurs but once in the inscriptions and that in the one cited above. The impressive ruins, now destroyed by the "Islamic" State are concentrated here, in the center of

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1. See also Vattioni (1981, 12).

the city. Different from other Greek and Oriental sanctuaries, the area is not dedicated to one God alone, but to several deities (Sommer 2005, 360).

By far the most prominent one is the Sungod, Šam(a)š,<sup>1</sup> and, as Tubach (1986, 261-63) has shown convincingly, he is “Our Lord,” *mrn* (Vattioni, index), a designation that evokes strong Christian associations (*Maran ata* “Come, our lord,” is still prayed in Aramaic by Christians). Ḥatrā is regularly referred to on her coins as “The city of the Sungod,” *Ḥṭr d šmš*. Graeco-Roman historiography also points to the strong presence of this Near Eastern God, who became part of the Roman imperial state cult under Emperor Aurelian, who vanquished Palmyra, in 274. Given the high importance of Parthian art for the genesis of Christian art (see Rostovtzeff 1935), it is thus not astonishing if the spectator nourishes suspicions that the bust of the Sungod from Ḥatrā is an early depiction of Christ (who is present in a mosaic from a mausoleum (“M”) from under the old Church of St. Peter in Rome riding Helios’ chariot); this can be seen in picture no. 4. It is only the horns that are different.

Generally, while the decoration of the temples is Hellenistic, the basic conception of the sacred district, most prominently the Ivan (G in Sommer’s plan) in the center, that consists of several parts (erected one after the other, the Southern being the oldest) is Parthian. Interestingly, this building is not the temple of the Sungod, although it (H) is closely (in the west) adjacent to the Ivan (which might have been the place of a dynastic cult; Andrae took it as a palace). It was built later than the Ivan, with a slight, although important change concerning the (avoided) architectural axuality (Sommer 2005, 364, n. 32, citing Freyberger). It is probable that the “tomb of Helios” (*hlyw* in Syriac, so the Greek name of Šamaš), which is mentioned in Theodor bar Koni’s *liber scholiorum*, a presentation of religions and sects (from Islamic times, similar to Šahrastānī, from a point of view of the Apostolic Church of the East), was this building. The same information is preserved also in the Greek Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions (Tubach 1986, 232f.; Vandenhoff 1915, 256f.).<sup>2</sup>

1. I cannot see why Sommer (2005, 384) assumes a difference between the nomadic, female Šams and a male, sedentary Šam(a)š.

2. In the same sense, the Moongod Sin is claimed for Ḥarrān.

The Sungod however, was venerated in Ḥatrā as a member of a “Holy Trinity,” which consisted of Father (*mr*) and Mother (*mrtm*) and was venerated in a separate temple (A in Sommer).<sup>1</sup> It should also be mentioned that “Our Lady” would not sound unfamiliar to a Christian, nor would the “Son of two Lords,” *brmryn*. Tubach (1986, 255-335) has dedicated a long chapter to this “Triad” (as he calls it), in which he analyzed works of art, evidence from the inscriptions (from both inside and outside the city) and Graeco-Roman writings. The Triad is also present on the city’s coins (Sommer 2005, 381 n. 100). Evidently, both older Babylonian concepts, as well as those from pre-hellenistic Syria survived in Ḥatrā. So, one also finds Atargatis, the “Dea Syria,” mentioned on many inscriptions in the district (Vattioni 1981, index; more attestations in Tubach 1986, 255f. n. 3, citing Drijvers). Lukian dedicated an essay to her. But also *Allāt*, the old Arab goddess from the Age of Ignorance had a temple in the sacred district, which was outside the most important sacred center, close to the wall dividing the unequal halves (B in Sommer) and furthermore, she is also represented in inscriptions (Vattioni 1981, index). There was also a special “leader of the house of Allat,” *rbjt l’t* (384, 5 Vattioni; the archaic construction and orthography points perhaps to an Arabic loanword). Astonishingly, the common dress of most deities is the Roman/Greek tunic. All over the city, fifteen smaller temples/shrines have been found and at the entrance to one of them, no. XI, during the city’s last moments, the nomadic tribesmen (mentioned above) erected a statue of a king.

Clearly, when Naṣrū set his inscription, an observer, like the one cited by Cassius Dio (see above), would have been able to witness a classical process of “Ethnogenese” in the style of the Vienna school; the classic of which is H. Wolfram’s book on the Goths (2001). Like the *gentes* of the Early Western Middle Ages, the Parthian, Arabic, and Hellenistic heritage in the city of Ḥatrā formed a kernel of tradition (“Traditionskern”). Its development, however, was stopped by the Sasanian destruction of the site.

The first who left traces at the *Beyt Alāhā* was an ancestor of Naṣrū, WRDW, who bears, as we have seen, a Parthian name, thus showing his alignment with the dynasty in Ctesiphon; the Southern Ivan in the sanctuary is his (Sommer 2005, 359, 374). The wall around the

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1. In Sommer (2005, 384), there is a certain contradiction, since he assigns here the Ivan-building to the Trias.

complex, however, was erected by his (indirect) successor, as is reported in the inscription dated to the year 137/138 CE cited above. This is a classic dedicational inscription, common also in the Hellenistic world. Nasrw, whose son, WLGS, was bestowed with a Parthian name, dated this inscription, which was meant for public display according to the traditional era in the Near East after Alexander (The date of the ascension of Seleucos I to the throne of Babylon). Thus, he chose the Hellenistic reckoning (1 of Nisan 311 BCE), like Greek cities in Mesopotamia and Iran and not the Arsacid one (247 BCE) (Vattioni 1981, 8 and nos. 64f.). For him, as the lower lines of the inscription show, the *Beyt Alāhā* was identical to the *House of Šamaš* (1.2 [bis] Vattioni).

In Ḥatrā, religious law could also be issued by assemblies led by nomads (on their role, see Sommer 2005, 386f.), and this is shown in the inscription mentioned above (336, 3 Vattioni). Šamašbarek, an Arab nomad, decided on the acceptance of a law that forbade any kind of theft, even if the purloined object was worth only one obolus (*mā'ā* in Syriac), under the penalty of stoning. This law is preserved by Eusebios of Caesareia (d. ca. about 340 CE) in his “Evangelic preparation” (VI, 10, 24: In Ḥatrā, the one who steals something, worth an obolos, is stoned [my translation]). This *pastiche* of older texts, stitched together by the author in the service of Christianity, was no longer valid in Eusebios' lifetime. Bardesanes (in Syriac Bardaysān) from Edessa (d. 222 CE in Armenia) declares explicitly that this law was no longer valid: “They do not do it anymore” (Tubach 1986, 228).<sup>1</sup>

So, there is no inscriptional attestation for any religion present in Ḥatrā, except the one of historical Syria/Northern Iraq, centered on the Syro-Mesopotamian Sungod (but no traces of Mithraism, Judaism, or Mazdaism). That there were Christians in Hatra is an assumption by Tubach (1986, 229), for which we have no direct evidence (in contrast to Dura/Europos and Edessa at the same time). The solar religion in the city, with the exception of some nuances, was common to Edessa, Dura/Europos, Palmyra, Baalbek, and Emesa.

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1. The citation is according to Cureton (33/20). See also Vattioni (1981, 3) and Sommer (2005, 376f.). It is evident, also according to Tubach that the citation in Eusebios is from the lost Greek original version of Bardesanes; the Syriac text we have are the notes taken from the master by one of his pupils.

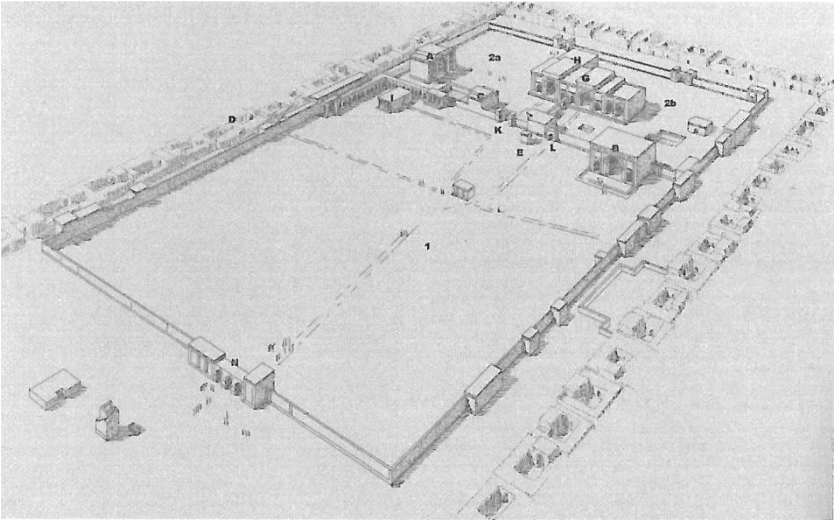


Only for Ḥaṭrā are these two religious institutions attested and worth of attention: The term “House of God,” later common for the Ka‘ba (though it not attested in the Qur‘ān),<sup>1</sup> and the canon concerning theft (which resembles the regulations of the Sharia, cf. Quran 5:33f., and those of the Roman law for *furtum*). The impressive ruins and unique inscriptions, now endangered, belong both to Greek/Roman and Iranian (Near Eastern) history. Millar’s question marks “East? West?” at the end of his book from 1993 (see also Sommer 2005, 355) symbolizes a major achievement: there is no sharp border between European and Oriental history and the protection of this common heritage is, therefore, a global duty (and an urgent one). It should be kept in mind that Constantine the Great, before adopting Christianity (officially only on his deathbed), worshipped the Sungod.

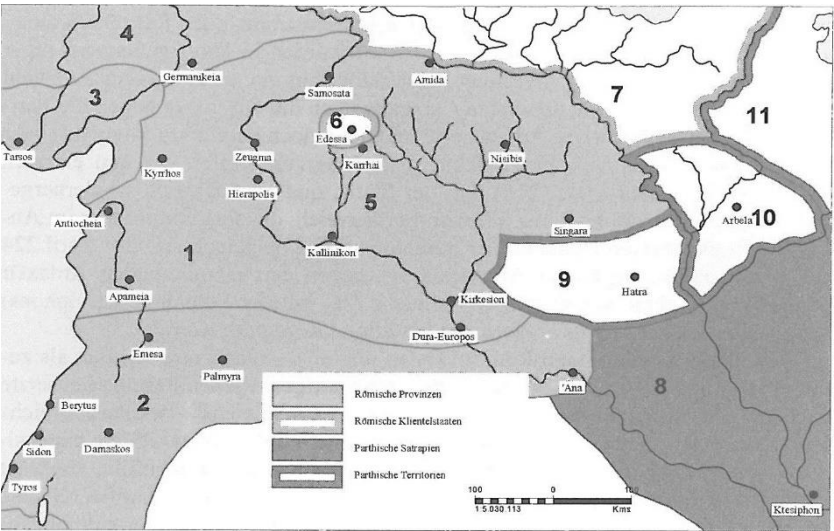


1. Aerial view of Ḥaṭrā (al-Ḥiḍr), taken from the book of Kennedy and Riley (1990, 105). It is an old photograph taken by the Royal Air Force. Important are the well visible circular plan (Parthian city), and the rectangular plan of the sanctuary in the center.

1. Attested though is the term *bayt*, followed by various qualifications, e.g. (*al-Ka‘ba*) *bayt al-ḥarām* (Quran 5:97); see also Quran 2:125-27 and 3:96. See EQ (2:458ff.) by J. E. Campo, EQ (3:75ff.) by G. R. Hawting, and Witztum (2009).



2. Isometric reconstruction of the central sanctuary of Ḥaṭrā (Sommer, 2005, 359), the *beyt Alaha*.



Roman vassal state. Dark Grey is Parthian, a dark margin a Parthian vassal state. 1. The province Syria Coele, 2. Syria Phoenice, 5. The new province of Mesopotamia, 6. The (rest of the) kingdom of Edessa/Urfa, 7. Armenia, 9. Ḥaṭrā, 10. Adiabene (whose kings were Jewish), 11. Media Atropatene, the nucleus of Modern Azerbaijan.



4. Relief cut in limestone from a temple in Ḥaṭrā (Tubach, 1986, 408ff. and Abbildung 10). The image shows either the Sungod Šamaš or his son, Barmaren (see above). Note the Roman tunic as dress. The piece, originally in Mosul, is hopefully preserved there.

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## **Jewish Theological Systematization in the Context of Islamic Culture**

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Among the most important Jewish encounters with other cultures and civilizations, the encounter with Islamic culture was, in our view, the most important. This encounter was in some aspects like their encounter with the ancient civilization, but the impacts were more valuable and constructive. Under Islamic rule, the Jews not only had a sense of security but also enjoyed a relatively satisfactory freedom of thought and religion. Their encounter with Islamic theology was more through their acquaintance with Mu'tazilite theology, which emerged at the beginning of the eighth century, and it was this encounter that resulted in theological and philosophical systematization in Jewish thought.

The impacts of Mu'tazilite theology on Jewish theological thought can be found in three areas: (1) content-oriented impacts, (2) methodological impacts, and (3) systematization of theology and philosophy.

**Keywords:** Jewish theology, Mu'tazilite, Kalām, Maimonides, al-Farabi.

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### **Introduction**

Among the most important Jewish encounters with other cultures and civilizations, three historical encounters can be highlighted, each of which were highly influential on Jewish culture and thought: (1) the encounter with Iranian culture, (2) the encounter with Greek culture, and (3) the encounter with Islamic culture.

The Jewish encounter with Iranians took place in the 6th century BC, following the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Great, the founder of Achaemenid Empire. The conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Great was a starting point in the Jewish-Persian relations, well remembered

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by Jewish and even non-Jewish historians. Iranian sovereignty brought social and political freedom and security for Jews (Sabourifar 1385 Sh, 45). Therefore, the Jewish people always commemorate their Iranian rulers, and names of many of these rulers have been mentioned in the Old Testament. In the Bible, Cyrus, King of Persia, is remembered as “God’s Christ,” whom the Lord appointed for conquering other nations and triumph over other lands (Gimann 1375 Sh, 42) and accompanied in all his conquests and victories (Isaiah 45:1-4). God considers Cyrus as His shepherd, one who fulfilled all that He pleased, and who re-built Jerusalem and renovated the Temple (Isaiah 44:28). Obviously, the great admiration of the Jews for Iranians made them welcome the impact of Persian religion even more. Many historians and researchers have demonstrated that Jews, in the Persian period, adopted important Iranian beliefs and rituals (Armstrong 1385 Sh, 49). Such beliefs include the existence of an evil force which is in constant conflict with good and is not under subjugation of God, finite and goal-oriented aspect of the universe, promise of a cosmic savior at the dawn of the end of the world providing the context for its end, the existence of heaven and hell and judgment of the dead, the end of the world with resurrection of the dead and final judgment and destruction of evil, establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth and righteous entry into this kingdom and eternal life with God (Boyce and Grenet 1385 Sh, 1:3; Rezaee n.d., 1:462; Hekmat 1388 Sh, 200-1).

Additionally, regarding the Jewish encounter with Greek culture, the Jewish community, especially in Alexandria, was highly exposed to identity-based and cultural threats. In other words, the Jews, in the Hellenistic period, were exposed to a significant transformation and to a serious cultural and religious threat. Therefore, they were concerned about their cultural survival as “Jews,” as they were in the struggle against praising Canaanites’ idols during the period of the Judges. In this struggle, the Jews were challenged both in terms of their social life and religious beliefs, and also in theological and intellectual terms. Many Jews were highly attracted to Greek culture, lifestyle, and systematized philosophical thought. Accordingly, the Jews, for the first time, encountered with such philosophical systems and systematic cosmologies as Plato’s, Aristotle’s, the Stoics’, and so on. Although such an encounter led to division within the Jewish community (one side of the struggle were Hellenists and the other side were Hasidim, the opponents of Greek culture), and although some like Philo tried to



develop a religious philosophy harmonizing Greek philosophy with the teachings of the Bible, those struggles neither created a new trend in Jewish culture nor led to the establishment of a Jewish theological or philosophical system. In fact, Philo's philosophical and theological heritage was handed to Muslims and Christians and not to the Jews.

Nevertheless, it took almost seven hundred years from Philo and his attempt to start a movement in Jewish theological systematization until the start of a systematic philosophical and theological practice in the Jewish communities in the Middle Ages and the emergence of the next philosophers under the territory of Islamic culture (Wolfson 1982; Winston 1997, 49). Since Philo until the era of Saadia Gaon, when we can see the start of theological reflections in the Jewish communities, Jewish thought was primarily focused on reflection on the scriptures (i.e. written and oral law) and proposing different interpretations for them, the bastion against the surrounding environment, especially the Greek intellectual environment considered as a threat. Over this period, we cannot see an independent work in the Jewish literature on theology or philosophy. It was only in the Middle Ages and in the context of Islamic culture that the Jews started their theological and philosophical works.

The Jews' encounter with Islamic culture was in some aspects like their encounter with the ancient civilization. However, the consequences were more valuable and constructive. In the light of Islamic rule, the Jews had not only a sense of security but also enjoyed a relatively satisfactory freedom of thought and religion. Islamic and Jewish social environments were so close that Arabic became the literary language of the Jews. However, Islamic culture was not a coherent and integrated package; it was facing, from the very beginning, the formation of intellectual and cultural currents, especially in the field of theology and philosophy.

The Jews' encounter with Islamic theology was more through their acquaintance with Mu'tazilite theology, which emerged at the beginning of the eighth century. Therefore, the Jewish theology during this period was more influenced by this theological current. Maimonides, who was a preeminent scholar of Jewish law in the Middle Ages, states that the Jewish theological doctrines (rabbinic and Karaite Judaism) are all derived from Mu'tazilite theology; Ash'arite theology, which later emerged in Islamic history and introduced new viewpoints,

did not influence Jewish theologians. This choice did not result from a comparison and evaluation of Mu'tazilite and Ash'arite ideas and teachings; rather, since Jewish theologians first got to know the Mu'tazilites, they adopted their ideas and thoughts.

From the very beginning, as we know, Islamic culture, with respect to its religious teachings and foundations, has been witness to the formation of numerous intellectual currents, especially in the realms of theology and philosophy. Mu'tazilite theological current was the earliest school of Islamic theology and had its beginnings in the 8th century. Moreover, Mu'tazilite theology is said to have emerged as a response to and in dealing with Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Christianity. Since monotheism (*tawhid*) and Justice ('*adl*) are two central Mu'tazilite doctrines, they call themselves "the People of Monotheism and Justice." Based on the divine Justice, righteous people are rewarded for their good deeds, while sinners are punished for their misdeeds. Clearly, such a belief would entail that we consider human beings as free-willed beings responsible for their deeds, and that God's promises and threats are meaningful. Additionally, Mu'tazilites, due to their belief in divine Justice, held a belief in the essential good and evil. Good and evil, in their view, are intrinsic in objects and actions; moreover, we are able to distinguish between good and evil by our own reason independently of revelation. Therefore, Mu'tazilites are said to have believed in rational and intrinsic good and evil. *Tawhid* (monotheism) is tantamount to the denial of any other god(s), on the one hand, and the belief in the absolute divine simplicity and denial of any composition in the divine nature, on the other. Clearly, the tenet just mentioned is also related to the issue of divine attributes. Mu'tazilites denied the reality of divine attributes and believed in the identity between divine essence and attributes; otherwise, they believed, the attributes would be pre-eternal beings beside God—an idea that entails *shirk* (polytheism). They also reject the belief in the creation of the Qur'an by the same argument.

