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Decoding Early Islam

A Close Look at the Origin of Islam

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Foreword

This essay about early Islam, it is intended to enlighten any person who is interested in this poorly understood and highly problematic issue, thus it is presumed that the reader has the knowledge of some basic historical facts and concepts concerning Judeo- Christianity and Islam.

Early Islam is an enigma that is based on a distorted history that can be analyzed from a different point of view by putting it into its historical context.

The aim of this essay is to provide an intellectual framework to help decoding the overwhelming volume of early Islamic narratives in order to reconcile opposing scholarly opinions, namely those who view the narratives as a-historical and those who consider them as the only available source of historical information. This work is to contribute to the growing body of work that attempts to tie the ideas of early Islam to modern linguistic concepts.

Omar Nineveh, September 2013

Decoding early Islam:

It is increasingly recognized, that our knowledge about the rise of Islam is flawed. The first century of Islam, which is the most difficult to understand, offers a wide range of scholarly opinions, ranging from acceptance of classical wisdom to complete dismissal of Islamic narratives and attempts to rebuild its history.

The approach used here is based on linguistic, cultural, and intellectual similarities of Muslim concepts in Arabic, English, and Hebrew compared to Christianity and Judaism.

Some scholars may be misled by the fact that the language of the Koran contains strong Syriac influences, and thus propose that students should understand Islam through a Syriac and Christian point of view

Another common misconception is that the rise of Islam is linked to a group of naïve pagans, because the traditions make that claim.

Introduction

To accept the simplest Islamic version of its historic timeline requires a leap of faith in its truth. To accept it, almost requires to be a Muslim!

The authors of the traditional narratives themselves have shown how much “erroneous” material was under their disposal. For example, Bukhari (البخاري) states that he picked less than 7000 Hadiths out of a pool of Hadiths of 600,000, merely 1%! Yet, many scholars still adhere to the old schools of following the authority of the traditional narrative even beyond of what itself claims. On the other hand, the accepted story of Islam has weaknesses not only in the narrative itself but also from an archeological point of view. These weaknesses are clear to scholars of early Islam, and are no longer in need of documenting.

The narrative contains many disagreements about dates, places, and persons; there is little agreement even about important issues like prayers or Hajj.

There are mythological and unrealistic events and explanations, but even these do not agree with each other.

There is much ambiguity concerning the explanation and meaning of important religious terms which cast questions about their true method of their entry into Islamic practice.

Archeology does not support classical wisdom. The cultural variations as outlined above may need special attention.

It is increasingly recognized that there is no archeological evidence for the existence of early Islam as a mature religion, until the year 72 AH when Islamic creeds, inscriptions, and coins mentioning MHMD (Muhammad) appear.

While "absence of evidence is not an evidence for absence", the missing Muslim presence is not merely negative evidence. For example, nearly all coins show the inscription "Khalifata Allah" (خليفة الله the representative of Allah), not "Khalifat Rusoul Allah" (خليفة رسول الله the successor of the prophet). From a Western view, this could be a simple omission, but from an Islamic view this is blasphemy: how dare the caliph claiming himself to be God's representative on earth?

Sadducee Origins

A sound approach to reaching a solid theory on early Islam will depend on evidence, not speculation, and although it is a bitter choice, the classic narrative is a good place to start with. There is a vast body of material from outside the accepted "history," and it seems unwise to dismiss it all as false. In fact, it would be preferable to decode the text in a way that clarifies how such a distorted picture of history could have emerged.

Islam is an Arabic phenomenon, and a strong tradition maintains that the originators were Ishmaelites. There are two groups of Arabs, the original Arabs and those who were Arabized (they are called Arab A'riba and Arab Most'ariba (العرب العاربة و العرب المستعربة)). The narratives present many disagreements and disputes concerning the original Arabs. Some divide them into two subgroups; those who went extinct (العرب البائدة) and those who survived. Others claim that all original Arabs are extinct.

The Arabized Arabs are called sons of Adnan (عدنان), and the originals are called sons of Kahtan (قحطان). There are many opinions concerning the latter because some ancient writers considered him to be the father of the original Arabs, and others who considered him as part of the line of Adnan,

thus putting the whole Arab people as sons of Adnan. From this chaos in legends, a strong desire and tradition emerges that turns most Arabs into the line of Adnan. In other words, they were not Arabs to start with, but were Arabized later. While they disagree in almost every other aspect, it seems that all of them want to be sons of Adnan, which is part of the family tree of Muhammad.

It seems that all Islamic sources insist on the family tree of the prophet up to Adnan, but the lineage is differing thereafter.¹ However, there can only be one ancestral line without creating a fundamental conflict. After Adnan, there is a sudden change from familiar Arab names to biblical names that sound alien to an Arab: Adud, Faneg....etc² (one of this author's uncle is called Adnan).