### **Theological Impacts of Mu'tazilites on Jewish Theological Knowledge**

Theological impacts of Mu'tazilites on Jewish theology can be found in three areas. First, the theological issues raised among the Jewish theologians were to a large extent an imitation of Mu'tazilite theological issues. For instance, David Al-Mukammas, in his book '*Ishrun makalat* (*Twenty Chapters*), highlights such issues as the unity of God, the

divine attributes, and justice; issues which were also highlighted in Mu'tazilite theology. Saadia Gaon, in his book *al-Amanat wa l-i'tikadat* (*The Book of Doctrines and Opinions*) has displayed this influence to a large extent. Titles of the articles in the book and their order depict the influence of thought and ideas of the Muslim theologians of the time.<sup>1</sup>

Second, Mu'tazilites concentrated on intellect and a rational way of thinking. They believed in rational goodness and evil due to their emphasis on God's justice and also human free will. This highlighted the position of reason in their theology, which greatly influenced Jewish theologians (Rabbanites and Karaites) (Maimonides n.d., 2:180). This can clearly be observed in the works of such philosophers as David Al-Mukammas and Saadia (c.f. Wolfson 1979; Gaon 1976, xxv). These two theologians benefited from rational arguments to demonstrate their religious viewpoints in their books. Jacob Kirkisani, a Karaite, gave more priority to reason and rational thinking than revelation, since, as he believed, the Bible contained the notion of false prophets with their false claims of revelation (Sirat 1990, 40).

The third impact has to do with the systematization of theology. The contents and structure of Saadia's *The Book of Doctrines and Opinions* and Maimonides' *The Guide for the Perplexed* clearly depict the influence of the common ways of theological and philosophical debates among Muslims. The impact of the systematization of Jewish theology was obtaining a systematized construct of beliefs and also clear principles for theological discussions (c.f. Maimonides n.d., 180; Ben-Shammai 1997, 130).

The direct influence of philosophical and theological thoughts of Islamic thinkers on Jewish thinkers in the Middle Ages cannot be ignored. According to Ibn Tibbon (the famous translator of philosophical and mystical works from Arabic to Hebrew in the Middle Ages), the richness and diversity of writings in the Jewish community under Muslim rule was surprising. These works included both commentaries on the Bible and Talmud and also independent works in

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1. The titles are as follows: (1) on creation of the universe, (2) on the unity of God and other divine attributes, (3) on the divine commands, (4) on obedience and disobedience, predestination and divine justice, (5) on merits and demerits, (6) on the human soul and its eternity, (7) on the resurrection of the dead, (8) on the redemption (the age of Messiah and liberation of Israel), (9) On the heavenly reward and punishment, and (10) on human obligations in this world (Gaon 1976) .

various sciences, as well as apologetics, mainly in Arabic. This was a common procedure for those Jewish communities under the Islamic rule, though not for the Jews in Christian territories. Since their only concern was the Bible or because they did not have access to books related to other sciences, Jewish scholars did not highly value those sciences. In this regard, Ibn Tibbon emphasizes the importance of linguistic context for dissemination of science and philosophy among Jews in Muslim lands. Both language and suitable living environments gave rise to the formation of a kind of Arabic-Jewish culture in Islamic lands (Stroumsa 2009, 4). This influence was so effective that such thinkers as Saadia Gaon, Yahuda Ha-Levi, Maimonides, and Gersonides were not just seeking to adopt some important ideas here and there; rather, they studied and worked on Islamic philosophy profoundly, and then, of course, employed it for their own Jewish philosophical purposes. Possibly, one reason that Jewish philosophy is too dependent on Islamic philosophy is the closeness of Islam to Judaism. Their shared views on monotheism, for instance, can be cited as an example in this regard.

In terms of Islamic culture in the 9th century (2nd century AH), in addition to such theological currents as Mu'tazilites, Ash'arites, and the Imamiyya, some other major philosophical schools emerged following the translation movement. As a matter of fact, the boundaries between philosophy and theology cannot be determined in medieval Christian, Islamic, and Jewish traditions. For this reason, we have used the concepts of philosophy and theology interchangeably throughout the paper. Although for Philo of Alexandria, as a founder of religious philosophy (if we agree with Wolfson in this regard), philosophy was the servant of the Bible—a belief that became prevalent in Christianity, Islam, and Judaism—philosophy either became theological in the intellectual realm of these three religions or became theology itself in some cases. Therefore, it can be said that religion and religious beliefs were the stimuli to the intellectual activity of thinkers. More precisely, although influenced by Greek philosophical thought, the thinkers in this era adhered to their respective religion and faith. They were believers who wrote for their religious communities, trying to provide their readers with a reasoned defense of religious beliefs. Therefore, when it comes to classifying the Jewish intellectual groups in the medieval era, there is no clear-cut distinction between philosophers and theologians. On the other hand, in this era, we witness an integration of ideas and

views, especially among Muslim thinkers. Avicenna, for example, is found to be more neo-Platonic than Aristotelian. In other words, in Avicenna we have a platonized or neo-platonized Aristotle. However, one cannot ignore that some figures in the Middle Ages had philosophical thought, whereas theology was only at the margin of their philosophical thinking; such Jewish neo-Platonists as Isaac Israeli and Ibn Gabirol can be considered as examples in this regard (Rudavsky 1997, 154).

### **Kalam, Neo-Platonic and Aristotelian Movements**

To classify Jewish thinkers of the Middle Ages, we should focus on the contexts and foundations, rather than on the specific philosophical or theological schools to which they belonged. Accordingly, given the philosophical schools and views that lasted in the Islamic era (i.e., Platonic, Aristotelian, and Neo-Platonic schools) and also based on the philosophical integrations previously mentioned, the Jewish thinkers fall into different groups, including theological, neo-platonic, Aristotelian, and anti-Aristotelian currents. In this case, the Jewish philosophical and theological thinking is mainly based upon Islamic philosophy and theology. Therefore, we will study David al-Mukammās, Saadia Gaon, Jacob Qirqisani, and Yusuf al-Basir with an Islamic theological perspective, Isaac Israeli and Ibn Gabirol with a neo-platonic perspective, and Ibn Dawood and Maimonides with an Aristotelian philosophy perspective. We thus deal with four currents in the Jewish medieval thought: (1) theological (Karaite and Rabbinic), (2) Neo-Platonic, (3) Aristotelian, and (4) anti-Aristotelian currents.

It should be noted that the Jewish thinkers of the Islamic era can be classified into two geographical groups: (1) those in the Islamic territories including the eastern Islamic world (Egypt and Mesopotamia) and the western Islamic world, and (2) those in the Western Christian lands (including northern Spain, the Provence, and Italy). The condition of Judaism in northern Europe did not offer a good opportunity for the Jews to participate in intellectual interactions with their Christian neighbors; therefore, the Jewish scholars in this region, such as Rashi, were focused mainly on hermeneutic activities. In southern Europe, possibly except for the south of Italy, the relation between Jews and Christians was not comparable with the conditions of the Jews on the east. However, in Islamic countries, the Jewish communities were increasingly growing in the middle of the 9th to 13th

centuries. Moreover, the Islamic and Jewish social environments were so close that Arabic language and literature became the scientific and literary language of the Jewish scholars; whereas, the Jews in Christian lands spoke their own native language, and Hebrew was their scientific and written language.

To cite some instances relating to direct impact of Islamic thinkers on the Jews, we can refer to such Jewish theologians as David al-Mukammas and Saadia Gaon, as well as Jewish philosophers such as Maimonides. Accordingly, al-Mukammas in his most important philosophical work titled *Ishrun maqala* (*Twenty Chapters*), written in Arabic, was highly influenced by Mu'tazilites in terms of the methods and contents of his discussions. As mentioned earlier, al-Mukammas, influenced by Mu'tazilite doctrines, focused mainly on the issues of God's unity and consequently divine attributes. He first addressed different meanings of unity, clarifying that when one says that God is the "One," he should consider this oneness as both external (i.e., rejection of other gods), and internal (i.e., belief in God's essential simplicity and rejection of any multiplicity in His nature). Clearly, al-Mukammas targeted both Christian beliefs and the beliefs of the attributists, who believe in the reality of divine attributes. Therefore, he refers to God's attributes as not being superadded to His essence, but identical with His essence. Thus, when ascribing the attribute of life to God, al-Mukammas would say, "God is living not in virtue of life, but His life is Himself," and "God is living not in virtue of life, but in virtue of Himself." He took the latter preposition from Abu l-Hudhayl and the former from al-Nazzam.

Saadia Gaon wrote his important work *The Book of Doctrines and Beliefs* in Arabic, which was the first systematic and philosophical presentation of Jewish doctrines, using Islamic philosophical and theological concepts. In the scheme of his work, Saadia closely followed the Mu'tazilites. As was previously mentioned, the topics of the ten articles of his book and their order clearly reveals the influence of theological discussions prevalent among Muslims and also the imprint of their structure on Saadia. In addition, they represent his serious commitment to the systematization of Jewish. Prior to discussing any of these topic, Saadia explains his main pre-supposition, which is the compatibility of reason and revelation. Thus, influenced by Muslim theologians, Saadia distinguishes between rational knowledge or laws ('*aqliyyāt*, *sharā'i*' '*aqliyya*) and revealed

knowledge or laws (*sharā'i' sam'iyya, sam'iyyāt*). Therefore, he considers rational reflection and speculation as compatible with religious teachings.

After stating this primary standpoint, he clarifies the sources of knowledge in order to take a firmer step in illustrating his own theological system. However, as we saw earlier, the first topic discussed in his book is the createdness of the world and the unity of God, the Creator. For Saadia, as a theologian, it is important to first prove the createdness of the world so as to prove the existence of God and His oneness and the issues associated with it. Under the topic of God's unity, Saadia is most emphatic in rejecting the corporeality of God, thereby highlighting His immateriality and transcendence. In his view, God, unlike other beings and things, cannot be defined by any of the Aristotelian categories, and He transcends all of them. As with al-Muqammis and Muslim theologians, Saadia believes that God's essence is identical with His attributes; therefore, he highlights God's absolute simplicity as against Christians and Muslim attributists and also rejects any idea of plurality and combination in God. Saadia emphasizes on the negative meaning of divine attributes, arguing that when, for example, we say that God is All-knowing, we mean that, first, His knowledge is not comparable with the human way of acquiring knowledge, and, second, His being All-knowing means that He is not ignorant. Furthermore, Saadia believes that those attributes ascribed to God in the Bible with an apparently metaphorical or personified meaning incompatible to God should be interpreted in metaphorical and allegorical terms. Thus, in Saadia's view, God is one, both in terms of external and numerical unity and in terms of internal unity and simplicity. Influenced by Mu'tazilites, he also discusses the issue of the createdness of God's word and, following Abu l-Hudhayl, argues for its creation in time. In addition, he distinguishes between the *communicative* word of God and His *creative* word. Saadia argues that when used to show God's communication with a prophet, the word refers to a real being, which God creates in the air at the time of the communication; however, when used for the creative act of God, it refers only to the will and wisdom of God in His creative actions. Thus, it is obvious that Saadia believes in the createdness of the Torah just as Mu'tazilites believed in the creation of the Qur'an.

Other Jewish theologians, such as Qirqisani and Yusuf al-Basir, did not differ much from Saadia in terms of their approaches and systems of thought and the influence of Muslim thinkers on them.

### **Maimonides and Islamic Philosophy**

Maimonides (1135-1204) was the most important and preeminent medieval Jewish philosopher in Spain. Besides the prophets of Israel, he regarded Aristotle as the highest representative of human rational faculty, calling him “the chief of the philosophers” (Maimonides n.d., 1:30). In a letter to Ibn Tibbon, the Hebrew translator of the *Guide for the Perplexed*, he states, “Aristotle's works are the roots and foundations of all works on the sciences, but they cannot be understood except with the help of commentaries, those of Alexander of Aphrodisias, those of Themistius, and those of Averroes” (Leaman 2013, 8). The great deal of compliments he gives to al-Farabi, Ibn Bajja, and Averroes (as the great interpreter of Aristotle), as well as to Avicenna (though to a lesser extent) suggest his inclination towards Aristotelian philosophy and disinclination towards neo-platonic philosophy or neo-platonic interpretations of Aristotle. He praises al-Farabi so much, considering him a great sage and philosopher whose works, especially his *Metaphysics*, sources of wisdom and truth.

Maimonides lived in an Islamic environment. He was familiar with both theological and philosophical currents in the Muslim community of the time and with Jewish intellectual figures and the works they had produced under the influence of Muslim theologians. The intellectual paradigms dominant in the Islamic community of the time gave a specific worldview and intellectual framework to Maimonides, a fact that is especially reflected in his *The Guide for the Perplexed*. Issues addressed in this book—such as knowledge of God, compatibility of reason and revelation, proving the existence of God, God's unity and His attributes, divine providence, the creation of the world, prophecy, religious dogmas, and so forth—were long discussed by Muslim theologians.

### **Maimonides and al-Farabi: Imagination Faculty and Prophecy**

As previously mentioned, Maimonides held al-Farabi in the highest esteem, considering his ideas in metaphysics as guides to truth. As we know, al-Farabi is a philosopher concerned with both systematization and harmonization; accordingly, he emphasized that philosophy is one unit, since its only aim is the pursuit of truth. Therefore, al-Farabi



attempts to show that despite the apparent difference between them, Aristotle and Plato are in fact in agreement. Based on his theocentric perspective, al-Farabi strove to reconcile religion and philosophy, contributing much to the philosophical foundation of later philosophy. His doctrine of reconciliation was based on two main points: first, revising the Peripatetic philosophy and dressing it with a Platonic form; and, second, providing a rational interpretation of religious truth. His cosmological and psychological theories, which shaped his theory of prophecy, played a key role in this regard (Madkoor 1362 Sh, 1:657). According to al-Farabi, prophecy is the result of an interaction between the intellect and the mimetic capacities of the imaginative faculty. What makes prophetic knowledge unique is not its intellectual content *per se*—that is found in philosophy as well. True prophecy is in reality the symbolization and imitation of the selfsame truths known demonstratively and intellectually in philosophy. All prophets possess, in addition to their intellectual capacities, the gift of an especially keen imaginative faculty. This gift allows their imagination to receive an influx or emanation of intelligibilities from the Active Intellect. In this way, what is normally available only to a select few who can reach the level of the acquired intellect, can be communicated by the prophet in the form of sensory images to a much wider, non-philosophical public (Black 1996, 187). According to al-Farabi, prophetic inspiration or revelation is caused by imagination, which can create mental images, as in dreams and visions, and also ascend to higher worlds to receive, in its communion with the Active Intellect, heavenly rulings related to particular cases (Madkoor 1362 Sh, 1:658). Thus, prophecy can be explained through this communion of imagination with the Active Intellect, and the chief characteristic of a prophet is to have a vivid imagination to work in conjunction with the Active Intellect.

Therefore, according to al-Farabi, both prophets and philosophers receive their knowledge from the same source, which is the Active Intellect; the former through imagination, and the latter by way of speculation and contemplation. In fact, religious truths and philosophical truths are both the radiation of the divine illumination through imagination or contemplation. However, we must not suppose that al-Farabi bases prophecy solely on human imagination; rather, according to his theory of intellect, which considers a hierarchy for human intellect (potential intellect, actual intellect, and acquired

intellect), human beings may reach a stage where the actual intellect becomes the acquired intellect, and, in this case, the perfect sage or the prophet (or the imam) emerges, who can receive revelation from God through the Active Intellect. Therefore, whatever is emanated from God to the Active Intellect emanates from the Active Intellect through the acquired faculty to the passive intellect, and then from it to the imaginative faculty. So, the person becomes a wise and perfect intellectual because of what his passive intellect receives from the Active Intellect, and he is a prophet and a warner because of what his imaginative faculty receives from the Active Intellect (Farabi 1361 Sh, 269).

It should be mentioned that al-Farabi uses imaginative faculty to explain only parts of the prophet's perceptions (i.e., the images), but he talks about the necessity of the communion of the prophet's intellect with the Active Intellect to explain other perceptions of the prophet (that is, the intelligible forms). In fact, al-Farabi is trying to explain three types of perceptions in the prophet: perception of intelligibilities, perception of imaginative and tangible forms (such as seeing the angel of revelation), and perception of specific incidents in the past, present, or future. In al-Farabi's view, revelation in the second or third type entails the communion of the prophet's imagination with the Active Intellect, but in the first type requires the conjunction of his rational faculty with the Active Intellect. Thus, he clearly asserts that in the prophet, the Active Intellect is present in both components of his rational soul, which are theoretical and practical intellects, and then in his imaginative faculty (cf. Kriesel 2001, 246-47). Therefore, it is clear that the exclusive characteristic of a prophet is the perfection of his imaginative faculty. A prophet differs from a philosopher in terms of the perfection of the imaginative faculty, but both are similar in terms of the perfection of the theoretical faculty. Thus, every prophet is a philosopher, but not every philosopher is a prophet.

### **Maimonides and Prophecy**

Like al-Farabi, Maimonides is an eclectic thinker, who attempts to integrate two contrary views. Before explaining the integrative view of Maimonides, we should first clarify the place of the imaginative faculty for him. In his view, the imaginative faculty has two functions: preserving images and recombining them. The material and data that it uses is the product of the five senses. Sometimes, as when we sleep, the

senses cease to function and the imaginative faculty, freed from the continuous distractions of the senses, can do its own proper activities and reveal its true capabilities. In this state, it turns towards itself and retrieves the images that it has stored while we were awake. This signifies that the imaginative faculty could achieve a level of perfection in which it sees things as if they were in the outside world (Maimonides n.d., 2:402). Thus, the concept of imagination becomes quite an important concept in Maimonides' theory of prophecy. It is usually said that Maimonides, where the question of a corresponding external reality does not arise, considers prophecy merely an internal psychological process, something similar to a dream. He indeed claims that the difference between dreams and prophecy is only a matter of degree (Leaman 2013, 39). He even says that whenever one finds in the Scriptures the presence of angels in the process of prophecy, it is just a description of a psychological experience caused by the imaginative faculty (Leaman 2013, 39).

Maimonides adopts a conception of imagination which implicitly encompasses a wide range of internal senses, but its main function is to combine and analyze concepts and images. Through our five senses, we receive sensory data and we re-organize them in different ways; for example, we relate our current hunger to not having had breakfast in the morning. Imagination is also related to what will happen in the future, such that if the faculty of imagination is so powerful and perfected in a person, he may receive the premonition of the future events. He who has a powerful imagination possesses both a powerful rational faculty and also appropriate moral and physical characteristics. Such a person is in fact a prophet, who knows not only what will happen in the future but also the reasons and means of what is to happen. This awareness is due to a deeper understanding of divine and logical origins of those events. Such a person possesses the skills required for transferring his information to others— a practical and visual capacity, which itself requires the ability to employ the faculty of imagination. The imaginative faculty is fully engaged with human senses, and the peak of its function is when the senses are free and resting. In the view of Maimonides, exactly at this state, an emanation from God is received by this faculty in accordance with its talent and readiness. The explanation of how this emanation is transferred from God through the separate intellects to the human imaginative faculty is based on

Maimonides' hierarchical cosmology that he has borrowed from Muslim philosophers.