The prophet's pedigree should represent the best known foundation to the contemporaries concerning the origin of the Arabs, even if Muhammad was an invented character (in this study his historicity is assumed). The inventors would have thus chosen their lowest common denominator in the sons of Adnan. There are few Hadiths in which the prophet says that the writers of family lines (Arabic Nassaboon النسابين) were correct up to Adnan but that they lied afterwards. The core issue is that this family line represents the specific tribe of Quraysh (قریش) rather than all Arab tribes.

There are 22 generations from Muhammad to Adnan. Given a rough calculation per generation of around 25 years, this will yield 550 years from the presumed death of Muhammad in 632 CE, which leads back to 82 CE. It raises serious concerns that the Arabs would be sure of their ancestry through 22 generations but not any further.

The hypothesis here made is that the collective memory of the Arabs being Arabized rather than being original Arabs, should lead to geographical and

Kedar version from Deus (2011): Al-Muqawwim ibn Al-Yas'a ibn Al-Hamis (Al-Humaisa) ibn Nibt (Nobet) ibn Salaman (Sulayman) ibn Hamal (Haml) ibn Qidar (**Kedar**) ibn **Ishmael**.

Nabaioth version in next footnote.

From Deus (2011): Muhammad ibn (son of) Abdullah ibn Abdul Muttalib (Shaiba) ibn Hashim (Amr) ibn Abd Manaf (al-Mughira) ibn Qusai (Zaid) ibn Kilab ibn Murra ibn Ka'b ibn Lu'ay ibn Ghalib ibn Fahr (Quraish) ibn Malik ibn an-Nadr (Qais) ibn Kinana ibn Khuzaimah ibn Mudrikah (Amir) ibn **Ilyas (Elijah)** ibn Mudar ibn Nizar ibn Ma'ad ibn **Adnan** ibn Add (Awwad) ibn Send (Send, the second born of Nabaioth) ibn Napyot (Nabaioth) ibn **Ishmael** ibn Abraham ibn Azar (Terah) ibn Nahoor (Nahor) ibn Srooj (Serug) ibn Ra'o (Reu) ibn Phaleg (Peleg) ibn Aber (Eber) ibn Shaleh (Shelah) (ibn Cainan) ibn Arpheckshad (Arphaxad) ibn Sam (Shem) ibn **Noah** ibn Lamek (Lamech) ibn Motoshaleh (Mehuselach) ibn Edres (Enoch) ibn Yared (Jared) ibn Mehlael (Mahalalel) ibn Qenan (Kenan) ibn Anosh (Enosh) ibn Sheeth (Seth) ibn Adam.

chronological clues to the origin of this Arabized people. The timescale of the late first and early second centuries is the era of the Jewish revolts and Roman Jewish Wars. This leads to a possible explanation of such a narrative that those Arabized people came from Judaea/Palestine, possibly in different waves of immigration during each war or revolt.

The idea of a group of people being the sons of Ishmael through Adnan could only be of a Judaic origin. It seems unlikely that a complete stranger would be able to convince a large group that they are the sons of Ishmael unless they already had such a notion or a ready connection. This puts their origin into a Canaanite paradigm. There is a striking phonetic similarity between Adnan and Canaan (as if we are saying Adnanites and Canaanites). This not to say that they are the same other than pointing at their overlapping sounds.

The Semitic languages, including Arabic and Hebrew, contain phonetics and consonants not available in English or other Indo-European languages. For example the letter *ayin* (ע) in Arabic and Hebrew is difficult to be pronounced by average Westerners; in fact, this author has witnessed prominent American Hebrew scholars miss-pronouncing Hebrew words in American Hebrew! *Ein* (ע) in Arabic is not A in English, but it seems that some don't have the cultural notion or feeling of that difference. This is complicated by the fact that there is a difference between written and pronounced Hebrew. Modern Hebrew is in an unusual situation of having the same phonation for two consonants as the Israelites have lost their ability to adhere to the old original pronunciation. Translation and transliteration of religious words go through a long path from Hebrew into Greek, Latin, and finally English, which leaves them distorted from the original.

Another complication arises through the circumstance that the Arabic writing contains many Hebrew words that are slightly distorted. Whether this is intentional or by mere coincidence, this distortion makes the terms sound Arabic but with a different meaning from Hebrew. However, in many cases, the remaining Arabic word has no intelligible meaning.

Interpreters went out of their way to explain mysterious terms to the degree of forming fairy tales. This results in opposing opinions about the meaning of an Arabic root that could be applied. Modern scholarship seems to overlook this, possibly due to distorted translation and transliteration

efforts that led to losing contact with the original sense. For example, the work of Christoph Luxenberg neglects Hebrew and exclusively focuses on Syriac and Aramaic. Applying philology in isolation of a sound historical context may thus lead to a dead-end.

Could it thus be that many if not all early Arabs and Muslims were nothing but immigrants from Judea/Palestine/Canaan who have been mixing with a small indigenous population of Arabs about which we know very little? However the case, all later history is about those newcomers, the sons of Adnan.

The notion of Judea/Palestine/Canaan rests on a set of Judaic sects of the late first and early second century. The terms Jewish or Judaic are thus meant in the broad sense of the word concerning the well-known Jewish sects at that time, the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Samaritans, and Zealots. When appropriate, the term Rabbinic Judaism is used to refer to post temple Pharisees, the originators of modern Jewry. These latter are not to be confused with the former sects.

The implications of this hypothesis would obviously include that Islam in its basic essence is nothing but a form of Judaism (in the sense of the post second temple culture). It is generally accepted among scholars that the Pharisee is the only surviving Jewish sect today, but our hypothesis implies that this may be an erroneous assumption. It rather seems that the Sadducees managed to flee to Arabia to re-establish a strong foothold and to protect themselves from their Roman enemy.

It is going to be shown that many attributes of the Quraysh are indeed of Sadducee origins, and it needs to be pointed out that it is A.J. Deus's meticulous work that has first demonstrated this connection with unmatched clarity.

The general framework that arises from this hypothesis is that the origins of Islam could have been intentionally distorted by the sects within it. The cause of this distortion would have been a common goal, namely concealing the Jewish and Christian elements of Islam. By this, we don't mean theological concepts alone but real Jewish and Christian people in action.

Although it is likely that there were previous immigrations out of Judea/Palestine/Canaan, the era around 82 CE seems to represent the origin

of the Quraysh as the spiritual leadership of Islam., As those immigrants are of Sadducee origin, they cannot function without a temple (a holy shrine, to say), probably represented by a tabernacle, which may later have turned into the Kaaba. Those newcomers interacted with the indigenous Bedouin population and with other, probably older waves of immigrants. There is a wealth of information about Arabian Christian groups at the birth of Islam, namely the Lukhmides (Manathera المناذرة) and Ghassanides (الغساسنة).

As those people also viewed themselves as immigrant Ishmaelites, Islam was composed out of the interaction of two basic components that had adopted a different kind of Judaic monotheism. They shared a common history and conscience; these groups were the Quraysh Sadducees as well as the Christian Ghassanides and Lukhmides. They shared the term "Believers" (المؤمنون). Added to these large groups are the indigenous Bedouins, which may have been the original "Muslims" (Submissive). While the believers are Muslims, they are not referred to as such in the early literature. The term "believer" implies a higher status and, more importantly, some form of ethnic distinction. This communality finds its source from its common origins. But Islam's internal divisions weaken the inner cohesion. While it seems that the prophet may have originated from the Lukhmides, but as the Sadducees were the leading theocratic power in this project, he may later have been transferred to their family line, creating the later divisions.

Bnu Hashim (بنو هاشم)

The Islamic narrative maintains that Muhammad stems from the Quraysh tribe of Banu Hashim (بنو هاشم). It is in itself a little strange that the narrators took pains to explain the names of people. According to them, the father of this family line was called Hashem because at one time there was a famine at Mecca. A person called Amru would have brought wheat flour in order to make bread to be eaten with meat. As Amru was breaking up the bread to prepare the meal for the people, he was renamed Hashem as the root hshm (هشم) means broke up. This custom of breaking the bread is called Thread (ثريد) in Arabic. In Hebrew, Hashem means "the name" (השם), which is an indirect reference to God. Thus, Banu Hashim (بنو هاشم) means "people of God."

The name of God appears in the Hebrew Bible in two main forms, Elohim and Yahweh. While Elohim is recited in reading the scripture, Yahweh is not said aloud. This is an ancient Jewish tradition that would survive in Rabbinic Judaism. The Tetragrammaton (יהוה youd, hay, vav, hey) is never pronounced. Instead of Yahweh, when reading scripture Adoni (אדוני) is recited. In colloquial language "it" (Yahweh) is referred to as "The Name;" the definite article "the" in English equals to "Ha" in Hebrew; and "Shem" means name. Hence, Hashem is a reference to the name of God, a custom that is in use up until this very day. A Hebrew speaking, religious person would respond to a friendly "How are you?" with (ברוך השם) Barukh Hashim, which means Thanks to God (Blessed is God, Arabic: الحمد لله).

This finds its echoes within the Islamic narrative. The Sira (Biography of the prophet) maintains that the Quraysh were called the people of God because God had protected them from the destruction of the Kaaba by king Abrahah and his elephants.

Given the Hebrew understanding, there can be little doubt that the people of God were of Judaic heritage.

Abu Bakr

According to tradition, the first Quraysh caliph was Abu Bakr Al Seddik (ابو بكر الصديق). The Islamic narratives explain that the prophet gave him the title Saddik because Abu Bakr immediately believed in Islam and its prophet. This relates to the root ysadik (يصدق), which means who believes. However, the Arabic root does not fit the meaning of the "one who believes." This should be Musaddik (مصدق) rather than Siddik. On the other hand, the Koran uses the same term in its plural form in reference to Seddikeen (الصديقين), who are connected to the prophets and martyrs. Tsadik (צדיק) in Hebrew means the righteous person. In Arabic, the consonant tsadi (צ) is pronounced as Arabic sad (ص). Hence, there is a linguistic match. One could argue that there are many common words between Semitic languages, but here the Jewish notion and meaning (the righteous) is perfectly appealing.