As already mentioned, to be a prophet, it is necessary for both the rational faculty and the imaginative faculty to attain that emanation from the Active Intellect. If the emanation is received only by a person's rational faculty, and not by his imaginative faculty, he becomes a philosopher; if it is received by both his rational and imaginative faculties, he becomes a prophet; and if it is received only by his imaginative faculty, he becomes a statesman, lawgiver, diviner, charmer, and so on.

### **Conclusion**

In this article, we focused on the Jewish encounter with Muslims, which resulted in the formation of the theological and philosophical systems in the Jewish tradition. We showed this important influence in the works of such great Jewish theologians and philosophers as al-Mukammas in his *Ishrun makalat*, Saadia Gaon in his *al-Amanat wa l-i'tikadat*, and Maimonides in his *The Guide for the Perplexed*. The imprint of Islamic theology is clearly reflected in the issues discussed by these Jewish thinkers, in the positions they have taken, and in the structure and system they have chosen to present their ideas.

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## ***Isra'iliyyat* or Traditions of Jewish Origin: A Major Instance of Transferred Traditions**

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One of the recent inquiries in the field of hadith studies is the investigation of transferred traditions and their causes and impacts on Shi'i hadith circles. By exploring some traditions in the hadith collection of al-Shaykh al-Saduq and comparing the textual similarities and also the chain of transmitters, this research attempts to show that traditions of Jewish origin in the Shi'i hadith circles are often transferred traditions and more care and attention should be paid in transmitting and relying on them. However, such traditions in the Imami School are but few and had less chance of appearance, mainly because the Sunni transmitters of such traditions were critiqued and the Imams of the household of the Prophet, peace be upon them, stood against the transmission of these traditions and restrained their effect on the Shi'i scholars of hadith.

**Keywords:** transferred tradition, *Isra'iliyyat* (traditions of Jewish origin), consequences of the transferred traditions.

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### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1. Transferred Traditions**

“Transferred traditions” is a recent term introduced by Allamah Askari in his invaluable book *Al-Quran al-karim wa riwayat al-madrasatayn* (The Quran and the Traditions of the Two Schools), where he argues that most of the corrupt traditions in the Imami circles of hadith are traditions transferred from the school of the Caliphs (Askari 1416 AH, 3:18). This term has been mentioned in some other researches, and some traditions have been studied in this light, such as the “Traditions of the Seven Letters” (Moaddab 1391, 11, 28). Although Allamah

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Askari discussed this term only in relation to those traditions transferred from the Sunnis to the Shi'is, yet this term can be extended to other Islamic sects and can be defined generally as those sayings and narrations which have been transferred from one religion or sect to another religion or sect and are accepted as true in some sources or cases. In this research, by the term "transferred traditions" is intended those traditions which have been transferred from the Sunnis to the Shi'is.

### **1.2. The *Israiliyyat* or Traditions of Jewish Origin**

One of the reasons for confusing pure and impure interpretations and traditions in both schools is the intrusion of *Isra'iliyyat* or traditions of the Jewish origin. Although the term *Isra'iliyyat* apparently means stories derived from Jewish sources, yet for the interpreters and scholars of hadith it has a broader significance and includes all of the ancient myths which were introduced by classical scholars in exegesis, hadith, or history, whether their sources are Jewish, Christian, or other sources. Some interpreters and experts of hadith have an even broader definition for "*Isra'iliyyat*" as whatsoever has been introduced in exegesis and hadith by the enemies of Islam out of hostility and hatred (Ma'rifat 1385 Sh, 2:70; see also Dhahabi 1400 AH, 19-20). Researchers, especially in recent periods, have made many attempts to introduce and study the causes and motivations and also the impacts of the *Isra'iliyyat*.

Certain factors, such as communication with the People of the Book and their high status in learning, the common features of the Islamic texts and those of the People of the Book, and the curiosity of the Muslims are among the reasons for the intrusion of the *Isra'iliyyat* (Diyari 1383 Sh, 102ff.). However, it should be noted that the inattention of some Muslims to the orders and recommendations of the Prophet in respect of consulting the people of the Book, the disagreement with recording the Prophetic tradition, the simplicity of some companions in consulting the people of the Book and their narrations, especially in relation to the stories of the Quran, and the hostility of the Jews to the Muslims were the main causes that some of the exegeses and traditions are abounding with so many unpleasant materials that distinguishing the sound and the unsound has become too difficult even for the scholars. The period of the emergence and circulation of the *Isra'iliyyat* occurs at the end of the rule of Umar (Abu Shahba 1408 AH, 89). Following that period, these stories are conveyed



from the Companions to the Followers, and from the Followers to other generations to be recorded continually in the books of exegesis.

## **2. Rarity of *Isra'iliyyat* in the Shi'i Heritage**

Because of certain reasons, the Imami exegetes and scholars of hadith were less affected by the *Isra'iliyyat* and were less suspected of transmitting such traditions. Considering these reasons could be helpful in this research.

### **2.1. The Different Sources of Exegesis and Hadith in the Two Schools**

The first reason is related to the different sources of the Shi'i and Sunni exegesis. One of the main differences concerns the sayings of the Companions. The Sunnis on the basis of the principle of the Justice of the Companions (*'adalat al-sahaba*) hold that their sayings are as reliable as the Prophet's. Therefore, "the majority of the Sunnis maintain that the traditions transmitted correctly by any of the Companions are authentic and believe that examining the justice and reliability of the Companions is out of question" (Babaie 1385 Sh, 1:181). Accordingly, for the Sunnis, a tradition reported on the authority of one of the Companions is as reliable as a tradition reported directly from the Prophet; that is, the flaw of extending the Prophetic tradition to that reported only by the Companions and the followers (As'adi 1389 Sh, 1:169).

The Shi'i scholars claim that the traditions of the Companions is valid only after securing its authenticity and when they report the sayings and traditions of the Infallibles (Moaddab 1386 Sh, 55). The Shi'is, on the basis of their realistic observation of the life of the Companions, hold that they were not infallible and, therefore, their sayings and actions are not authoritative. Thus, one may observe that most of the Sunni hadith collections, for example, abound in traditions reported by a Companion like Abu Hurayra, the student of Ka'b al-Ahbar, who is suspected by the Sunni scholars of deception in hadith. He was with the Prophet only for twenty-one months, but has related more hadiths from the Prophet than all other Companions put together, and, therefore, the Sunnis mention that he is the first suspected narrator in Islam (Abu Riyya 1389 Sh, 278-91). On the other hand, Sunni canonical hadith collections contain almost nothing by 'Ali—peace be upon him—who was with the Prophet from the very beginning, and both schools unanimously agree on his justice, reliability, and great virtues.

In contrast, since in the Shi‘i sources of exegesis and hadith, the Prophet and the immaculate Imams are considered to be infallible in their sayings and actions, the Shi‘i traditions have been less affected by the *Isra’iliyyat* and corrupt traditions.

## **2.2. The Campaign of the Imams against the *Isra’iliyyat***

Besides what was said, the Imams paid much attention to the intrusion of the *Isra’iliyyat* and tried to show their inauthenticity through rational and scholarly criticisms and with reference to the verses of the holy Quran and Prophetic traditions. The Imams in their weighty critique have considered both the texts and the chains of transmission.

### **2.2.1. The Imams’ Criticism of the *Isra’iliyyat*’s Content**

As an example of the critique and rejection of the *Isra’iliyyat* by the Imams is Imam al-Sadiq and Imam al-Rida’s criticism of a forged story about Harut and Marut. It is reported in *‘Uyun akhbar al-Rida* that Ma’mun asked Imam al-Rida—peace be upon him—about the tradition indicating that the planet Venus was originally a woman who led Harut and Marut to sin, and because of that she was transformed into a planet. The Imam answered: “They lie in saying that ... Indeed, the Exalted and Glorious God does not transform His enemies into bright lights, preserving them as long as the heavens and the earth endure” (Saduq 1378 Sh, 1:271-2). The Imams not only opposed openly the transmitters of these traditions and called them liars, but also critiqued such stories both rationally and with reference to Quranic verses.

### **2.2.2. The Imams’ Critique of the Chain of Transmission of the *Isra’iliyyat***

The scholars of hadith have introduced certain individuals as the main sources of the circulation of the *Isra’iliyyat*. Some of the most famous among them are Ka‘b al-Ahbar, Abu Hurayra, Abdullah ibn Salam, Abdullah ibn ‘Amr al-‘As, Tamim ibn Aws al-Dari, and Wahab ibn Munabbih (Marifat 1385 Sh, 2:84; see also Abu Shahba 1408 AH, 97-106; al-Dhahabi 1400 AH, 95-115; ‘Abd al-Rahman Rabi‘ 2009, 44ff.). The infallible Imams—peace be upon them—give their clear views in their critique of these individuals. For example, it is reported that Imam al-Baqir called Ka‘b al-Ahbar, who claimed that the Ka‘ba prostrated every morning before Jerusalem, a liar (Kulayni 1407 AH, 4:239-40).

Compare now these views with the position of a person like Ka‘b al-Ahbar in the sources of the Sunnis. The majority of the Sunni scholars

believe he is a trustworthy person and nothing can tarnish his justice or put into doubt his reliability (Dhahabi 1400 AH, 96). They also call Abu Hurayra the narrator of Islam (Abu Riyya n.d., 90). So, thanks to the guidance of the Imams and the efforts and care of the Shi'i scholars of hadith, the *Isra'iliyyat* could not find much opportunity to affect the Shi'i hadith.

### **3. The Incursion of the *Isra'iliyyat* into the Shi'i Legacy**

Shi'i hadith and exegesis, however, are not free of the *Isra'iliyyat*. Najmi writes:

Unfortunately, some of these fake stories, which are much appealing and attractive to the common people, have been widely narrated by some narrators and story-tellers in the name of the stories of the Prophets, and have been collected in some cheap books of certain Shi'i authors, whose aim was to collect whatever is narrated, whether correct or incorrect, significant or insignificant. Some of these stories, such as the story of the Owner of the Two Hands (*Dhu al-Yadayn*) and the forgetfulness of the Prophet (*sahw al-Nabi*), found their way into certain sources, which attributed them to the Imams and established a chain of transmission for them in order to validate and authenticate these stories. (Najmi 1390, 395-396)

We attempt, however, to show the relative purity of the Shi'i hadith tradition from the *Isra'iliyyat* in comparison with the Sunni tradition. This is of course due to the two already mentioned reasons: questioning the absolute authority of the Companions' sayings and the struggle of the Imams against the *Isra'iliyyat*.

But what about the *Isra'iliyyat* in the Shi'i hadith collections and exegeses? The answer to this question is the main point in this research: the main traditions of Jewish origin in the Shi'i sources have been transferred from Sunni sources. Tracing an example of such traditions in Qur'anic commentaries such as *Majma' al-bayan* and *al-Tibyan*, we see that one of their important sources is al-Tabari's *Jami' al-bayan*, which is full of *Isra'iliyyat*. Moreover, examining the chains of transmission of these traditions indicates that many of them are narrated by people like Abu Hurayra and Tamim ibn Aws Dari. Experts of hadith and exegetes have sometimes cited these commentaries and in many cases without mentioning their chains of transmitters. Later, these Sunni reports entered Shi'i exegeses and were circulated as Shi'i hadith and

in the name of the people of the household of the Prophet, peace be upon them.

Here, we do not intend to have a thorough discussion and critique of the *Isra'iliyyat* and refer the reader to the detailed works written on this subject. Our aim in this article is to show that many of such traditions have been transferred from Sunni sources to Shi'i sources.

The other point which should be pointed out here is that although in the evaluation of the *Isra'iliyyat* their chains of transmission needs to be considered, we should know that, as attested by hadith scholars, the corrupters of hadith, including the Exaggerators (*Ghulat*), did their best to invent chains of transmission for the forged hadiths ('Askari 1416 AH, 3:254).

In the light of what has been said, we will have a look at some of the traditions mentioned in al-Saduq's work to show that they are invented and transferred from the Sunni sources to Shi'i collections.

#### **4. A Case Study: The Traditions on the Causes of Earthquake in *Man la yahduruh al-faqih***

In his *Man la yahduruh al-faqih*, al-Shayk al-Saduq quotes three hadiths on the causes of earthquake:

##### **4.1. The First Tradition**

Al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, states, "When Dhu al-Qarnayn came to the dam, he crossed it and entered the darkness. He suddenly met an angel standing on a mountain, whose height was five hundred *dhira'*. The angel said to him, "O Dhu al-Qarnayn! Was there no other path behind you?" Dhu al-Qarnayn said, "Who are you?" The Angel answered, "I am one of the angels of the Merciful trusted with this mountain. Allah has created no other mountain but it has a vein connected to this mountain. When Allah the Exalted wants to strike a town with earthquake, He reveals that to me and I strike it with earthquake." However, earthquake could happen because of some other causes. (Saduq 1413 AH, 1:542)

This hadith has been mentioned on the authority of al-Saduq in many other hadith sources, such as *Tafsir al-wafi* (Fayd al-Kashani 1406 AH, 26:490), *Mir'at al-'uqul* (Majlisi 1404 AH, 25:367), *Bihar al-anwar* (Majlisi 1403 AH, 57:127), *Al-Nur al-mubin* (Jaza'iri 1404 AH, 143), *Rawdat al-wa'izin* (Fattal al-Naysaburi 1375 Sh, 1:46), *Tahdhib* (Tusi 1407 AH, 3:290), and *Tafsir al-Ayyashi* (Ayyashi 1380 Sh, 2:350).

In his *'Ilal al-shara'i'*, al-Saduq also mentions the same hadith with a disconnected chain of transmission: "I was informed of this hadith by 'Isa ibn Muhammad on the authority of 'Ali ibn Mahziyar, 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, 'Abbad ibn Hammad, reporting from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him (Saduq n.d., 2:554-5). Al-Saduq also mentions the complete chain of transmission in *al-Amali* and links the chain through Isa ibn Muhammad to Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him:

We were told by Muhammad ibn 'Ali Majiluyah, may Allah be pleased with him, through Muhammad ibn Yahya al-'Attar, Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn 'Umran al-Ash'ari, 'Isa ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Mahziyar, 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, 'Abdullah ibn Hammad from Abu 'Abdillah al-Sadiq, peace be upon him. (Saduq 1376 Sh, 464)

In al-Saduq's *Kamal al-din wa tamam al-ni'mah*, such a tradition has also been reported (from one of the Infallibles) on the authority of Muhammad ibn Sulayman in a detailed story about Dhu al-Qarnayn (Saduq 1395 Sh, 2:394-406).

#### **4.2. The Second Hadith**

Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, says, "Allah the Exalted created the earth and ordered the fish to carry it. It boasted that "I carry it by my own power." Allah the Exalted then sent another fish whose length was no more than a span and it entered its nose. It was disturbed for forty mornings. So when Allah wants to strike a land with earthquake, He makes it imagine that fish and it shakes the earth out of fear." Of course, earthquake may occur because of other reasons. (Saduq 1413 AH, 1:543)

#### **4.3. The Third Tradition**

Al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, says, "Allah the Glorious and Exalted has ordered the fish to carry the earth, and each land of the lands is settled on one of its scales. When Allah wants to strike a land with earthquake He orders the fish to shake that scale, and the fish shakes it. If the scale is removed that land will turn upside down with the permission of Allah the Exalted." Of course, earthquake may occur because of any of these three causes, and these traditions are not different. (Saduq 1413 AH, 1:543)

#### **4.4. The Fourth Tradition**

Sulayman al-Daylami asked Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, about earthquake: "What is it?" The Imam answered, "It is one of

the signs of Allah.” Sulayman asked, “What is its cause?” The Imam replied, “Allah the Exalted has trusted an angel with the veins of the earth, and when Allah wants to strike a land with earthquake, He orders that angel to shake such and such a vein. Then the angel shakes the vein of that land which Allah the Most High and Exalted has ordered and the land would move with its people.” (Saduq 1413 AH, 1:543-4)

In what follows, we will see some evidence and proofs that these hadiths are transferred traditions.

#### **4.5. An Assessment of the Four Hadiths**

##### **4.5.1. The Discrepancy between Their Contents**

In the first hadith (about Dhu al-Qarnayn), the cause of earthquake is claimed to be an angel, who is set firmly on a mountain to which all the mountains of the earth are connected by a vein. By the order of Allah, the angel shakes that vein and there will be an earthquake. In the second hadith, the fear of the big fish (i.e., the whale) is said to be the cause of earthquake. And in the third, the cause is the movement of the fish on whose scales cities are located. The fourth hadith is somehow a restatement of and an emphasis on the first hadith, for it speaks of an angel in whose hand is the vein which connects all cities to each other and by each movement there would be an earthquake in one of the cities.

##### **4.5.2. The Traditions of Earthquake and the *Isra'iliyyat***

One who is familiar with the *Isra'iliyyat* knows that such traditions deal with the phenomena of the world of nature more than any other subject (Marifat 1385 Sh, 2:136). Galaxies, darkness, night and day, mountains, lightning and thunder, heaven and earth, water and sea, the sun and the moon and stars, and other natural phenomena make a huge bulk of the *Isra'iliyyat*.

One of the cases which is considered by many scholars to be one of the clear instances of the *Isra'iliyyat* is the sayings and traditions which follow the story of Dhu al-Qarnayn and the first verse of the surah Qaf (Qur'an 50:1). The stories and sayings reported on these two cases include certain issues, the most important of which is the story of the mountain Qaf and its role in the universe. In most of these traditions, all the regions of the earth are connected to this mountain by a vein, and when it moves those regions move as well. These traditions have been narrated in different ways and on different authorities in Sunni hadith collections.

In order to draw the attention of the reader to the similarity between these *Isra'iliyyat* and what is said by al-Saduq, we mention as an example some of these traditions which al-Suyuti mentions under the first verse of the surah Qaf.

Ibn Hatam quotes Ibn 'Abbas (Suyuti 1404 AH, 6:101-2) that Allah created a sea that encompasses this earth and beyond this sea He has created a mountain called Qaf, which is the heaven of this earth and it encompasses the sea. Beyond this mountain, He created an earth like this earth but seven times bigger. Beyond that, He created a sea that encompasses that earth and then a mountain by the name Qaf, which is the second heaven and encompasses that sea. Then he continued his counting up to seven earths, seven seas, seven mountains, and seven heavens, and added that this is the meaning of the verse "and the sea replenished with seven more seas" (31:27).