The name Bakr also bears a Hebrew meaning, morning (בוקר). While this word (morning) is used in the Koran, the common reference to morning by

Arabs is the word sabah (صباح) rather than bakr. However, in Hebrew it is in common usage up until today: Hebrews greet each other in the morning by Boker Tov (good morning בוקר טוב).

Related to Abu Bakr is the name of his daughter Aisha, the wife of the prophet (عائشة). The Arabic notion of the name is "the living", but in Hebrew it would render as "esha" (אישה), meaning a woman.

Abu Bakr, surrounded by Hebrew names such as tzadik, boker, or esha, was of high rank. He was the first leader after the prophet. This was no ordinary person. Could he have been a Sadducee (Hebrew: צד'קים), a Tsadikim, which is formed from the plural of Tsadik. As a caliph, he would carry the correct Hebrew title of the Sadducees, The Tsadik, which in turn would have to be of the Levite lineage. The Levites form the lineage of the twelve sons of Jacob. They are traced to Moses's brother Aaron and were responsible for the temple. When the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, each tribe had its share in the land except for the Levites. The concept of inheritance of the land did not apply to them. In replacement of the duty of sacrificing all Israelite first-fruits, their Levite lineage was chosen in place of the promise, and their heritage was God himself. Thus, they were given (or they took) eternal responsibility of the priesthood and the temple for all other Israelites. Hence, the Levites claimed the exclusive right to serve the temple and to perform the various rituals and sacrifices. While they did not own land, they were given lucrative tithes from all other tribes (one tenth of everything that they earned in return for spiritual air).

Fadak (فدك) was a property of land that belonged to the prophet. As the rightful heir, his daughter Fatima asked Abu Bakr for the land, but the latter denied. According to tradition, he said to her that Muhammad had told him that we, the prophets, do not leave a heritage but leave our possessions to charity. Fatima insisted on her right to the land until she died. Modern Shiite Muslims still curse Abu Bakr for denying Fatima's request of the Fadak. The Sunnis confirm the incident but do not blame Abu Bakr. The Shiites maintain that caliph Abu Bakr hated Fatima and thus denied her inheritance. But why would he hate the daughter of his companion and prophet, the founder of Islam? If Abu Bakr was indeed a Levite, then Levite rule would have applied to him, and no heritage of a land that he did not own in the first place could have been left for successors. This implies that Muhammad would have been a Levite also. After all, the Quraysh were the leaders, the caliphs, and the people of the highest ranks. As petrified in

the Sura that bears their name, they are the "masters of the Kaaba". Modern Shiites still submit to the prophet's demand of one fifth of their earnings, double the original taxation by the Levites.

Al Ansar/Nutsrim (נצרי'ם)

The Islamic narrative tells us that after the migration of the prophet (Hijra), he was received in Medina by a group of new Muslims (the supporters/helpers). Those were of two main tribes, namely the Aws and Khazraj. Supposedly, these two tribes were Pagans "Mushrekeen" who received the prophet in Medina and supported him in his mission to spread Islam. Hence, they were called the supporters/helpers, "Ansar" in Arabic

Within the Islamic narrative, there is no hint that the word Ansar might refer to a Christian sect. However, when the word Ansar is used in the Koran to refer to a "specific" group of people, it always refers to the disciples of the Christ. "The disciples said: 'we are helpers in the way of Allah.'" Here and in three further cases, the Koran always refers to Christians, but when the Koran makes a general reference, it says for example "the unjust shall have no helpers."

The argument is that the Ansar, according to tradition, are a specific people, who are addressed several times in the Koran as a separate group from the Muhajireen (the immigrants). It seems strange that the Koran distinguishes between these groups and essentially plants a seed of sectarian division.

Would "Ansar" be used in the Koranic rather than in narrative form, a specific sect of Christians emerges that is distinct from Trinitarian Christians who are addressed as Nasarah. The latter is a Judaic term that is still in use today. Only Jews and Muslims address Christians as Nasara, or in Hebrew "Natsrim" (נצרי'ם), which is the same Koranic term as the suffix eem (עם), which refers to the plural form in Hebrew (Nasara is also plural).

The finding of the Sana'a Koran showed that this new scripture could indeed date back to the time of Muhammad or close to it, unlike the narratives, which date from two hundred years later. Even the lost Sira of Ibin Ishaq (سيرة ابن اسحق) is around 150 years late.

It is evident that we are faced with two distinct paradigms, the first is the Jewish one (not the Rabbinic) and the second is the Christian one (not Trinitarian). This would make it understandable why the Koran addresses

two paradigms: They must have been two distinct sects. With this view, the Koran was not planting the seeds of division but rather attempted to unite the Jewish and non-Trinitarian Christian paradigms under one umbrella of "The believers".

In this context, it must be stressed that the term "Jewish" does not refer to the form of (modern) Rabbinic Judaism that evolved after the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, but it rather refers to the old tradition before 70 CE, in particular the Sadducee and Levite priesthood. The same applies to non-Trinitarian Christians, who might be viewed as resembling closer to modern Muslims than to modern Christians. This non-Trinitarian Christianity may be referred to as the Arian paradigm. In any case, putting the focus onto questions of leadership, someone was meant to rule the spiritual world of the evolving Muslims. This role seems most suitable to the Jewish/Sadducees/Levite priesthood: The Quraysh.

In Iraq, the supposed ancestors of Hussein (and thus the prophet) call themselves "Saddah" (سادة sometimes with emphasis on the letter D). The Arabized meaning of the word is masters (Sadah سادة in Arabic masters). Linguistic evidence confirms them indeed as Sadducees/Saddoukaioi: masters. The plural Arabic word Sadah (masters) has no emphasis on the D. Instead, the term Sadducee (Middle English), Sadduce (Old English), Sadducaeus (Latin), Saddoukaioi (Greek), adduqi (late Hebrew), and the modern Iraqi colloquial Saddah (سادة) still retain the emphasis on the D.

Common Themes of Judaism and Islam

Islam shares common themes with Judaism more than with any other religion. The notion of Allah is similar to the Yahweh of the Old Testament. The Koran contains verses asking the believer to kill infidels and polytheists "Mushrekeen" (المشركين). The complex allegorical concepts of the New Testament or the words of Jesus are altogether missing.

Jews and Muslims are circumcised, they both don't eat pork, nor do they permit icons and pictures, even their prayers share similar themes and religious phraseology.

Moses is mentioned more than 120 times in the Koran, compared to Muhammad being named only 4 times. The Koran flatters Beni Yesrael (بنو اسرائيل) as if begging the audience to believe. With the exception of few negative verses about Jews, the Koran is generally centered on Jewish

events and themes. It is needless to recount the many Jewish legends that have made it into the Koran. These issues were discussed in detail in other works.

The Judaic undercurrent was deliberately hidden by all stakeholders when Islam was finally crystallized theologically, under Abbasid rule. Once Islam as a theology was born, this process of denying relations was common among Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. To this day, they simply did not want to have anything to do with each other.

For example, for a critical reader of the Koran, the fact that the instruction for circumcision is missing raises serious concerns. It is perplexing that circumcision is so essential and universal throughout the Islamic world even though it is not mentioned in the Koran. Obviously, they were already circumcised and committed to the Covenant with God. In fact, in the earlier Judaic religion, the practice went the other way around: Christianity came to see the Judaic practice of circumcision only since the West Syrian Council of Antioch in 817 AD as apostasy. Obviously, not only Islam set itself apart from Judaism under Abbasid rule but at the same time also Christianity, which may explain the silence over the distortion of history by all stakeholders.

The Pilgrimage/Hajj

The Islamic narrative puts the pilgrimage long before the rise of Islam, and it is viewed in Islamic sources as a corrupted Pagan practice. Islamic scholars go back to the period of Ishmael and Abraham to prove that it had originally not a Pagan but monotheistic background and that it was corrupted by Arabs and stone worshipers. However, it is commonly accepted among scholars that the practice of Hajj was a Pagan custom that was introduced into later Islam. Even very early critics of Islam, like the Arab Abu Al-Alaa Al Maarri (ابو العلاء المعري), have allegedly called Hajj as the trip of the Pagan.

Yet this notion raises questions which are difficult to answer, in particular how a Pagan practice could have been introduced into a presumably monotheistic religion. Jews and Christians in the area would have violently objected to the innovation, even in the face of force. Such a Pagan practice could not have made its way into Islam unless it had already been well established before.

The simple answer to the problem of Hajj is that it wasn't Pagan.

Instead, and as outlined below, Hajj is nothing other than an imitation of the Exodus story: The practice of Hajj in Islam shows the striking theme of millions of believers circumambulating the Kaaba, but from a theological viewpoint, this practice is not the core of Hajj.

From the Islamic narratives, two concepts can be taken that are still in practice until today: the simple visit to the Kaaba is called "Umra" (العمرة), which consists of the circumambulation and of running between the two places called Safa and Marwa. While these are essential parts of the modern Hajj practice, the narratives suggest that the practice of early Hajj did not necessarily include Umra but rather the journey from a place outside of Mecca called Mekat (مبقات) into Mena and then to Mount Arafah/Arafat. Islamic narratives claim that Muslims wanted to perform Hajj and Umra at the same time, and the prophet then declared that the Umra and Hajj were to be performed together.

The basic Hajj is related to the journey from Mekat (The Timing/Start point) up to Mount Arafah (or Arafat عرفة). Modern Islamic theologians insist that the most important part of Hajj is Mount Arafah, and they relate to a commonly (in fact universally) accepted Hadith of the prophet "The Hajj is Arafah". When Muslims stand on Mount Arafah, they experience the culmination of the Hajj practice, where God is said to view his subjects, become proud of their commitment to Him, and purify them from their sins.

Yom Kippur (יום כיפור)

The relation between the Islamic Hajj and the Exodus is revealed from the Jewish tradition Yom Kippur.