It is narrated that 'Abdullah ibn Barida, following the verse "Qaf" (50:1), said, "Qaf is a mountain of emerald, which encompasses the world, and the two sides of heaven are set on it." Ibn Abi al-Dunya in his book *'Uqubat* ("Punishments"), and Abu al-Shaykh in *al-'Azama* ("The Book of Majesty") have quoted Ibn 'Abbas as saying:

Allah created a mountain by the name Qaf, which encompasses the entire world. The roots of Qaf reach down the very rock on which the earth is settled. When Allah wants to strike a land with earthquake, He orders the same mountain and the mountain shakes the veins which are tied closely to that land and makes it shake and move. This is how an earthquake strikes a land while nothing happens in another land. (Suyuti 1404 AH, 6:101-2)

A look into the words of al-Saduq and the traditions on Dhu al-Qarnayn and Qaf leave no doubt that these traditions are among the *Isra'iliyyat*. Ibn Kathir (d. 774 AH) is probably the first person who shows with meticulous erudition that these traditions are of Jewish origin. He states,

Such traditions are rooted in the superstitions of the Israelites, and because some people believe referring to their traditions on subjects which can be neither attested nor contested is permissible they have accepted these views from them. I believe these traditions and those similar to them are the fabrications of some disbelieving Jews to deceive people in religious issues; as in the Muslim community also,

despite the presence of great scholars, memorizers of the Quran, and leaders, such false sayings are attributed to the Prophet. (Ibn Kathir 1419 AH, 7:368)

Mulla ‘Ali al-Qari (fl. tenth century AH) in his *Mawdu‘at al-kubra* (“The Great Subjects”) argues that this tradition is one of the traditions which are rejected by many sound arguments (Qari 1391, 451). Al-Alusi, having mentioned the tradition of the mountain Qaf and the cause of earthquake, writes:

My view on this subject is that of al-Qarrafi. Such a mountain according to sensible evidence does not exist. Explorers have many times travelled around the earth, but they never saw such a mountain. Although some of the narrators of these traditions are committed to transmitting sound traditions, yet critiquing and rejecting such traditions is easier than denying the senses. Of course, such a denial is not like the denial of the existence of a thing which cannot be found, as it is not hidden from people of wisdom. Earthquake as a phenomenon cannot be dependent on the mountain Qaf, but it is due to terrestrial gases and their need to rush through the surface of the earth and the resistance of the earth. For the people of even a little knowledge, the denial of these facts is absurd. (Alusi 1415 AH, 13:322)

Abu Shahba in his invaluable book *al-Ista‘iliyyat wa l-mawdu‘at fi kutub al-tafsir*, gives the reasons why the mentioned tradition is one of the *Isra’iliyyat*:

What is said in this regard has no external existence and, therefore, is not reliable. Such traditions are rooted in the superstitions of the Israelites, whose discourse is contaminated by lies, corruption, and distortion. Some hold that these traditions are made up and fabricated, and some others have admitted them with good intention; they have transmitted them, but because of their oddity, they do not believe they are true. We thank Allah for those scholars who rejected these fake traditions even before empirical sciences proved their inaccuracy as we see today. (Abu Shahba 1408 AH, 383)

He further severely criticizes people, such as al-Haythami, who try to admit and justify such traditions. He writes:

My question for al-Haythami and those who agree with him is, what the use and result of accepting such views, which are rejected by



schoolboys, let alone scholars, would be? Is it other than that such views open the door for those who desire to find fault with the infallibility of the Prophet? If such views could be accepted at the Age of Ignorance and superstition, today they cannot be admitted. Astronomers have travelled round the earth and have seen the earth suspended in the space without a mountain, a sea, a rock or a pillar. How can we admit such *Isra'iliyyat*, which go against the sense and scientific observations? (Abu Shahba 1408 AH, 383).

Perhaps the most judicious comment on the tradition of the mount Qaf, including the question of earthquake, is what is said by Allamah Tabataba'i in *al-Mizan*. Having quoted the tradition reported by Ibn 'Abbas and shown the different ways it was transmitted by the Sunnis and how it found its way into the exegesis of al-Qummi, he rejects it saying, "The reason for the inauthenticity of this tradition is that it is very similar to the *Isra'iliyyat* (Tabataba'i 1417 AH, 18:15). Ma'rifat also believes that this tradition is one of the *Isra'iliyyat* (Ma'rifat 1385 Sh, 2:137). Moreover, 'Allamah Tehrani writes in this regard and on the incursion of such traditions into the exegesis of al-Qummi: "Such traditions are quoted by Shi'i and Sunni narrators, for they do not know that these traditions are rooted in the Israelites' superstitions, which have entered our traditions mainly to corrupt the visage of Islam as opposing rationality, science, and sensible experience" (Sadiqi Tehrani 1365 Sh, 27:268).

Ignoring the Jewish origin of such traditions and that they are transferred traditions made many scholars fail in their explanation of the hadith. For example, Majlisi writes:

One way to explain the apparent difference among the traditions related to earthquake is that all of these causes occur in every earthquake or each earthquake happens due to one of these causes, as al-Saduq writes in *Man la yahduruh al-faqih*. The other way is to say that showing the (small) fish (to the big one) indicates an earthquake in the entire earth, shaking one of the scales indicates a strong earthquake in a particular region of the earth, and shaking one of the veins of the earth indicates a weaker earthquake in a particular region of the earth. (Majlisi 1403 AH, 88:149)

Ghaffari, who usually looks at hadiths with a critical eye, accepts these traditions and holds that such utterances are tailored to the level

of the perception and understanding of the Imam's addressees (Saduq 1367 Sh, 2:260-1).

Al-Saduq also refers to the mount Qaf and its story on another occasion, but in a different context. At the end of a detailed tradition reported on the authority of Sufyan al-Thawri from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, on the *disconnected letters* in the first verse of surah Qaf, he quotes the Imam as saying, "As to Qaf, it is the mountain that encompasses the earth and gives the sky its azure, by which Allah holds the earth lest it shakes with its people" (Saduq 1403 AH, 22-23). This tradition is regarded as inauthentic, because it is narrated on the authority of Sufyan al-Thawri, who is not considered a reliable narrator, and because such a tradition is narrated many times in Sunni sources (Akbarnejad 1392 Sh, 165-78). We should also add that the hadith, like the other hadiths on earthquake, is a transferred tradition.

#### **4.5.3. The High Frequency and Diversity of the Transmission of the Tradition in Sunni Sources**

As a general rule when a tradition is transmitted in different ways and on different authorities but with the same content in a school and then it is found in other schools, the tradition must have been transferred from the first school. This rule applies in particular to those traditions which are incompatible with the Quran, the established tradition, or the accepted principles of the target school. Besides the many reasons we have that this tradition is of a Jewish origin, some sources also have indicated that it is transmitted mainly by the Sunnis.

Allamah Tabataba'i (1417 AH, 18:15) among the Imamis and Abu Shahba (1408 AH, 383) among the Sunnis have stressed the many ways this tradition has been transmitted by the Sunnis. Consulting Sunni sources substantiates this testimony, as the hadith has been narrated in many of both early and recent Sunni hadith collections including the following:

1. **The third century AH.** Ibn Abi al-Dunya in *al-'Uqubat* (Punishments) reports on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas and Ka'b al-Ahbar, who is the most important and most known transmitter of the *Isra'iliyyat* (Ibn Abi Al-Dunya 1996, 1:23).
2. **The fourth century AH.** Abu al-Shaykh al-Isbahani in *al-'Azama* (The Book of Majesty) reports on the authority of Wahab, who is one of the main sources of transmitting and spreading the *Isra'iliyyat*, and Ibn 'Abbas (Isbahani 1408 AH, 1489).

Among the recent scholars, the author of *Al-Fatawa al-fiqhiyyah al-kubra* has collected the different views of the early scholars, especially those of Ibn 'Abbas, in order to reject the claim that this tradition is one of the *Isra'iliyyat*. Like what was said on the traditions quoted by al-Saduq about earthquake, he hints at the discrepancy between the traditions and tries to show their agreement (Haytami n.d., 1:383). In his criticism of those who believe that the sayings of Ibn 'Abbas are no more than his personal interpretation and are unreliable, he writes: "Whatever is transmitted by the companions and is not their personal opinion should be considered as the sayings ascribed to the Prophet (Haytami n.d., 1:277).

One rarely comes across a Sunni exegesis that does not report and accept the tradition of the mountain Qaf and its details. This tradition has been narrated, among many others, in the following Qur'anic commentaries: in the second century, Farra' in *Ma'ani al-Qur'an* (The Meanings of the Quran) (n.d., 3:75); in the fourth century, Nahhas in *I'rab al-Qur'an* (1421 AH, 4:331), al-Tabari in *Jami' al-bayan* (Tabari 1412 AH, 26:93); in the sixth century, Ibn al-Jawzi in *Zad al-masir* (Ibn al-Jawzi 1422 AH, 4:157); and in the tenth century, al-Suyuti in *al-Durr al-manthur* (Suyuti 1404 AH, 6: 102).

One of the oldest written reports of this tradition is seen in Muqatil ibn Sulayman's exegesis (Muqatil 1423 AH, 5:78). This tradition has been repeated so frequently in the Sunni sources that Rumi, the great Sunni poet, has put into verse the story of Dhu al-Qarnayn and earthquake (Rumi 1378 Sh, Book 4).

The following are evidence enough that this tradition is a transferred one.

#### **4.5.4. Textual Similarity**

In the traditions of *Man la yaduruh al-faqih*, three causes are mentioned for earthquake and all of the three are reported in the Sunni Hadith books. The first tradition (related to Dhu al-Qarnayn) maintains that the cause of earthquake is the angel in whose hand are the veins of the earth. This cause is mentioned in most Sunni traditions with the difference that there the mountain is mentioned instead of the angel. As an example, it is reported that:

'Abd ibn Humayd quotes 'Ikrima as saying that when Dhu al-Qarnayn came to the mountain which is called Qaf, he was called

by an angel. Dhu al-Qarnayn asked, "What mountain is this?" The angel answered, "It is a mountain called Qaf, which is the origin of all mountains, and all other mountains are of its veins. Whenever Allah wants to strike a city with an earthquake, He shakes one of its veins. (Haytami n.d., 1:277; Suyuti 1404 AH, 6:102)

In the second hadith, the fear of the big fish (the whale) is claimed to be the cause of earthquake. Ka'b al-Ahbar and 'Abdullah ibn Salam report:

I was informed that 'Abdullah ibn Salam asked the Prophet, peace be upon him, where the fish was, and the Prophet said, "It is on the black water, and the fish takes from that sea as much as one of your fish takes from one of these seas." I was told that Satan got into that fish and made it think it is very big. He told the fish that there was no creature as rich and powerful as it was. The fish became excited and moved, and so there is earthquake whenever it moves. Then Allah sent a small fish and made it live in its ear; so whenever it moves, that which is in its ear moves too. (Suyuti 1404 AH, 6:238)

In the third tradition, the cause of earthquake is said to be the movement of the fish on whose scales the cities are built. The same tradition (but without mentioning the scales) is reported by the Sunnis:

Ibn Abi al-Dunya quotes Ka'b in *al-'Uqubat* (The Punishments) that "the earth is stricken with earthquake, because it is created on the back of a fish, and it is likely that when the fish moves or when sins are committed on it, it shakes out of fear that the Exalted Lord is looking at it. (Ibn Abi al-Dunya 1996, 1:31-32)

Another tradition is reported by Haqqi al-Barusawi but with the same content. "Ibn Abi Ka'b has said that earthquake occurs not but for three causes: either because Allah looks with awe at the earth, or because of the many sins of the people, or because of the movement of the fish on which the seven earths are settled, and that is to refine people" (Haqqi al-Barusawi n.d., 9:102).

Perhaps one of the connections and similarities between the traditions in *Man la yahduruh al-faqih* and the *Isra'iliyyat* is the expression "five hundred yards," which is the current measure in the *Isra'iliyyat*. In many of these traditions, this figure is repeated, sometimes to indicate the stature of people like the people of 'Ad

(Qurtubi 1364 Sh, 21:45; Ibn 'Adil 1419 AH, 20:318). Mulla Salih Mazandarani in his commentary on *al-Kafi* and in the story of the meeting of Ibrahim with the angel of death also speaks of a man with such height (Mazandarani 1382 Sh, 12:547). On other occasions, the number is mentioned in relation to the description of one of the angels (Tusi 1407 AH, 3:290) and in describing the gate of the Court of Alexandria, which is said to have been five-hundred yards high (Bakri 1992, 2:638; Maqrizi 1418 AH, 1:297), and in many other sources. In the tradition about the causes of earthquake reported in the works of al-Saduq, sometimes the stature of the angel or the height of the mountain is given such a measure.

Accordingly, the traditions reported by al-Saduq are similar in text and content to the Sunni traditions.

#### **4.5.5. Evidence for the Invention and Transference of the Tradition of Earthquake**

1. As was mentioned, the first tradition of al-Saduq on earthquake is mentioned in *Kamal al-din* on the authority of 'Abdullah ibn Sulayman, who admits that he had taken this tradition from the books of other religion: "I read in some books of Allah the Exalted" (Saduq 1395 Sh, 2:385, 395). We cannot find a better evidence that this tradition is one of the *Isra'iliyyat*. 'Abdullah ibn Sulayman repeats the same words mentioned in the tradition as the cause of earthquake. Now, the same saying but on a different authority is mentioned in other books of hadith, and such *Isra'iliyyat* are attributed to the Imam. Therefore, the tradition is not really said by the Imams, and thus it is not reliable for us it. Moreover, there is evidence enough that it is one of the *Isra'iliyyat*.

2. In the chain of transmission of some of these traditions, some Exaggerators (*Ghulat*) or those who are suspected of Exaggeration (*ghuluww*) are seen. From the viewpoint of Allamah 'Askari, the Exaggerators, like 'Abdullah ibn Bahr and Sulayman al-Daylami, are some of the most important transmitters of Sunni traditions into Shi'i sources.

3. The tradition has also been reported by al-'Ayyashi ('Ayyashi 1389 Sh, 2:349). Because of his frequent communication with the Sunnis and because he was formerly a Sunni himself, he is suspected of transferring such traditions.

4. In Sunni hadith, some of the traditions are transmitted on the authority of Wahab ibn Munabbih and Ka'b al-Ahbar, whose role in inventing some of the *Isra'iliyyat* is unanimously accepted by scholars.

5. As a common argument for reporting these narrations by Shi'i narrators, one may refer to the confusion in reporting the narrations. In one of his important reports, Kashshi writes,

Fadl ibn Shadhan says that his father asked Muhammad ibn 'Umayyir, why, despite meeting so many Sunni masters, he had not reported any tradition from them. In response, he [i.e., Muhammad ibn 'Umayyir] said, "I have listened to their narrations, but I noticed that many of the Shi'i narrators, who had listened to the traditions reported by both the Sunnis and Shi'is, fell into confusion so much that they reported Sunni traditions through the Shi'is and Shi'i traditions through the Sunnis. I did not like such a confusion, and therefore I abandoned it and acted as Idid." (Kashshi 1409AH, 590-1).

Therefore, it is likely that some Shi'i narrators may have heard or read such traditions in Sunni sources and then through confusion attributed them to their Imams. The similarity in the chains of transmission and texts of these narrations with those in Sunni sources supports this claim.

## 5. Conclusion

1. Because of the Imamis' different sources of exegesis and hadith, and the opposition of the Imams to the *Isra'iliyyat*, such traditions are very few in Shi'i sources compared to Sunni sources.

2. The traditions related to earthquake in *Man la yahduruh al-faqih* are among the *Isra'iliyyat*.

3. These traditions are similar in many ways to those in Sunni hadith sources.

4. Some Sunni traditions are reported by Ka'b al-Ahbar and Wahab ibn Munabbih, which leaves no doubt that the traditions are unreliable and among the *Isra'iliyyat*.

5. In the chain of transmission of such traditions in the Shi'i hadith circles, there are some Exaggerators or those suspected of Exaggeration, who themselves are inventors of these traditions and mediators in transferring Sunni traditions.

6. The confusion of the narrators in reporting the traditions and in attributing the sayings of the Sunnis to the Imams is one of the reasons why these narrations have found their way into Shi'i hadith sources.

To sum up, the *Isra'iliyyat* in general, and the traditions of the causes of earthquake mentioned in *Man la yahduruh al-faqih* in particular, are evidently transferred traditions and unreliable.

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## Marriage in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism

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Marriage holds a special position in different cultures and religions. Despite differences in the limits and conditions of marriage, religions have many similarities in regard to the issue of marriage. This research paper is a comparative study of marriage in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. The findings reveal that all three traditions recognize marriage to have a sacred nature, and they all stress that all sexual needs must be satisfied through marriage. Islam and Judaism encourage marriage, while Christianity has some differences in this respect.

**Keywords:** Marriage, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Monasticism.

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### Introduction

Marriage is the natural vocation of a human being, which enables him to achieve peace and tranquility. From the viewpoint of sociologists, marriage and family formation fulfill many functions, such as reproduction, socialization, protection, emotional support, and regulation of sexual behavior.

Alternatively, the functions of family can be examined socially and individually in material and immaterial dimensions. Individually speaking, every human being has a sex drive, which is a primary material need similar to the need for food and water. According to divine religions, satisfying sexual needs is permissible only through marriage.

Moreover, every human being longs for an intimate and affectionate relationship to achieve mental peace. According to sociologists, many people find their most satisfying relationship with their wives, parents,

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children, or other relatives (Bostan et al. 1387 Sh, 86). Socially speaking, marriage is associated with both material and immaterial consequences. The material consequence of marriage is the formation of a population required for a society. Structural functionalism sees population as the primary need of a society; in other words, the first functional factor is characterized by the demographic features of a society. If the population of a society is perished or scattered, the essence of the society will clearly be in danger (Ritzer 1374 Sh, 127). The very first step for the formation of any society is to create the required population. A society facing population decline is in fact heading towards destruction. The immaterial social consequence of marriage is the regulation of healthy social behaviors. As mentioned earlier, marriage contributes to inner peace and leads to spiritual balance in individuals. A society consisting of mentally balanced individuals will have healthier social relations, whereas a society prevalent with mental anxiety and emotional imbalance will give rise to many crimes and disorders.

Marriage traditions vary from culture to culture. All societies—even the very primitive ones—see marriage as an important phenomenon in life, and therefore regulate it with special principles and rulings. Religion also makes marriage a sacrament and introduces special principles for it beyond the natural principles. The current study attempts to comparatively examine the status of marriage in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism in order to achieve a deeper understanding of its hidden and manifest layers in the individual and social aspects of human life.

### **Marriage in Islam**

Marriage and family are the most important social institutions. Islam considers marriage to be a “solemn covenant” (Qur’an 4:21) and one of God’s “signs” (30:21). Islam encourages marriage by promising those who intend to get married that “Allah will give them means out of His grace” (24:32-33). Special importance is given to relationships of lineage and marriage: “It is He who has created man from water, then He has established relationships of lineage and marriage” (25:54).

In Islam, marriage is a dear deed to God and is consistent with human nature. Prophet Muhammad (s) says, “There is no foundation built in Islam dearer to God than marriage” (Majlisi 1403, 100:222). Marriage protects faith, so much so that the Prophet (s) said, “When a

man marries, he has protected half of his religion” (Hurr al-‘Amili 1412 AH, 14:5).