Yom Kippur is the most holy day in the Jewish religious practice, and it is a standard biblical theme making it a major Jewish holiday (unlike Hanukkah for example which is a relatively late practice of Halacha). Yom Kippur is the tenth day of the seventh Jewish month of Tishrei. It has two important significances: It is the Day of Atonement (forgiveness), and it is also the day of reception of the second set of tablets with the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai by Moses.

Jews celebrate this day with strict observation, fasting, intense prayer, and asking for forgiveness by God. In the first day of the same month there is another Jewish holiday, Rosh Hashanah (The head of the year, ראש השנה), which is the beginning of the year. The day of Rosh Hashanah is heralded by trumpet calls which continue from day one up to day ten, Yom Kippur.

Rosh Hashanah has another name, Yom Teruah (which is the day of trumpets). Some religious authorities maintain that the trumpet calls mean to awaken the Jews to repent before the tenth day, Yom Kippur. During the first or second day of Tishrei (Rosh Hashanah), some Jews practice what is called Tashlikh (Hebrew: תשל"ך, meaning "casting off", to give away sins) by going into a river bed and feeding the fish with bread as a symbolic act to cast off sins. While the practice of Tashlikh is said to be more recent (in the nineteenth century), there is evidence that it could be a fairly old practice.

Yom Kippur and Hajj

The essence of Hajj is when Muslims are standing on Mount Arafah. This occurs in the ninth/tenth of the Hajj month, Thu Alhijjah (ذو الحجة), still with the same number 10. The day is a forgiveness day (same concept). Muslims all over the world observe the Arafah day by fasting (same as Kippur), in an indication that the believers are standing on a mountain, clearly imitating of the Sinai story.

It is noteworthy that the Islamic counting of calendar days starts at evening and not in the morning, which is identical in the Torah and the Jewish laws. The believers are not allowed to leave Arafah until the evening begins so that they leave in the tenth of Thu Alhijjah (ذو الحجة).

Linguistically, the religious terms are also closely related. The mountain is called Arafah (Arabic: عرفة with Arabic "ein" phonationع). Mount Sinai is also called Mount Horeb (Hebrew: הַר הֹרֵב). The Hebrew and Arabic words are not similar because Horeb is an English word. In Hebrew it is pronounced "Horevah." In order to trying to find the Arabic equivalent, the V changes into an F as Arabic lacks V sounds. Thus, it would be pronounced "Horefah," which is quite close to Arafah, especially if in the full Hebrew term, Mount Horevah (הַר הֹרֵב) Hur- Horeva (Hur means mountain). The phrase would be difficult to pronounce in Arabic and could easily change to ein (ع) to simplify it.

Interestingly, there is no consensus about the meaning of the word Arafah. Some attribute to it the Arabic root araf (عرف), meaning “to know,” which leads to “a place of knowing people,” but it is a place of Hajj, not a cocktail party! Different explanations, such as Adam and Eve having met there and thus getting to “know” each other, are entirely unsuitable. But here, the verb “know” could be linked to the act of intercourse from the Torah, which is again not a reasonable explanation. Another version is that Angel Gabriel had been holding Abraham in flight to show him the Hajj stations and asking over Mount Arafah "did you know? did you know?" Abraham said "I knew I knew! "Ariftu Ariftu!" (عرفت عرفت) So came the name Arafah.

How far the interpreters had to go to explain one of the holiest events of Islam demonstrates that nobody would dare to point at the association between Mount Arafah and Mount Horeb.

The eighth day of the same month before going to Mount Arafah is called Yom Tarwiyah in Arabic (يوم التروية). Tarwyah (تروية) and Yom Teruah (day of blowing the horn) are so closely related that the same explanatory desperation arises in Islamic tradition as with Mount Arafah. The Arabic root rawa (روى) means “to pour water.” The narrators agree that there was no water in Arafah in ancient times, and so the people had to carry as much water as possible to Mount Arafah. Another opinion is that it follows the root trawwi (تروي) which means “to delay” because Abraham was trying to delay the sacrifice of his son.

Both, Yom Al-Tarwiyah (Arabic: يوم التروية) and the Hebrew Yom Teruah (יום תְּרוּעָה), are before Kippur (the tenth day).

The days eleven, twelve, and thirteen of the same month after Arafah are called days of Tashreek (Ayam Tashreek أيام التشريق part of the four day Islamic festival) in Islamic tradition. After the celebration of Rosh Hashanah (in the evening), the custom of Tashlikh (Hebrew תְּשַׁלֵּיךְ, meaning "casting off" or Removing the Sins) in Jewish tradition.

This prompted another set of painful Islamic explanations. Following the root shrek (sunrise شروق), it means that the sacrifice is after sunrise. Various other attempts disagree, but they share the attempt to fit the meaning of the word into a known Arabic root with an acceptable theological significance. Of course, the sacrifice is a reminder of the Jewish custom of offering sacrifice at the Temple for Yom Kippur.

Another symbolic similarity is that the Israelites after the Exodus from Egypt spent 40 years in the wilderness, which is why the Eid (Eid means festival العيد) festival holiday is four days, during which millions of animal sacrifices are offered throughout the Islamic world until today.

Other Yom Kippur concepts

Yom Kippur appears in Islam in three concepts:

1. Chronologically.
2. The concept of atonement (Hajj).
3. The concept of receiving the tablets by Moses.

Yom Kippur is the tenth day after the beginning of the year. The Islamic year starts in the month Muharram (محرم), and Muslims fast during this day without a convincing theological explanation. The Islamic narrative states that the Prophet said that "the Jews were fasting this day, and we are more concerned to observe it than them." Hence, the link is beyond doubt. Later, the Islamic narratives connected the martyrdom of Imam Hussein with the tenth of Muharram, thus, giving it a sacred meaning.

The less obvious link is the third concept (the tablets). Here, the concept of Yom Kippur appears within an unspecified night during the last ten days of Ramadan (the fasting month) where it is called the night of Kader (ليلة القدر). It is claimed that the Koran was brought to earth from the heavens at this specific holy night. Muslims celebrate this with prayers and spending the night at the mosque, asking for forgiveness. Yom Kippur is also received with prayers, spending the night at the synagogue and fasting (Kader is already part of the Ramadan).

The Islamic narrative is again in pain to explain why this night is called Kader. Some claim that it is from the root kdr (قدر), which means "high status." Hence, it is a night of high status. Others say that it is from the root which means measuring (تقدير). This would turn it into "the night of determining the destination of a person." It is fascinating that the Jewish tradition has also such a notion that the destiny of the subject for the next year is determined in Yom Kippur. Islamic tradition focusses on the importance of prayer at this holy night, as it is the best opportunity for God

answering prayers, and thus it is regarded as the most holy night in Islamic calendar.

The features are similar, but comparing the Hebrew Kippur (יום כפור) and the Arabic Kadr (ليلة القدر) will bring forth a much deeper relation. It is custom to change the Hebrew phonation of kuf (ק) to k'uf (ق) in Arabic, and although the Hebrew Kippur word is written with the letter kaf (כ), it still retains the phonation of kuf (ק). Arabization of a word should typically depend on its phonetics rather than on written consonants as ancient people would have depended on hearing rather than reading. It is thus likely that the consonant waw (ו) would be removed while Arabizing Aramaic words. As many Syriac and Aramaic words contain an extra waw (و) from the Arabic point of view, Kippur could have changed to Kidor (قدور) and finally (قدر) Kadr as it appears in the Koran.

It is an almost universal phenomenon in the Islamic narrative that words from the original language appear slightly twisted or changed in the Arabic texts such that the resulting new Arabic words still retain phonations that resemble the original words but with a new and obscure meaning; this phenomenon has been observed by various writers and researchers on early Islam.

Whatever the philological explanation, the similarity in content and more importantly *concept* is striking: receiving tablets versus receiving the Koran; Kippur versus Kader; spending the whole night at the synagogue versus spending the whole night at the mosque; fasting in both cases; tenth day of the month, versus one of last ten days of the month. While the consequences of these revelations are dramatic and hard to accept, they cannot be dismissed as merely coincidental or speculative.

Mount Hira (جبل حراء)

A single Judaic concept of an event can appear more than once in Islam. Likewise, Mount Horeb (Hebrew Horevah: חֲרִיבָה) finds its equivalent also in Mount Hira (جبل حراء) where the Prophet has received the divine revelation. There is a small difference to Arafah, but it is still a similar modification process from Horevah to Hira: The difference is that Hira is embedded in the story of Elijah where he enters the cave and God revealed himself to him. While the Hebrew Horevah/Horeb (חֲרִיבָה) could mean “heat by the sun rays” (or glow), in Islamic tradition, the other name of Mount

Hira is the Mountain of Light (جبل النور). This reasonably confirms the association, but of course, the explanation here is the light of Islam.

There seems to be a possible case for shifting the event of the Exodus from the Sinai to Saudi Arabia. However, this view is not universally accepted. Yet, there are prominent scholars that proposed since the nineteenth century that one of the candidates for Mount Horeb could be The Mount of Light, Hira. This proposal was based on historical and geographical accounts, unrelated to philology or religious concepts.

The Kaaba (الكعبة)

The Kaaba predates Islam, and it has been perceived as a Pagan building. Like Hajj, tradition suggests that a Pagan building became the most important shrine of Islam, which is puzzling. Instead, the Kaaba is not a Pagan building but a Tabernacle (an imitation of the Temple of Jerusalem). In this respect, in the Antiquities of the Jews, Josephus Flavius describes the Temple of Jerusalem as being covered with a curtain of Linen :

Whence that custom of ours is derived, of having a fine linen veil after the temple has been built, to be drawn over the entrances; But the ten other curtains were four cubits in breadth, and twenty eight in length, and had golden clasps, in order to join the one curtain to the other, which was done so exactly, that they seemed to be one entire curtain. These were spread over the temple, and covered all the top, and parts of the walls, on the sides and behind, so far as within one cubit of the ground.³

The Islamic narrative conveys that it was a custom to cover the Kaaba with fine curtain which was usually brought from Yemen.