Based on Qur’anic verses, Muslim scholars consider marriage to be a natural act with two goals: (1) achieving peace and tranquility, and (2) continuation of the human race (Hamoudi 1432 AH, 27-29). The Qur’an clearly considers marriage to be among God’s signs by which human beings “may dwell in tranquility” (30:21). Some Muslim scholars define the functions of a Muslim family as “acquisition of spiritual perfection, chastity, avoidance of sin, commitment, and responsibility” (Ahmad-Panahi 1385 Sh, 35-37). Others consider the main goal of marriage to be the formation of a family that gives rise to a new generation of healthy and pious Muslims (Elahi and Malakutifar 1389 Sh, 105).

Sexual desire is a embedded in human nature. Islam emphasizes the necessity of this desire and God’s wisdom in creating it, and considers marriage as the best way to satisfy it (Elahi and Malakutifar 1389 Sh, 106). Monasticism is therefore impermissible in Islam, and marriage is regarded as a means to reach spiritual perfection rather than an obstacle. Shahid Motahhari argues that sexual instinct is the only desire which affects spirituality positively when satisfied in the right way; therefore, marriage is considered a religiously recommended (*mustahab*) act. He adds that, as experience shows, those who avoid marriage and child-bearing for their spiritual goals demonstrate shortcomings in their personality. Seemingly, man has one aspect of spiritual perfection, which cannot be obtained except through “the school of family” (Motahhari 1370 Sh, 248-49). Marriage contributes to growth and excellence, while celibacy leads to futility and decadence.

### **Age of Marriage**

Marriage, like other natural needs, should be satisfied in a sufficient and timely manner. Nevertheless, in some societies, marriage is sometimes delayed or carried out prematurely, leading to many social and individual problems.

Physiologically speaking, sexual needs arise with physical maturation. In Islam, sexual maturity is a condition for marriage. Imam Sadiq (a) prohibits marriage at an early age, and warns: “If you have your children married at childhood, no affection will arise between the husband and wife” (Hurr al-‘Amili 1412 AH, 20:104). In Islam, the age

of nine is the age of maturity for girls and the age of fifteen is when boys reach maturity. However, in addition to sexual puberty, mental maturity is also necessary for a successful marriage. Family is a small system requiring management and policy, and the couple need a certain level of mental maturity to establish and sustain such a system. Additionally, the family system is an emotional unit and calls for sympathy and intimacy; therefore, the capacity for feelings and emotions is another condition for having a healthy married life. Social maturity is another criterion, which enables desirable actions and reactions between the husband and wife, the lack of which may cause stress and damage (Ahmad Panahi 1385 Sh, 38-40).

While premature marriage is discouraged in Islam, late marriage is also looked down upon. The Prophet (s) says, "If someone whose child reaches the age of marriage is financially able to have him/her get married but does not do so, any sin committed by the child would be recorded for him" (Hindi 1397 AH, 16:442).

Based on the aforementioned issues, scholars argue that although Islam permits marriage at any stage of life, an examination of the goals and functions of marriage reveal that a suitable age for marriage is early youth. The Imams (a) encouraged early marriage (Ahmad Panahi 1385 Sh, 41) and discouraged celibacy (Nuri Tabrisi 1408 AH, 4:155). Overall, many scholars agree that the ideal age of marriage for boys is eighteen and for girls fifteen (Ahmad Panahi 1385 Sh, 42).

### **Conditions of Marriage**

One of the conditions of marriage is the consent and freedom of choice of both parties. In the case of reluctance from either side, the contract is void. This freedom of choice can clearly be seen in the marriages of religious figures, such as the marriage of Fatima (a) to Imam Ali (a) (Motahhari 1359 Sh, 67).

Another condition of marriage is pronouncing the marriage contract (*sigha*). The formula can either be pronounced by the man and woman themselves or by others on their behalf. The *mahr* (marital gift) from the bridegroom to the bride is another obligatory condition for marriage. The Qur'an says, "And give the women [upon marriage] their [bridal] gifts graciously. But if they give up willingly to you anything of it, then take it in satisfaction and ease" (4:4). Therefore, the wife's *mahr* should be given as a free gift which she can give up if she so pleases.

### **Impediments to Marriage**

Since marriage in Islam has a sacred nature, there are some limitations regarding the choice of spouse. In Islam, marriage between Muslims and pagans is absolutely forbidden. There are also limitations in regard to marriage between Muslims and the People of the Book. Marriage between a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man is impermissible. Scholars argue that this ruling arises from Islam's emphasis on women's rights and privileges (Bujari and Parcham 1392 Sh, 23). In regard to marriage between a Muslim man and a non-Muslim woman, there are various views: some Islamic sects believe that it is permissible for a Muslim man to temporarily marry a Christian or Jewish woman, while others allow for permanent marriage as well.

Marrying one's maharim (that is, one's father, mother, grandparents, siblings, children, grandchildren, aunts, and uncles) is not allowed either.

### **Polygamy**

Polygamy is permissible in Islam under some conditions. The Qur'an says, "And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one" (4:3). According to this verse, a man can marry four women at the same time as long as he can deal with them justly. This justice refers to material issues (food, clothing, shelter, etc.) as well as emotional ones. Since being fair in all these aspects is a difficult task, polygamy is limited.

### **Divorce**

In Islam, any instability in the family system is regarded as reprehensible. The Qur'an says:

And if you fear dissension between the two (husband and wife), send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, Allah will cause it between them. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Acquainted [with all things]. (4:35)

In Islamic law, divorce (*talaq*) is the termination or dissolution of the contract of marriage between the husband and wife. It is considered to be an abominable act and is regulated with stringent conditions and procedures. This will reduce the negative social and emotional consequences of divorce for the couple and their children.

According to the Qur'an, when a conflict between a husband and wife is leading to divorce, two arbiters from the relatives of each party have to be appointed to try to reconcile them. Anything that contributes to optimism between the husband and wife and consolidates family ties is desirable in the view of Islam; and anything contributing to its instability is abominated (Makarim Shirazi 1374 Sh, 227). It is important to note that Islam does not declare divorce to be altogether unlawful. Islamic law permits divorce on certain conditions, as "sometimes it is not possible to continue with the marriage and the husband and wife have no other choice than divorce. Islam does not allow divorce unless after the emergence of marital hostility between the husband and wife or when hatred devours them from inside and they set traps for each other" (Sharif Ghoreishi 1386 Sh, 121). Nevertheless, under such conditions when reconciliation is not possible and divorce is seen to be the only solution, morality and justice should not be forgotten.

### **Marriage in Christianity**

The legitimacy of marriage in Christianity comes from the Old and New Testaments. Christianity holds that in the beginning, God created one man and one woman and that the man leaves his father and mother to united to his wife and they become "one flesh" (Genesis 2:25).

In Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, marriage is seen as one of the seven sacraments (Ma'dali 2002, 112-13). Marriage is also considered a sacred act from the Protestant viewpoint. As a sacred act, marriage should take place in the church by a priest with special rituals. In Christianity, marriage is a covenant between husband and wife (*Anzimat al-ahwal* 1997, 56-57) and a visible sign of God's love for humans and a sign of Jesus' love for his followers (Ephesians 5:32).

Despite this, the Church considers marriage a kind of attachment to the material world; accordingly, pure and holy people are those who follow Church orders and remain unmarried. Paul states that monasticism enables one to arrive at union with God through the shortest possible way; however, if a person is unable to preserve himself from sin, then he should get married to avoid adultery (Ma'dali 2002, 114). On the other hand, the Church considers women as a source of temptation and deviation and thereby insists on avoiding them. A woman is viewed as an evil creature; marrying her is allowed only to avoid the greater evil of falling into sin (Motahhari 1379 Sh, 4:18).



Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the essence of Christian life, and communion with him has priority over any other type of social and familial relationship. There are some men and women who avoid the pleasure of marriage in order to pay more attention to the mission of Christ (*Anzimat al-ahwal* 1997, 46). Monastic tradition, which is a symbol of purity and sanctity in Christianity, is against marriage. In Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, priests, deacons, monks, and bishops are not allowed to get married. Marriage—like any other worldly attachment—is viewed as an obstacle to human growth and development, and celibacy is considered to be a way to serve religion. An unmarried person is concerned about the work of the Lord and how he can please Him, but a married person is concerned about the affairs of this world and how he can please his spouse (Corinthians 7:32–33). Jesus Christ and Mary are taken as role models, and since Jesus never married, marriage is allowed in Christianity only in case of necessity and to extinguish the fire of lust.

Overall, both marriage and monasticism are ways to holiness (*Anzimat al-ahwal* 1997, 46). The relationship of husband and wife is compared to that between Christ and the Church. Marriage allows a husband and wife to love each other, just as Christ loved the Church. The secret of marriage in Christianity is this love and affection (*Anzimat al-ahwal* 1997, 56).

### **Age of Marriage**

Since Christian marriage is indissoluble, early marriage is not accepted (Ma'dali 2002, 121). In the Coptic Orthodox tradition, the minimum age required for marriage is seventeen for boys and fifteen for girls. In the Roman Orthodox tradition, no specific age is given, but eighteen for boys and fifteen for girls are considered acceptable. The Catholic Church also gives the age of seventeen for boys and fourteen for girls (Ma'dali 2002, 122-3). In these religious traditions, any boy or girl under the marriage age must obtain his or her guardian's permission before getting married. In the Evangelical Church, however, the contract is void before the age of seventeen for boys and fifteen for girls (Ma'dali 2002, 123).

### **Conditions of Marriage**

One of the fundamental conditions of marriage in Christianity is the mutual consent of both parties (*Anzimat al-ahwal* 1997, 49). Christian

scholars believe that since it is impossible to annul a marriage, mutual consent contributes to further consolidation of parity (Ma'dali 2002, 121).

Another condition of marriage in Christianity is the marriage contract. This contract must be executed in the church and usually in public. The presence of a priest and his execution of the contract is another condition of marriage. In their view, marriage is not complete except by the matrimonial prayer (Ma'dali 2002, 121-30).

### **Impediments to Marriage**

In Christianity, there are thirteen impediments to marriage, four of which are disparity of religious affiliation, the bond of a previous marriage, sacred orders, and blood relationship (*Anzimat al-ahwal* 1997, 49-50).

Based on Mar Paul's message on the conflict between light and darkness and Christ and evil, Christian theologians believe that no relationship is acceptable between the believers in Jesus Christ and non-believers; that is, it is not possible to marry and form a family with someone who has a different religion and rejects the principles of the Church and its sacred beliefs (*Anzimat al-ahwal* 1997, 81). This is an effort by the church to nurture religious children.

The bond of a previous marriage is another impediment to marriage. Since divorce and polygamy are not allowed, one with a previous marriage contract is not allowed to marry again.

Blood relationship is another impediment. Blood relationship in Christianity is the most expanded among divine religions and includes one's father, mother, grandparents, brothers, sisters, children, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

With regards to sacred orders as an impediment to marriage, the Catholic and Orthodox Church are more strict than the Protestants. Although the Catholic Church insists on the celibacy of church leaders, it was possible during some periods of time for Catholic priests to get married. Some believe that celibacy was not mandatory for priests in the first three periods of Christian history, but gradually, extremists came to view any sexual activity between man and woman to be a sin (Baghbani 1385 Sh, 62). In the Orthodox Church, a married man may be ordained to the priesthood but is not allowed to become a bishop. Protestantism in general does not require the celibacy of its clergy and

allows, or even encourages, clerical marriage (Baghbani 1385, 62). Martin Luther spoke out against clerical celibacy and got married himself. Protestantism argues that marriage has priority over monasticism and a pious wife who fears God and loves her family is the best gift from God (Ma‘dali 2002, 115).

### **Polygamy**

Since marriage in Christianity means the union of a man and woman to become one flesh, polygamy is prohibited. The Church views marriage as an inseparable bond and prohibits divorce or polygamy. Remarriage is not allowed except after the death of one’s spouse—and even in this case, not remarrying is considered more appropriate (Corinthians 7:39-40).

Some scholars believe that the prohibition of polygamy has its origin in the laws of the Roman Empire rather than the teachings of Christ. Shahid Motahhari holds the view that polygamy is not prohibited in Christianity. He argues that the Torah, approved by Jesus Christ, recognizes polygamy, and there were people before Christ who had multiple wives. He sees the prohibition of polygamy as having roots outside of Christianity (Motahhari 1368 Sh, 394).

### **Divorce**

The nature of marriage in Christianity is (1) heavenly and divine, and (2) unbreakable, because God creates this sacred bond between the man and woman (Zinati 1384 Sh, 42).

In Matthew we read, “It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery” (Matthew 5:31-32). The union of the husband and wife in marriage is like the union of Christ and the Church—they cannot be separated and their holiness is eternal (*Anzimat al-ahwal* 1997, 56).

### **Marriage in Judaism**

In Judaism, marriage is viewed as a religious and spiritual act. God’s first command to humans was marriage: “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28). A man who does not make any effort to get married is like a person who sheds blood or considers the human image, which is the image of God, to be worthless,

or like the one who caused the Lord to remove Israel from His presence (Anterman 1385 Sh, 225). Accordingly, “a man is allowed to sell a book of Torah and use the money for his marriage, as he is allowed to sell it for the purpose of learning it (Cahan 1382 Sh, 180).

The husband and wife become united in marriage: “A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:42). Marriage leads to perfection and completion, since “He created them male and female and blessed them. And He named them ‘Mankind’ when they were created” (Genesis 5:2).

### **Age of Marriage**

Judaism insists on marriage and considers natural maturation in women and men as the condition for the validity of marriage. Therefore, the minimum age required for marriage in boys and girls are thirteen and twelve respectively (Ma‘dali 2002, 97).

In the case that girls are married to a person before their maturity, their guardian’s consent is required. The guardian’s consent cannot be ignored even after the girl’s maturity, except when she gets divorced or her husband dies (Ma‘dali 2002, 90-91). Ideally, a person should marry by the age of twenty. When a person passes this age and is still unmarried, God curses him by saying: “Let curse come into his bowels and swell his bones” (Bujari and Parcham 1392 Sh, 32). Notably, Judaism prohibits marriage when the husband is unable to satisfy his wife’s needs and provide her comfort (Cahan 1382 Sh,180).

### **Condition of Marriage**

The conditions of marriage in Judaism are (1) satisfaction and sanctity, (2) marriage contract (ketubah), and (3) blessing prayer. The first condition refers to a declaration of consent in the presence of at least two witnesses accompanied by the giving of a marital gift. The ketubah is a binding document of confidence and trust, which details both the husband’s obligations to his wife (including loyalty, nice behavior, and satisfying her needs) and the wife’s obligations to her husband (including the laws of family purity and compliance with religious codes). The amount of the wedding gift, as presented in Deuteronomy, is fifty shekels of silver (Deuteronomy 22:28-29), which would be different in the second marriage (Abu al-Majd 2004, 62). The third condition for a Jewish marriage is the blessing prayer which should be performed in public (Ma‘dali 2002, 97).

### **Impediments to Marriage**

The marriage impediments in Judaism are religion and blood relationship. Principally, Judaism does not allow Jews to marry non-Jews (Ma'dali 2002, 91). A Jewish child should ideally learn the Torah and be raised to be God-fearing (Cahan 1382 Sh, 182), and a non-Jewish wife, no matter how good she is, cannot help a Jewish child to effectively play his role in keeping the heritage of Judaism alive (Boujari and Parcham 1392 Sh, 27). This marriage impediment, however, has been gradually ignored (Ma'dali 2002, 90-91).

Judaism also forbids marriage between certain blood relatives, including one's father, mother, ancestors, brothers, sisters, children, and grandchildren.

### **Polygamy**

Polygamy is permissible in Judaism, and Jews are permitted to marry up to four wives (Ma'dali 2002, 99-100). Revered figures such as Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon had several wives. It was customary for Jews to marry their female slaves, although this required conditions such as the sterility or madness of the first wife, financial ability, and the capacity to uphold justice.

### **Divorce**

Contrary to Christianity, Judaism allows divorce. The authority of divorce is entirely in the hands of the man, who only needs to hand his wife the divorce document in order to complete the divorce. The moment a man decides to divorce his wife, she becomes forbidden to him. Divorce is also allowed for reasons such as the sterility of the wife, adultery, physical defects, and social problems. A man who is getting divorced should pay his wife's wedding gift, unless she has failed in the implementation of Jewish religious laws.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Islam, Christianity, and Judaism view marriage as the only legal way to reproduce and satisfy sexual needs. In the view of these Abrahamic religions, marriage is a religious and sacred act: Islam places great emphasis on it (*mustahab mu'akkad*); Christianity includes it in the seven sacraments; and Judaism views it as a *kiddushin* (sanctification). In all these religions, a marriage ceremony is performed with special rituals, and a specific contract is pronounced in a holy language. The

three Abrahamic religions have specific conditions for marriage, and failing to follow them invalidates the marriage.

Islam and Judaism view marriage as contributing to spiritual growth, and therefore do not accept monasticism. In Islam, a man's love for his wife is in lines with the Prophets' manners and increases faith (Kulayni 1365 Sh, 14:320). Christianity, however, advocates that spiritual growth is elevated by purity from worldly affairs such as marriage. Church leaders should, therefore, avoid marriage.

Islam and Judaism reject celibacy and insist on marriage soon after maturity. Islam sees marriage as a solution for financial problems and encourages the poor to get married by promising them God's blessings. Judaism, however, does not encourage marriage for those who are not financially ready.

Polygamy is an issue faced with many challenges throughout history. Islam and Judaism allow for polygamy under certain conditions, but Christianity absolutely forbids it even in case of the wife's sterility.

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## Thinking Towards Peace: On Triades and New Cosmology of the Mesocosm<sup>1</sup>

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This paper has three parts. In the first part, we bring to the fore an ancient Vedic concept of mesocosm and discuss its religious and cosmic significance within Indian religion. This part also brings an initial approach towards philosophy of spirituality by focusing on the role of breath within the very concept of mesocosm. In the second part, based on our preliminary analysis, we present an original account on triades and Trinitarian thinking in some of the religious traditions by discussing the following questions: (1) What does the triade as a concept bring to theology and religious studies? (2) How could it be understood as a form, representing the most perfect model for the sacred correlation between divine and for the human Being? (3) How is it related to the idea of the “Third Presence,” the relational link between One and Two as primeval ontological realms? In the third and concluding part, we return to the ancient Indoeuropean religion by discussing the mediatory role of the Indo-Iranian Mit(h)ra.

**Keywords:** mesocosm, trinitarian thinking, triades, third presence, Vedas, Mit(h)ra, mediation, community, peace.

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### Introduction

This article aims to elaborate an ancient term: *the mesocosm*. In his work on *Kaṭha Āraṇyaka*, Michael Witzel (2004) argued for the reconstruction of this term. He posited it within the ancient Indian Vedic magical interpretation of the world, where we face different “identifications” between the macrocosmic and microcosmic realities or gods. Also according to ancient Sumerian theology, between heaven and earth there was a substance, called *lil* “wind, air, breath, spirit”

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(Kramer 1956, 47). Many other religious traditions also testify for the existence of an ontologico-cosmical reality, related to the middle space between Heaven and Earth, having spiritual character and being related to the wind, air, ether, or breath.<sup>1</sup> This ancient cosmic constellation can be represented in the form of a triadic model, which will also be interpreted in the Trinitarian sense. The mesocosm reveals to us, as a middle term, an inter-space or a copula. Mesocosm is the sacred guardian of cosmic air permeating the All, but also, ethically, of cosmic Breath as a vital/life principle, enlivening the cosmos and our bodies: as such, it reveals to us, as a basic principle, all ethics, all life, and peace. Mesocosm, thus, is the *atmosphere* of ethics and inaugurates the triadic principle in the philosophy of peace in contemporary studies of religion and theology.

### **Part I: On Mesocosm in Ancient Indian Vedic Thought**

In his introduction to a translation of early *Upanishads*, Partick Olivelle describes the triadic relation between the human body/person, the ritual, and the cosmic realities. The ritual sphere includes different ritual actions (such as formulas, prayers, and songs), while the other two realms represent what we understand as microcosm and macrocosm. For the Vedic thinkers, the central concern was to discover various connections between these three realms of the cosmos. Vedic seers (*ṛṣis*) were in a possession of some secret knowledge of these secret cosmic relations or *upaniṣads*.<sup>2</sup> But it was Michel Witzel who, for the first time, surprisingly late, introduced the name for the middle term of this ancient cosmological triad—namely, *mesocosm*, a name given to the ritual sphere in order to understand the relation between macrocosm and microcosm. Mesocosm is thus a *copula*, a third part of the triangle structure *the ritual – the cosmic realities – the human body/person* in the ancient Vedic-Upanishadic context.<sup>3</sup> This now is the ancient Vedic

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1. Here we can only mention various contexts where we could elaborate on concepts such as *ruah*, *aër*, *pneûma*, *spiritus*, *prāṇa*, *qi*, *kī*, *mana*, *orenda*, etc.
  2. See *Upaniṣads*’ introduction (Olivelle 1996, lii): “The central concern of all vedic thinkers, including the authors of the Upaniṣads, is to discover the connections that bind elements of these three spheres to each other. The assumption then is that the universe constitutes a web of relations, that things that appear to stand alone and apart are, in fact, connected to other things.”
  3. *Kaṭha Āraṇyaka*, critical edition with a translation into German and an introduction by M. Witzel (2004), see n. 129 on p. xl of the Introduction for the history of the usage of “mesocosm.” Witzel wrote how curious it was that “the term has not been

triade as represented in a model:

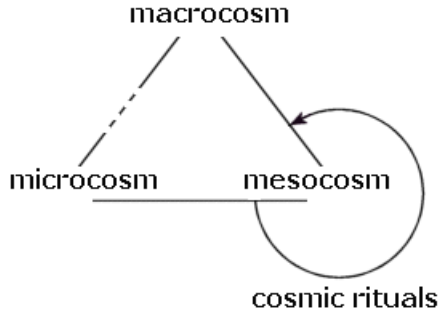


Figure 1: A model for the ancient Vedic triade

We have to outline another important characteristics of the Vedic thought: the role of breath and breathing. For the Vedic philosophers, or the tradition of Vedism/Brahmanism, there existed five originary elements of the world: earth, water, fire, air, and ether (*Aitareya Upaniṣad III*). We find references to wind and breath in the *Samhitās* (the oldest parts of Vedic collections), but the most ancient testimony and elaboration for the so-called “Wind-Breath doctrine” (Wind-Atem-Lehre) can be found in the philosophy of nature of *Jaiminīya upaniṣad brāhmaṇa* 3.2.2. and 4. This teaching is an example of a typical Vedic macro-microcosmic analogy between the macrocosmic Wind (*vāyu*) and microcosmic Breath (*prāṇa*).

From the cosmological point of view, the wind is the only “complete” deity, since all other deities/gods/elements/phenomena (sun, moon, stars, fire, day, night, waters, etc.) return to him during the enigmatic stillness of the night, while he never stops blowing. But at

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used in this context before.” He refers to its first usage in a book on Newar religion authored by Robert I. Levy and Kedar Rāj Rājopādhyāya (1990). Witzel argues for the reconstruction of the term “mesocosm” within the Vedic magical interpretation of the world, where we face different analogies or magical “identifications” between the macrocosmic and microcosmic realities or gods (for example, Sun-eye, Wind-breath, Earth-body, Waters-semen, Fire-speech, etc.). This ancient way of thinking uses different “mystic” correlations and equivalents, some obvious (such as between Sun and the eye, or Wind and breath) and some more hidden and esoteric (between Moon and mind). But always there exists a nexus or a connection between two beings (in Sanskrit it is called *bandhu* and *upaniṣad*). See also M. Witzel (1997).

the most abstract level, it is the difference between the perishable (day, night, etc.) and imperishable or “eternal” (Wind) that led to the so-called Wind-Breath doctrine.

Analogously, then, breath in humans is the most important of the five vital powers (breathing, thinking, speech, sight, hearing), since it is only breath that is present during deep sleep. Of course, in the moment of death, breath returns to its macrocosmic eternal origin, the Wind. Breathing as the most important vital power is thus equated with life itself, with the cosmic Wind, and later with person’s self (*ātman*).<sup>1</sup> Mesocosm as a sphere of breath or cosmic wind (or, in Christianity, Holy Spirit) refers to the inauguration of the triadic principle or the so called third presence into religion—as a newly conceptualized cosmico-ritual space between God/gods and humans. The problem of spirituality, and our relation to the spiritual sphere, and, ultimately, God, in my opinion, can be understood from this initial mesocosmic constellation.

## **Part II: On Triadic Principle: The Logic of Third Presence**

But what does the triade as a concept bring to theology and religious studies? How could it be understood as a form, representing the most perfect model for the sacred correlation between divine and for the human being? How is it related to the idea of the “Third Presence,” the relational link between One and Two as primeval ontological realms? I wish to elaborate on the triadic thinking and triades as models of the divine, before returning in the third part to the ancient Indo-Iranian religious contexts.

In her insightful book on religion and monotheism (*Beyond Monotheism*), Laurel C. Schneider rightly asserts that in order to understand the trinity in our time, we have to turn our minds toward “divinity in multiplicity” (Schneider 2008, 4), which is to be understood as a renewed ontological gesture, disabling the old abstract or numerical (or mathematical-monarchical) modalities and positions of One, and thus opening for us new possibilities for divine incarnations. She thus pleads for a new theology of multiplicity, a theology of Many, which, again, works beyond some naïve and simple “God or the gods” thinking or dilemmas (Schneider 2008, 4). This indeed is a very important observation and a methodological credo, since throughout the history

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1. For the Wind-Breath doctrine, See M. Boland’s *Die Wind-Atem-Lehre in den älteren Upanisaden* (1997).

of religion and theology, triades have been probably the most powerful model for representing spiritual exchanges within the Divine-Circle,<sup>1</sup> or within the *divine-human* cosmic and ritual circles and spiritual exchanges. Triades, as we will see, represent an effort towards unity in diversity and thus towards peace and reconciliation, while the idea of One and Two (Dyad) is marked by monolithic, static on one, or a(nta)gonistic (relational but dialectical, even to its very borders—violence and war) principles on the other side.<sup>2</sup> Now, I have already written on the so-called *triadic principle* in my book on intersubjectivity, ethics, and peace.<sup>3</sup> In this analysis of mine, I have identified three ontological realms—microcosm, macrocosm, and mesocosm—as three ancient cosmic and ontological realms. Microcosm is the realm of our human existence, the space of our bodily-spiritual identity; macrocosm, on the other side, is the ontological (old metaphysical) realm of Gods and divinities; and mesocosm is the ritual space between divine and human realms.

We have already seen that the triadic model in Vedic thought derives from an ancient cosmological (mainly polytheistic or henotheistic) logic of ritual exchanges between three cosmic realms. It indicates the necessity of an intermediate realm, connecting both realities (Gods and humans), and, therefore, the line between microcosm and macrocosm is epistemologically weakened/interrupted. But let me now approach the problem of this trinitarian logic as represented in religion and the principle of multiplicity from a slightly different point of view.

The first ever account on multiplicity in the vicinity of the Jewish-Christian world can be found within the ancient Egyptian and African traditional religion. In *An African Interpretation of the Trinity*, African theologian A. Okechukwu Ogbonnaya (Ogbonnaya 1994) presents us with a fascinating thesis of early African influences on Christian doctrine of the trinity (i.e., of Tertullian). Ogbonnaya even claims that

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1. See Plotinus' *Enneads* (Plotinus 1991, xxxv). On triangles and their cosmic role, see Plato's *Timaeus* (53d).
  2. On various trinitarian theologies in the non-Western world, see Phan (2011), especially chs. 16–20. In these chapters, we can see the rich variety of triadic thinking in Confucianism (Heaven, Earth, and Humanity) and Taoism (i.e., the dynamics and relationality within Dao as One, producing Two [yin-yang], and having their offspring as Three), and, of course, within both Hinduism as well as Buddhism (*triguna*, *tridoṣa*, *trikāya*, and so forth).
  3. See Škof (2015); especially cf. my triadic models on pp. 195–98.

ancient non- and proto-Semitic African cosmology was actually a background of Tertullian's own concepts of the trinity and trinitarian divinity. For Ogbonnaya, following the communitarian character of African religion,

mutual relation is far more than a dyadic relation in which two are lost uncritically in each other. The African emphasis on offspring assures that dyadic relation does not lead to egotism can be avoided because there is always the possibility of a "third presence." (Ogbonnaya 1994, 8)

What Ogbonnaya is arguing here is very important: first, dyadic relations (known from the old metaphysical and theological models (Heaven and Earth, God and the world, macrocosm and microcosm, but also the *mýthos*–*lógos* dichotomy, and the dichotomy between man and woman) *cannot* assure the space in which both ontological or divine realities would exist in a mutual *peaceful* atmosphere and without an ontological conflict or any other form of appropriation, either by higher or lower vertical realms, or by any one of two horizontal sides or realms of the dyad. The third presence is thus necessary for establishing a *full relationality*, without any form of appropriation by any member of the triad. Secondly, still more important, the third presence is related to the *offspring/child*, and thus marking a communal atmosphere with its cosmic-ontological and sexual-generational aspects included and, most importantly, preserved.

Now, we know from Plato's *Timaeus* that "a third kind" (*trítōn génos*) or "the third type is space" (Plato 1997, 49a and 52a), known enigmatically as *chóra*, is a receptacle of becoming—its wetnurse, as it were; thus, it is an ontological category *par excellence*—and, perhaps most importantly—*chóra* (already for Plato) always resides in the feminine element.<sup>1</sup>

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1. According to Plato's *Timaeus*: "The new starting point in my account of the universe needs to be more complex than the earlier one. Then we distinguished two kinds, but now we must specify a third, one of a different sort. The earlier two sufficed for our previous account: one was proposed as a model, intelligible and always changeless, a second as an imitation of the model, something that possesses becoming and is visible. We did not distinguish a third kind at the time, because we thought that we could make do with the two of them. Now, however, it appears that our account compels us to attempt to illuminate in words a kind that is difficult and vague. What must we suppose it do to and to be? This above all: it is a *receptacle* of all becoming – its wetnurse, as it were" (Plato 1997, 1251, 49a).

But allow me one more intercultural digression, an important one as we will see: there is a striking similarity between this concept and Daoist philosophy as represented by Chinese philosopher Kuang-Ming Wu. In his magnificent effort on cosmico-material ethics and religion, *On Chinese Bodily Thinking* (1997), Wu presents us with an idiosyncratic mode of thinking, called “wombing forth” and “wombing motherliness.” Wombing forth is first based on a concept of the “womb-power” as a feminine ontological presence, which we can find everywhere—“in water, in roots, in valleys”—and, furthermore, also as a presence in ourselves, which enables us, as human beings, to be humble, compassionate, and devoted to others. Womb-power, according to Wu, is

the empty room between Heaven and Earth (...) a motherly bellows, vacuous, inexhaustible, continually letting forth [things] ...

Every human relation worthy of its name is a mothering and wombing—your being vacuous draws me forth, lets me become as I am ... The inner personal touch fills the void in me and in you, making us one. Yet we remain two, for two-ness enables touch. We are thus two in one, and one in two, thanks to our personal void and touch inside. All this describes mutual fulfillment. Personal void generates love—inner touch—that *mothers us* to grow into ourselves. (Wu 1997, 140–2).<sup>1</sup>

We have thus the third kind/element represented in another intercultural context. Moreover, this element is *apophatic*, for it is necessarily related to my self-nihilation, a void-space in myself, to my absolute giving for the sake of the other (persons and things) in his/her... reciprocal, but again, absolute giving for me. The *womb-power* in her essential potency—wombing motherliness—is the ontological space of our mutual becoming, the possibility of an “inner touch” (Wu 1997, 141) between two realities: firstly between the mother and the child (foetus), but ultimately between God/dess and any human being. In Christian terms, we thus find Christ in ourselves as inner touch, the subtle, yet powerful spiritual (Holy Spirit; His breath

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1. Wu refers to *Dao de jing*, chapter 6: “The spirit of the valley never dies./ It is called the subtle and profound female./ The gate of the subtle and profound female/ is the root of Heaven and Earth./ It is continuous, and seems to be always existing./ Use it and you will never wear it out” (Wu 1997, 139f.). My emphasis above in the citation.

of love) presence of love, humility and absolute self-annihilation *qua* self-transcendence.

Now, to return to the African communitarian and triadic context in religion and ancient cosmology: we know *ubuntu* as an African Bantu word for the cluster of dynamic ethical meanings of justice-compassion-reconciliation-friendship-peace (Škof 2005, 181f., n. 38). This word now marks the topos of all ethical considerations in African communitarian theologico-religious thought. In John Mbiti's famous words, within broader African contexts, ubuntu means the primordial and irreversible ontologico-ethical gesture of "I am, because we are, and since we are, therefore I am" (Mbiti 1969, 104). This is the all-relatedness in every aspect of our communal life; it is also "inclusive of all cosmos" (Ogbonnaya 1994, 14) and goes beyond mere dyadic relations within the cosmological or social contexts. Now, the most important consequence of this thought lies in an interpretive possibility, offered by Ogbonnaya, that within various analyses of later Tertullian's trinitarian theories of divinity, the African perspective has been largely ignored. Being from Carthage, and apart from being strongly influenced by both Jewish and Greek philosophy, Tertullian seems also to be strongly influenced by his 'native' African thought. Within the ancient Egyptian religiosity, we also come across the following interpretation, attested in the following verses from ancient Egyptian theology:

All the Gods are three  
Ammun, Re, and Ptah without their seconds.

And, as interpreted by Ogbonnaya,

[F]or the Egyptians the number three was a sign of unity in plurality ... The importance of the number lies not in threeness but in its symbolic interplay of unity and plurality ... In addition to the symbols of three, considered above, there was the phrase *psdt* ("Ennead"), which means the group of nine of a group of three squared. (Ogbonnaya 1994, 45f.; both citations)

We cannot find similar early elaborations on the triadic structure of world/reality, neither in the ancient Judaic theology nor in the Christian and Greek literature before Tertullian and Plotinus. But we find them in an earlier cosmological thinking of ancient Vedic India and ancient African religious thought (in ancient Egypt as well as in other Nilotic and Bantu religious contexts).



What consequences can we draw from this? For the purpose of this paper, I wish to return one more time to the early development of religion in India and Iran—and thus to ancient Indo-Iranian religion and one of its most prominent deities: God Mit(h)ra, the protector of peace. On the basis of our earlier expositions of both mesocosm as a Vedic concept as well as various religious constellations of early trinitarian thinking, we will thus try to point to some ethical consequences of this thought as related to the God Mit(h)ra.

### **Part III: God Mit(h)ra as Guardian of Mesocosmic Sacred Space and Peace**

Language evidence from the Indo-European Slavic languages shows that *peace/mir* and *cosmos/vsemir* (as preserved in Old Church Slavic and Russian) are indeed related to the cosmico-communal sense of peaceful dwelling and home, with a strong meaning of *reconciliation* (to set things into balance) included. Peace, or *mir* in Slavic and our Slovenian language (we will see how this word is related to another important Vedic and ancient Iranian God, namely Mithra, which, in the way of an ancient cryptophony includes *mir* in his name: “MIt(h)Ra”), is here related to “all people, whole world, human race, municipality, village municipality, assembly” (Golema 2013, 83). Therefore, peace has to be restored in this world. But how?

To be able to respond to this urgent call, I wish to devote my concluding thoughts to the ancient Indian tradition, to which I have devoted a lot of my previous work.<sup>1</sup> If we stay for the purpose of this essay within Vedic religiosity, then we can contend that the spirit of Vedic philosophy, or Vedic cosmological thought, is in its character very close to Heidegger’s “Indo-Germanic” philosophy of the Fourfold. Now, as we have seen in the previous sections of this essay, we now dwell between heaven and earth, and remain in peace, and close to our

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1. Cf. some of my works on Vedic religion and natural philosophy: *Upaniṣade: Besede vedske Indije (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad and Īśa Upaniṣad: translation from the Sanskrit with notes and a commentary)* (Ljubljana: Nova revija, 2005); “Il ruolo ed il significato degli elementi acqua, aria e terra nell’antica filosofia indiana e greca: uno studio comparativo [The Role and Significance of the Elements of Water, Air and Earth in the Classical Philosophies of India and Greece: A Comparative Study],” *Magazzino di filosofia* 5, no. 13 (2004): 123–37; “Rigvedske himne Varuni in vprašanje moralnosti v stari vedski religioznosti. [Morality in Vedic Religion As Exemplified by the Rigvedic Hymns to Varuna],” *Studia mythologica Slavica* 5 (2002): 163–88.

divinities only when we always already (esoterically) identify ourselves with the God. This is how we can safeguard our presence in the world. Now, as God Varuṇa and God Aryaman are God Contract and God Hospitality in the ancient Vedic Indian context (Thieme 1957), the protector of Peace is another Vedic god—Mitra (Iranian Mithra). Mitra is closely related to the triadic thinking and topology of the third presence. According to Toporov, the name Mitra derives from the Indo-European root \*mi-, \*mei-, “related to the idea of mediation, mutuality, legality, consent, and also to creating peace, friendship and affection” (Golema 2013, 81). Although we need to be careful in interpreting this old Indo-Iranian deity (and I do not intend to address this question today and generally in my interpretations and readings; I would rather follow Thieme vs. Toporov or Dumezil), we still can agree that Indo-Iranian Mit(h)ra is the God, *mediating between the cosmo-social functions of ancient societies and their dwelling places* (divine vs. human, the whole cosmos vs. villages, and gods vs. mortals; i.e., the Fourfold). Perhaps the most important role Mitra can play for us today is the role of this divinity as a mediating or *mesocosmic* God. We know that the role of Indo-Iranian Mit(h)ra was in safeguarding contracts and agreements, and thus peace—here understood primarily as an absence of hostilities or wars. But on the contrary, Slavic Mitra is much more related to the peaceful coexistence in a sense of *dwelling* as an internal or mediating condition of a community. Golema, in his beautiful exposition of Slavic Mitra (Golema 2013), argues for a close relationship between Mitra as “mir” and a group of words related to the Indo-Iranian root “jat-,” expressing activities of Mitra, also represented in numerous slavic words (Croatian and Serbian “jatiti se,” Slovak “jatka,” Polish “jata,” Slovenian “pojata”—as related to herding/to stall/to flock, and then derivatives from this root, such as “prijeti” [to accept], “prijatelj” [friend], “objeti” [to hug], and so forth). This all marks the role of Slavic Mitra in “binding together in a collective” (Golema 2013, 84). Peace, or *mir*, thus, is an affection, being closely related to mutuality, mutual exchange, friendship, and charity. But peace, we have seen, is hospitality, or *dwelling in peace*. This, if I mention Heidegger here, is the meaning of his *hearth of being* (see § 18 of his *Hölderlin’s Hymn “The Ister,”* “Der Herd als das Sein”; Greek *hestia*) in a context of his well-known reflection on the homely/unhomely:

[W]e initially know only that unhomely one who, among beings and through his or her own activity in each case, seeks a way out toward the

homely and seeks the site of beings ... Does this mean that the hearth—around which alone everything, and especially human beings, can be homely—is being? (Heidegger 1996, 109)

... What essentially prevails as harmonious commencement, the unifying One in the middle of the sphere, is called “hearth.” (Philolaos from the Pythagorean school; Diels, *Vorsokratiker*, Fragment 7, cited and translated by Heidegger [1996, 112])

This is now my final point: for Heidegger, being is the hearth; it is the *place* to which all beings (all world, in an ancient cosmological sense) are drawn. It is “the middle” (Mitra has the same sense)<sup>1</sup> that “gathers everything around it – that wherein all beings have their site and are at home as beings” (Heidegger 1996, 112f.). The mesocosmic and trinitarian logic also has thus in an idiosyncratic way been safeguarded by Indo-Iranian Mitra. It would be one of the most important tasks of religious thinking today to address this forgotten ancient triadic and mesocosmic logic and to relate it to our theories in ethics and interfaith dialogue.

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1. Golema (2013, 96) convincingly argues in his paper on Mitra that this god actually is “a third member” of old Indo-European triades, and as such, in his mediating role, the essence of the mediation—and we may say gathering.

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## **An Investigation into the Pantheon in Bactrian Economic Documents**

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In the 90s, a remarkable number of manuscripts were found in Northern Afghanistan, including economic documents, legal documents, and letters, which have become an important resource for academic studies. This paper aims to investigate the Bactrian pantheon as reflected in the economic documents of this collection. At first, these economic documents and the pantheon mentioned in them are introduced. After that, the names of the gods that were commonly used in people's names are studied, and finally the gods of the Bactrian pantheon are discussed in detail. The conclusion is that the names of the gods in the Bactrian pantheon are not Indian but Iranian, and also the gods themselves are rather pre-Zoroastrian than originally Zoroastrian.

**Keywords:** Bactria, economic documents, pantheon, pre-Zoroastrian.

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### **Introduction**

In Arsacid and Sassanid eras, Eastern Iran had centers for trade in Asia. People of different nations and various faiths came to these centers for commercial matters. Among these Eastern Iranian trade centers, Sogdiana, Khotan, and Bactria were the most remarkable ones. These trade centers were also the loci of cultural interaction between different nations (Iranian, Indian, Chinese, and Greek), which prepared the ground for religious debates among different faiths, such as Zoroastrianism, Manicheanism, and Buddhism. Therefore, one can find useful information about these religions in the economic documents belonging to these centers in that era. In this paper, we have investigated

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the economic documents of Bactria with the aim of discovering new aspects of the Bactrian faith. Bactrian language was recognized in the late 1950s. In that time, some inscriptions, coins, and seals, as well as a few documents were found that were written in this language. Again, in 1990s, a few inscriptions and a remarkable number of documents were discovered.

Sims-Williams has labeled the dated economic and legal Bactrian documents in BD1 with capital letters ordered according to their dates. For example, the label of the oldest document is A, the second oldest one is labeled B, and so on. He has labeled the rest of the documents (e.g., the non-dated documents) with two lowercase letters—the first letter suggests a stylistic similarity of that document with the document from the former group whose label is the same letter in capital. As examples of the labels of this second group of documents, we may see aa, ab, ba, bb, and so forth. The letter “a” in aa and ab, for instance, indicates that they both have a style of writing similar to the document A in the former group. The dated economic and legal Bactrian documents discovered after the publication of BD1 are each labeled with a capital letter along with its lowercase counterpart (which was chosen according to the label of the nearest formerly discovered document in date); for instance, the document Aa is a dated document discovered after the publication of BD1 and is nearest in date to the document A in that collection; in other words, the document Aa has either the same date as A or a date between A and the next oldest formerly discovered document, B.

The twenty-five Bactrian economic documents discovered are the following:

1. Receipts (**Aa, B, E, G, H, K, M, ac, an**)
2. Civilian contracts: (**I, Ii, J, L, Nn, V, W, aa, ab**)
3. Vineyard lease contract (**U, m**)
4. Property payment expression (**D**)
5. Slave purchase contract (**P**)
6. Loan money contract (**Q**)
7. Hundred dirham loan contract (**Ss**)
8. Cost inventory (**al**)

In this paper, we have explored Bactrian documents in order to further our knowledge of the gods worshipped in Bactria and their



influence as reflected in the use of their names in people's names. After an introductory discussion on the development of Buddhism in Bactrian documents, we first mention the names of the gods found in these economic documents. Then, we move on to explore the names of the gods which became common names for people. Finally, we will discuss about some of the gods in the Bactrian pantheon in more detail.

### **Buddhism in Bactrian Documents**

From Bactrian economic documents, it can be inferred that Buddhism developed most extensively in the last years of the Sassanid dynasty, because *bahar* (Buddhist sanctuary, βαναρο in Bactrian language) is discussed only in the later documents **V** and **W**. Furthermore, it could be argued that Bactrian Buddhist documents are more recent, since the Buddhist expressions therein are all loanwords; for example, “λωγοασφαροαζο βοδδο” is taken from the Sanskrit “*lokeśvararāja Buddha*,” and “λωγοασφαρο βοδοσατρο” from the Sanskrit “*lokeśvara bodhisattva*” (BD2, 174-75).

### **Bactrian Gods and the Usage of Their Names**

There are two local gods mentioned in the economic documents of Bactria: (1) Bagh Wakhsh and (2) Bagh Ramset.

Wakhsh (οαχβο in Bactrian) is a river-god (the river Wakhsh is the very Oxus river) that is mentioned in documents **L**, **Nn**, **U**, **V**, and **W** and is described in **Nn** as “wonderful, the granter of favours and fulfiller of wishes whose fame and miracle has filled the whole world” (BD2, 243; Sims-Williams 2001, 13). He is said in document **L** to be worshipped in Warnu, and in documents **U** and **W** in Gundar. His description in the document **V** is as such: “The God Wakhsh, the granter of favours and fulfiller of wishes, great and wonderful who has worship in Kah” (BD1, 64, 106, 114, 126). It could be concluded that the god Wakhsh was worshipped throughout different areas of Bactria.

Ramset (ραμοσητο in Bactrian and r'mcytk βγγ in Sogdian derived from OIr. \*rAma-caITa), meaning “the spirit Ram,” is the name of a god which is similarly called rAmaN-god in Avesta (BD2, 259). It is also mentioned in documents **P**, **Q**, and **Ss**; in the latter document, one can see only the name of this god. It is described in documents **P** and **Q** as “God Ramset, the granter of favour and fulfiller of wishes, wonderful who has a worship place in Marugan” (BD1, 82, 88; Sims-Williams 2001, 19). It could be concluded that this god was worshipped only in

Marugan and Guzagan, since the document **Ss** is originally from Guzagan.

The name of Wakhsh is used in the following personal names: *σαχβομαρηγο* (“Wakhsh’s slave,” in **U4**, 19, 4’, 6’, 20’, 26’), *σαχβοανινδο* (“victorious through the Oxus,” in **aa6f**), *σαχβοιαμφο* (a combination of the names Wakhsh and Yamsh, in **L14**, 17), and *σαχβοβορδο* (“received from the Oxus,” in **V6**, 34, 33’) (Sims-Williams 2010, 103-5). Also, the name of god Ram is used in the personal name *ραμογολο* “belonging to Ram family” in **Iv2** and **Ii5**, and the last name *ραμανο* (in **Ii10**) (**BD2**, 259; Sims-Williams 2010, 119).

The names of some other gods are mentioned only within people’s names: (1) Yama or Jam (*ιαμφο* in Bactrian) in **C11**, **I6’**, **Ii17**; *ιαμφοβανδαγο* “slave of Yamsh” in **Ss3**; *ιαμφοοανινδο* “victorious by Yamsh” in **aa7**; and *ιαμφοσπαλο* “belonging to Yamsh’s army” in **C6** (Sims-Williams, 2010: 67-69). Another case is *Οαχβοιαμφο*, which was discussed earlier. (2) Mihr (*μυρο*) used in personal names *βορζομυρο* “high Mihr” in **J5**, 7; *μυροβαβορο* “Mihr Shabour” in **J2**, v4; *μυρο* “Mihr” in **W10**, 24; *μυροβανδαγο* “the slave of Mihr” in **C9**; and *βορζομυρανο* in **L16** and **N13** (**BD2**, 204; Sims-Williams 2010, 51, 88-89, 92). (3) Wesh (*οηβο* in Bactrian) is used in personal names *οηβλαδο* “given by Wesh” in **ab11**, 20, 22; *οηβοοαραζο* “boar of Wesh” in **J6**; and *οαραζοοηβο*, inversion of *οηβοοαραζο*, in **L5**, 5f, 9f, 28, 29’, v1 (Sims-Williams 2010, 100, 106-7). (4) God Zhun (*ζοβο* in Bactrian), which is used in the personal name *ζονολαδο* “given by Zhun” in **L8**, 19, 23, 30, **P3**, 4f, **Q5**, 5f (Sims-Williams 2010, 65-66). (5) Nana (*νανα* in Bactrian) used in *νανηβανδο* “Nana’s slave” in **M2**, 7 (Sims-Williams 2010, 94).

## **A More Detailed Study of the Bactrian Gods**

### **1. Wakhsh, about whom Markwart writes:**

The great Birouni, who was himself Khwarazmian, has written in his Khwarazmian calendar sketch: “And the tenth day of Ispandārmacī, the twelfth month, is the feast known as Waxšangām, and Waxš is the name of the angel in charge of water and specially Jeyhoon River.” On one of Kushan coins, [the picture of] a man could be seen, whose name is obviously *Οαχβο*. It seems that he has in his left hand a fish or a dolphin, which most likely represents sea-god or divine river (Markwart 1938, 31-32).

In a passage from the Chinese work by Duan Chengshi (803-863), a temple near the Oxus River is mentioned in which the god of the temple sometimes arises as a golden horse. Panaino believes the temple to be located in Bactria and the god to be Tishtar (Panaino 1995, 105-6). The authors of this paper, adopting the hypotheses of Markwart and Panaino, believe that it is likely that god Wakhsh is the same as Tishtar.

2. Mihr (μῑρo in Bactrian), which is used in personal names βορζομῑρo and μῑρoβαβορo. These and other names such as μῑρo, μῑρoμαρηγο, and μῑρoβανδαγο show the significance of the god Mihr for Bactrian people. Μῑροασανο (spelled alternatively as μῑροασανο and μῑροσανο) means “east” and is derived from OIr. \*mI{rAsANa-. Its middle Persian equivalent is xwarAsAN. Μῑροναφρανο (its alternative spellings are μῑρoναφρανο, μῑρoναφανο, etc.) signifies “west” and is derived from OIr. \*mI{ra-NIfrANa-. Its Parthian equivalent is hwnryfryn. It could be inferred from these data that Mihr (μῑρo, μῑρo, and μῑρo in Bactrian) was the very sun in Bactria which had replaced the Greek ηλιος in Kanishka coins. The above discussion is another evidence proving the hypothesis of Gershevitch, according to which Mihr as the god of the sun was originally an eastern Iranian idea (BD2, 233-34; Gershevitch 1954, 41; Sims-Williams and Cribb, 1996, 108, 110).



Fig.1. Mithra on Kushan coins (Staviskij 1986, ii)

3. Wish, used in the personal name oηῑλαδο. This name and the personal names oηῑμαρδο, oαραζooηῑβο, and oηῑφαρδαο indicate the importance of the god oηῑβο for the Bactrian people. Cribb asserted that Wish was a kind of Indian Shiva; however, Humbach demonstrated that it is in fact Vayu “god of the wind” (Sims-Williams and Cribb 1996, 108; Sims-Williams 2010, 106).



Fig.2. Wish on Kushan coins (Staviskij 1986, ii)

4. Zhun (ζονο in Bactrian) is used in the personal name ζονολαδο “given by Zhun.” Zhun is the god of Zabulistan in Chinese and Arabic sources. Schaeder and Humbach have considered Zhun as equal to Iranian Zurvan (Sims-Williams 2010, 66).

5. Yamsh. Grenet has read ιαμφο as /yamCU/ and believes it to be an alternative form for ιαμοραιο “King Jamshid” (Kaferi: Imro<yama-rAja-, Sogdian: /ImI/, and middle Persian: yam or jam). The picture of the God Yamsh could be seen on the gold coin of Kushan sovereign Huvishka II (Grenet 1984, 254).

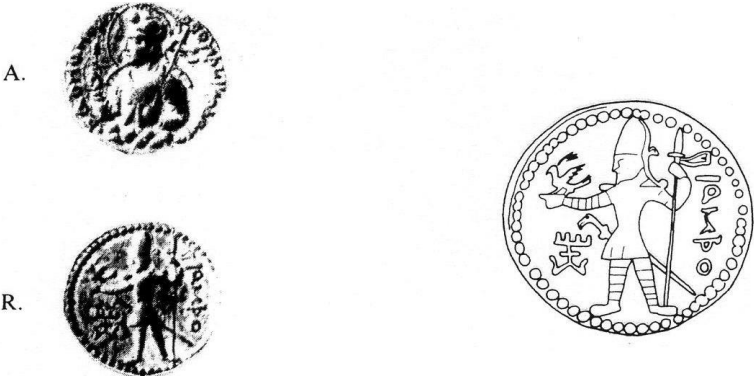


Fig.3. God Yamsh with Vareghan bird on his right hand depicted on Huvishka’s coin (Grenet 1984, 253).

In *al-Farq bayn al-firaq*, King Jamshid is described as being worshipped (Baghdadi 1408 AH, 345).

6. Nana (𐎡𐎴𐎠 in Bactrian) is the name of a Babylonian goddess. The goddess Nana was revered and worshipped in Eastern Iran. Her name and picture is seen in Kushan coins and silver vessels from Kwarazm and in the paintings on Dzhar-Tepa. In Nisa Parthian documents, Anahita fortress and temple is written as 'yzn nnystwkn. Hence, Lifshits believes that this Mesopotamian goddess has replaced the Iranian goddess Anahita (Lifshits 1962, 44, 45; Grenet 2001, 45). G. Azarpay believes that Nana, the Sumero-Akkadian Goddess, is the very Iranian goddess Armaiti (Azarpay 1976, 541). However, since we have no evidence of the old temples of Armaiti, the authors do not agree with this viewpoint.



Fig.4. Nana on Kushan coins (Staviskij 1986, ii)

## Conclusion

(1) In studying the Bactrian economic documents, we found out that the gods worshipped by Bactrian people are Iranian deities or the replaced local and Semitic gods. Unlike what was expected, Buddhism turned out to have much less presence in those documents, and the few exceptions belong to a later period.

(2) The figures of fifteen Zoroastrian deities (Ahura Mazda, Mithra, Mah, Adur, Wad, Ashi, Farn, Arshtat, Wanind, Shahrewar, Druwasp, Tir, Wahram, Vayu, and Wahman) and two Non-Zoroastrian Iranian deities (Wakhsh and Yama) are seen on Kushan coins of Kanishka and Huvishka (Grenet 2006, 88). Moreover, in Kanishka's Rabatak inscription we read that "for these gods, whose service here the ... glorious Umma leads, (namely:) the above-mentioned Nana and the above-mentioned Umma, Aurmuzd, the gracious one, Soroshard,

Narasa, (and) Mihr” (Sims-Williams 1998, 82). However, in these economic documents, only two of those Zoroastrian deities are mentioned along with the two non-Zoroastrian ones, in addition to two other Zoroastrian deities. Original Zoroastrian deities (Ahura Mazda, Shahrewar, and Wahman) are neglected in these documents, while pre-Zoroastrian Iranian deities are preserved. This indicates that in time of writing these documents (4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> centuries), the original Zoroastrian deities gradually vanished from the worshipping scene, but pre-Zoroastrian Iranian deities continued to be worshipped. Thus, Bactria’s Iranian religion throughout this era was drastically different from the Zoroastrian orthodoxy of Sassanids.

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## Pragmatic Elements of Rawls's Theory of Justice

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In this article, in order to demonstrate the pragmatic elements of Rawls's viewpoint, the developmental path of his A Theory of Justice shall first be investigated. This development has two phases: In the first phase, justice has an ethical-philosophical basis. In A Theory of Justice, this phase is specifically shown under the title of theory of justice. In the second phase, justice has no philosophical basis, but, as Rawls says, political justice is included. The main purpose of this article is to show the path of Rawls's theory of justice from an ethical viewpoint to a political one. Rawls, himself, points out this transition, but the main problem is how Rawls arrives at a pragmatic viewpoint. In Rawls's time, this viewpoint was brought to life by Richard Rorty in a particular way. Rawls is not interested in this viewpoint, but these elements indicate the above-mentioned transition. These elements are pluralism, society as a fair system of cooperation, public reason, and overlapping consensus. Although these elements are implied in A Theory of Justice and have Kantian basis, in his Political Liberalism, Rawls articulates these elements and eliminates metaphysical, religious, or any kind of doctrine from principles of justice and arrives at a practical viewpoint on justice.

**Keywords:** Rawls, political justice, Rorty, pragmatism, pluralism.

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### Introduction

Rawls's theory of justice is one of the most important theories on justice, so much so that Thomas Nagel, one of the interpreters and analyzers of Rawls's thought, refers to him as the most important philosopher of the twentieth century (Nagel 1989, 10). Robert Nozick describes Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* as a powerful and deep writing in political thinking and also in the philosophy of ethics (Nozick 1971, 183).

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Considering the importance of Rawls's theory of justice, the main challenge of this article is to follow the path of its development and to identify the pragmatic elements of Rawls's thought. In order to do so, the main structure of this article would be as follows: First, we study the first phase of Rawls's theory of justice, which has an ethical and philosophical basis. The important element of this phase is "The original position." Then we discuss the second phase of Rawls's theory of justice in which the philosophical and ethical basis is put aside. The elements of this phase are pluralism, society as a fair system of cooperation, public reason, and overlapping consensus. Although the original position is also presented in the second phase of Rawls's theory, there is an important difference between them. The original position in *A theory of justice* has a metaphysical base, but Rawls in his latest work, *Political liberalism*, has no commitment to any metaphysical doctrine.

The elements of the second phase of Rawls's theory of justice are indicative of Rawls's pragmatic point of view. To demonstrate this conclusion, we refer to Rorty's important viewpoint on "recognition," and we show how Rawls's point of view compares to Rorty's. The main point in his book *Consequences of pragmatism* is that a pragmatist theory "says that truth is not the sort of thing one should expect to have a philosophically interesting theory about. For pragmatists, 'truth' is just the name of a property which all true statements share" (Rorty 1980, 8). Having put the "truth" to one side and having deduced the pragmatist view, Rorty proceeds to note the consequences of this theory.

### **1. The First Phase: Philosophical and Ethical Basis**

Rawls's important theory about justice can be divided into two phases. The first phase takes shape in Rawls's book titled *A Theory of Justice*. In this book, the theory of justice has a philosophical and ethical foundation, which is specifically inspired by Kant. Rawls believes that the theory of justice as fairness offers the best ethical foundation for a democratic society.

To arrive at this ethical foundation, Rawls uses the conventional theory of social contract. Of course, his theory has major differences with the theory of social contract, as he does not seek to explain government.

[W]e are not to think of the original contract as one to enter a particular society or to set up a particular form of government.

Rather, the guiding idea is that the principles of justice for the basic structure of society are the object of the original agreement. (Rawls 1972, 11)

In this contract, those who engage in social cooperation choose to put together, simultaneously, the principles which assign basic rights and duties, and to determine the division of social benefits (Rawls 1972, 11).

For Rawls, social contract is a device of representation and also a mental evaluation. Social contract is a device, because, with that, one arrives at the principles of justice. It is also like a mental evaluation, because, accordingly, judgments shall be made according to wisdom (Rawls 1972, 19). Rawls calls this device "original position." To reevaluate ethical and philosophical fundamental views of Rawls, this condition must be further discussed.

### **A. Original Position**

To arrive at the principles of justice, Rawls uses a hypothetical situation with simulated parties. "It is understood as a purely hypothetical situation characterized so as to lead to a certain conception of justice" (Rawls 1972, 12). This situation, which is extensively described and discussed in *A Theory of justice*, shall be briefly presented here.

In the original position, all parties of the agreement are sound, rational, and have good intentions. These individuals are equals, and therefore everyone has equal judicial rights. They are in situations where they cannot make any personal decisions. In such a situation, Rawls speaks of a condition which he names the veil of ignorance.

To represent the desired restrictions one imagines a situation in which everyone is deprived of this sort of information. One excludes the knowledge of those contingencies which sets men at odds and allows them to guide by their prejudices. In this manner the veil of ignorance is arrived at in a natural way. (Rawls 1972, 19)

Rawls seeks to establish a fair condition in which all agreed principles are just. "The idea of the original position is to set up a fair procedure so that any principles agreed to will be just" (Rawls 1972, 136). To accomplish this, all parties of the contract, in this hypothetical case, are assumed to be under a veil of ignorance and have no

knowledge of certain facts, such as their place in society, their class position or social status, their fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, their conception of the good, or the particulars of their rational plan of life. They do not know their society's economic or political situation or its level of civilization. They have no information as to which generation they belong to. The parties must not know the contingencies that set them in opposition (Rawls 1972, 137). The only particular facts the parties know is that their society is subject to the circumstances' justice and whatever this implies. They know the general facts about human society. They are presumed to know whatever general facts affect the choice of the principles of justice (Rawls 1972, 37).

In this situation, the parties of the contract must select their best choice from a list offered to them and come to an agreement regarding the principles of justice. The list is comprehensively offered in chapter 3 of *A Theory of Justice*. According to Rawls, the principles of justice must meet the following criteria. First, the principles of justice should be general. "That is, it must be possible to formulate them without the use of what would be intuitively recognized as proper names, or rigged definite description" (Rawls 1972, 131). They must be universally inclusive of all individuals as ethical human beings. "Thus I assume that each can understand these principles and use them in his deliberation" (Rawls 1972, 132). They also must be public.

The publicity condition is clearly implicit in Kant's doctrine of the categorical imperative in so far as it requires us to act in accordance with principles that one would be willing as a rational being to enact as law for a kingdom of ends. (Rawls 1972, p 133)

And they must be final. The parties must evaluate the system of the principles, just as the final court of appeal in practical reasoning (Rawls 1972, 131-36).

## **B. Pure Procedural Justice**

Rawls calls the procedure described under the original position as pure procedural justice. "Thus justice as fairness is able to use the idea of pure procedural justice from the beginning." (Rawls 1972, 120). This is the same procedure that has the Kantian description and analysis, which is "an interpretation of it in its use to select general principles" (Mason 2003, 1:360).

The principles of justice are also analogous to categorical imperatives. For by a categorical imperative Kant understands a principle of conduct that applies to a person in virtue of his nature as a free and equal rational being. The validity of the principle does not presuppose that one has a particular desire or aim. (Mason 2003, 1:253)

Therefore, the original position can be considered as procedural description and analysis of what Kant conceived as autonomy and categorical imperative. "Kant held, I believe, that a person is acting autonomously when the principles of his action are chosen by him as the most adequate possible expression of his nature as a free and equal rational being... To be sure the argument for these principles does add in various ways to Kant's conception" (Rawls 1972, 252).

Rawls's method of arriving at the principles of justice in the first phase is influenced by Kant's ethical views. The important points which specifically show Kant's influence on Rawls, are deontology, autonomy, opposition to utilitarianism, and the priority of right over good. "We may note also that the motivation assumption of mutual disinterest accords with Kant's notion of autonomy, and gives another reason for this condition" (Rawls 1972, 253). All of these cases come under the spotlight in the original position, which, as described, provide just conditions for arriving at the principles of justice. Individuals in the original position are rational and very similar to Kant's rational being.

[F]or that there must be such is self-evident from the common idea of duty and of moral laws. Everyone must admit that a law, if it is to be valid morally, i.e., as the ground of an obligation, has to carry absolute necessity with it; that the command 'You ought not to lie' is valid not merely for human beings, as though other rational beings did not have to heed it ... and even a precept that is universal in a certain aspect, insofar as it is supported in the smallest part on empirical grounds, perhaps only as to its motive, can be called a practical rule, but never a moral law. (Kant 2002, 2)

Kant's deontology means that ethical goodness of a behavior is the result of its compliance with duty. This leads to a deontological attitude towards the principles of ethics. In his opinion, no action has ethical value unless it is motivated by duty. Rawls develops deontology as a

hypothesis in *A Theory of Justice* and maintains that the theory of justice as fairness is a deontological theory.<sup>1</sup>

Rawls provides for the individuals conditions in which they are unaware of their self-interests. Therefore, they cannot make any decision based on their personal interest. Under such conditions, utilitarian views are negated because they consider goodness and good intentions prior to righteousness.

While Rawls was writing his book, utilitarianism was dominating liberal justice, and he intended to “work out a theory of justice that represents an alternative to utilitarian thought generally and so to all of these different versions of it” (Rawls 1972, 22).

In contrast to the utilitarian point of view, Kant and Rawls believe that ethical principles are chosen rationally and not according to benefits; therefore, justice is prior to goodness. In Rawls’s view, utilitarianism is the idea that there is nothing inherently unjust, there is no ethical principle that is inherently credible, and all of the ethical principles and judgments regarding the principles of justice depend on the existing conditions of the society; whereas in Rawls’s opinion, every member of a society considers justice as undeniable so much so that even the overall wellbeing of a society cannot dominate it, and the loss of freedom for some cannot be justified by a larger sum of satisfactions (Rawls 1972, 24).

In the first phase of Rawls’s theory of justice, philosophical ethics is clearly visible. In this phase, as mentioned earlier, the condition is dominant. “The conditions of the initial situation and the motivation of the parties are intended to set out the necessary premises to achieve this end” (Rawls 1972, 185). Without considering the philosophical basis influenced by Kant, one cannot talk about Rawls’s theory of justice.

## **2. Second Phase of Rawls’s Theory of Justice: Putting Aside Philosophical and Ethical Basis**

Developing his theory of justice, in his *Political Liberalism*, Rawls speaks of certain concepts implied in *A Theory of Justice*, which end up in a political conception of justice. These concepts are pluralism,

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1. Rawls defines deontological theories as non-teleological theories, “not as views that characterize the rightness of institutions and acts independently from their consequences. All ethical doctrines worth our attention take consequences into account in judging rightness. One which did not would simply be irrational, crazy (Rawls 1972, 30).

society as a fair system of cooperation, public reason, constructivism, and overlapping consensus. They are the constitutive elements of Rawls's pragmatic viewpoint. "One thing I failed to say in *A Theory of Justice*, or failed to stress sufficiently, is that justice as fairness is intended as a political conception of justice" (Rawls 2000, 224). In *Political Liberalism*, the conception of justice is political and not metaphysical when it is neutral toward conflicting worldviews (Habermas 2003, 1:381).

Before discussing these concepts, it is necessary to mention that in his *Political Liberalism* and *Justice as Fairness*, Rawls considers the differences between society, community, and association. In Rawls's viewpoint, the democratic society is not, and is impossible to become, a kind of community. In his view, community is made of the sum of the parts, which everyone accepts as a comprehensive or nearly comprehensive doctrine. Similarly, political society is not a kind of association, because in an association the individuals share a purpose and final end. In contrast, all individuals in a society do not have a common purpose. In other words, a democratic society is a closed social order, which one enters by birth and leaves at death (Habermas 2003, 1:4). Rawls points out several important facts in this social order, which we will review briefly in the following section.

### **A. Pluralism**

In Rawls's view, pluralism is the persisting identity of democratic culture. He identifies this understanding as the first fact of a democratic society; it means that the multitude of religious, philosophical, and ethical teachings is not only a historical condition that may easily disappear but also a permanent feature of modern democratic societies. Along with the first fact, Rawls mentions another fact named oppression (Rawls 1996, 64). One can see this fact during the middle ages in the approval of Catholicism (Rawls 1996, 69).

The third fact is that a democratic order must be freely supported by a considerably large majority of citizens that are politically active. The democratic order must recognize the variety of views presented by the majority of politically active citizens; otherwise, such an order will not remain stable (Rawls 1996, 38). Another fact is that the political culture of a democratic society which has rationally performed well in a considerable period of time includes some fundamental ideas on the

basis of which one may form a political conception of justice that is appropriate for a constitutional order (Rawls 1996, 72).

Political liberalism represents an advance in its attention to social group difference and in its theorizing of a pluralist solution to the political challenges posed by such difference. (Young 2003, 4:20)

The last fact shows Rawls's deviation from his philosophical and ethical foundations. In *A theory of Justice*, Rawls emphasizes that the existence of the original position is necessary for achieving the principles of justice, whereas in his *Political Liberalism* and thereafter, he emphasizes on the hidden ideas in a democratic society. The most important of these ideas is "society as a fair system of cooperation."

### **B. Society as a Fair System of Cooperation**

According to Rawls, the principles of justice determine the fair conditions of social cooperation. This is accompanied by two other ideas: the idea of citizens as free and equal individuals, and the idea of an orderly society which becomes orderly through a general understanding of justice. According to Rawls, these ideas are familiar to the democratic society and they mean that the citizens in such a society consider their order as neither a kind of natural fixed order nor a structural foundation that could be explained by religious teachings (Rawls 2000, 5).

### **C. Public Reason**

In *A Theory of Justice*, public reason is discussed as a public idea, such that it becomes an integral part of theory of justice as fairness. After *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls tries to find a common ground on which individuals are able to coexist despite their deep religious and ethical differences. Rawls believes that practical implementation of justice brings about the support of individuals in the society. Rawls uses public reason to distinguish it from private reason. In his opinion, the reason associated with churches, universities, and many other associations is not public. Therefore, in dictatorial societies, there is no public reason. Public reason is the reason of citizens. Its subject is public goodness—what the political essence of justice expects of the society's basic structures and of the goals the citizens must achieve (Rawls 1996, 99). "In particular, justice as fairness is framed to apply to what I have called the 'basic structure' of a modern constitutional democracy" (Rawls 2000, 224).



### **D. Overlapping Consensus**

Rawls thinks that citizens approve a uniform understanding of justice, but they do not do this for the sake of uniformity. As mentioned earlier, Rawls considers pluralism as one of the facts of democratic societies. Considering the fact that individuals in a society have different philosophical, ethical, and religious points of view, he emphasizes that there is no comprehensive doctrine according to which citizens would be able to agree on the fundamental problems of political justice. On the contrary, he thinks that political understanding of justice is approved by what he names overlapping consensus. And this is the final phase of his theory of social justice. In the first phase, Rawls seeks a philosophical and ethical doctrine with a Kantian viewpoint, but it is in the final phase that he concludes that when there is a multitude of doctrines, it is not possible to protect one of them by the power of government, and therefore the theory of justice is not universal (Rawls 2000, 138-40).

In *Political Liberalism*, the principles of justice that Rawls arrives at appear as the values of a specific independent political field. This is where Rawls sees it the duty of every citizen to demonstrate the relevance of his or her thought about political values (i.e. principles of justice) to his or her own values learned in the philosophical, religious, and ethical fields.

With an overlapping consensus on constitutional principles, groups can cooperate together in the same polity without any of them needing to abandon their own specific culture or commitments (Young 2003, 4:20).

The political values, in Rawls's point of view, are great values and one cannot easily overlook them. These values, including political and social freedom, equal opportunities, free economical trade, and so on come from the heart of a democratic society.

### **3. Rawls's Arriving at Rorty's Points of View**

At the beginning of this part, we take a look at Rorty's views on epistemology. Rorty is a pragmatist philosopher, who criticizes philosophy and states his pragmatic viewpoints on knowledge and truth in his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, a book whose moral is "historicist, and the three parts into which it is divided are intended to put the notions of 'mind,' of 'knowledge,' and of 'philosophy,'

respectively, in historical perspective” (Rorty 1980, 10). He names his viewpoint on knowledge epistemological behaviorism. Knowledge, in his view, needs verbal communication and social action. In his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty investigates the views of philosophers on knowledge and truth to demonstrate his point of view on these two concepts.

In his historical investigation, he says, “Other problems concern the legitimation of claims to know, and are crystallized in questions concerning the ‘foundations’ of knowledge” (Rorty 1980, 3). He believes that all philosophers have searched for these foundations. He also presents different methods used by philosophers to arrive at these principles; and to show their mistakes, he discusses the discontinuity of knowledge in philosophical paradigms, and selective models of recognition (Rorty 1980, 3).

Rorty shapes his views under the influence of Thomas Kuhn. In the picture Rorty draws of the history of philosophy, the permanency of philosophical problems is considered as the philosopher’s hallucination. Searching for the reasons, Rorty finds the mistakes in using the philosophical problems and concepts of one paradigm with the same meaning in another paradigm—while in his view, every philosophical problem is about its own paradigm and completely selective.

Rorty presents himself as a “therapeutic” philosopher, who thinks that the most fundamental philosophical problems must be put aside instead of being mentally solved. In the preface of his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, he attributes his therapeutic antecedent to people like Austin and Wittgenstein, but he believes that his curing methods are different from theirs in respect of his insistence on the historical origin of the problems. In Rorty’s point of view, “philosophical problems” are not permanent; rather, the present philosophical problems are made up of a sum of concepts that are historically possible, and therefore optional. The outstanding concepts of philosophy are knowledge, representation, and truth. In Rorty’s view, the outstanding superiority of analytical philosophy has been the criticism of those concepts. But, this criticism has resulted in the destruction of its most basic suppositions. Therefore, it has surpassed its limit and consequently has destroyed itself (Rorty 1980, 3-11).

Rorty offers a descriptive-historical explanation of the development of philosophy with the aim of destroying the confidence of the reader in three things: (1) "mind" as something about which one should have a "philosophical" view, (2) "Knowledge" as something about which there ought to be "theory" and which has a "foundation," and (3) "Philosophy" as it has been conceived since Kant's time (Rorty 1980, 7). Thus, it becomes clear that Rawls's theory of justice develops in a path that ultimately comes to Rorty's point of view.

By talking about pluralism and its effects, Rawls shows that the foundations of epistemology lose their meanings. In other words, if we want to arrive at principles of justice, we cannot start from a single starting point, whether philosophical or ethical. Otherwise, we arrive at the fact of suppression, in the sense that everyone must believe in a single principle, which is not acceptable in Rawls's opinion.

As was mentioned, Rawls in the second phase of his theory of justice explains the idea of society as an order of social cooperation. In the society that Rawls describes, he shows an order which, as Rorty says, is not a natural but a man-made order; that is to say, the principles of justice for the basic structure of society are the object of the original agreement. They are the principles that free and rational individuals concerned about furthering their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms of their association. (Rawls 1972, 11). Rawls shows how this order is built by public reason and overlapping consensus. In this section, again, the emphasis is on the lack of any specific fundamental philosophy. The citizens of an orderly society have different points of view. In such a society, no special point of view is preferred and citizens accept the principles of justice for a variety of reasons. Thus, Rawls arrives at Rorty's viewpoint in the second phase.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The main purpose of this article was to show the pragmatic elements of Rawls's theory of justice. In order to do so, we first reviewed Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*. It was shown that the first phase of Rawls's theory of justice has ethical and philosophical foundations and is influenced by Kant. To arrive at the principles of justice, Rawls used a device called "preconditions," which made it possible for those who choose the principles of justice to have, at the same time, ethical and

philosophical fundamentals and thus make them available to all generations. In other words, the principles of justice in this phase had vast and universal applications.

In the second phase of his theory, Rawls keeps away from Kant's point of view. Here, he realizes that to make the principles of justice practical, he must eliminate the philosophical basis of justice. In his important book *Political Liberalism*, Rawls points out the reality of pluralism. He believes that pluralism is a reality that if we accept it, we cannot regard any viewpoint as absolute in the society. In other words, if we accept a universal and well-developed viewpoint and negate other viewpoints without considering that the plurality of views in the society is a fact, we arrive at the fact of suppression. Rawls had well understood this point, and this was the reason why in the second phase of the development of his theory he speaks of ideas that draw him to a pragmatic viewpoint on justice. These ideas include pluralism, society as a fair system of cooperation, public reason, and overlapping consensus. Each of these ideas shows the fact that there is no pre-established or pre-determined order. Whatever we want in order to arrive at justice in a society must be fitting to that society. In contrast to his intentions, this phase in the development of his theory comes close to a pragmatic point of view.

Rorty is a pragmatist philosopher. He states his views on knowledge and truth in his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. He reviews the history of knowledge in philosophy and shows that philosophical problems are not eternal and permanent; rather, they are completely selective. Each paradigm has its own special problems, so we cannot expect a fixed reality. This pragmatic view can be seen in the second phase of Rawls's justice, in which he searches for not an eternal and permanent order but a man-made one, different and completely selective during each period.

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