Contrary to common belief, the Kaaba is ripe with Judaic themes, such as the covering (dressing up to say) of a shrine. Even the idea of a foundation stone (or Black Stone) finds its origin in the Tabernacle and the Temple. In fact, the position of the Black Stone at the corner reveals its purpose.

The Islamic narrative informs us that the Kaaba was rebuilt several times during its history. Whether before Islam or afterwards, at least two radical rebuilding projects are reported by Islamic sources, one performed by

Antiquities of the Jews; Book III., as quoted in Deus 2011

3

Abdullah Ibn Al Zubaire (عبدالله ابن الزبير), where he allegedly reshaped the Kaaba in order to increase its size, and the other was performed by Hajjaj, who is claimed to having returned it to its original Quraysh dimensions. The time between the two major rebuilding projects is less than 20 years, which is an indication that these exercises may be inventions.

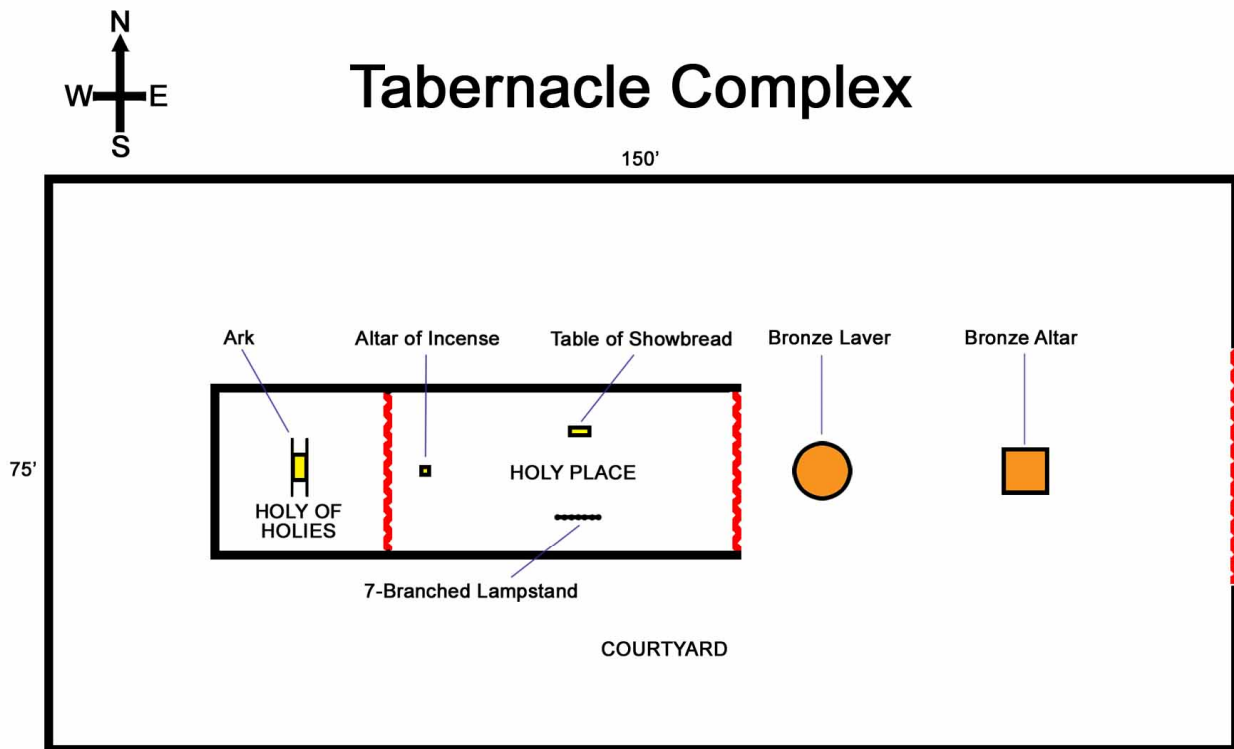
Other indications point at the possibility that the Kaaba may have been used as a church at least during a limited period. The Prophet may have removed images of Abraham, Jesus, and Miriam (In fact one Hadith says that he kept the images of Jesus and Miriam). According to other Hadiths, there could have been statues of Jesus and Miriam inside the Kaaba.

The evidence that the Kaaba could originally have been a tabernacle remains in some of its features. The original Tabernacle is described in detail in the Tanakh, and there is consensus concerning its main characters.

"The standing place of Abraham" (Makam Ibraheem مقام ابراهيم) is mentioned in the Koran, giving it a meaning as of very old. Today, it is situated several meters from the entrance to the Kaaba and is covered with gold. It consists of a small cubic stone structure that contains two deep indentations alleged to be the site of Abraham's feet when he built the Kaaba. According to tradition, the footprints were so deep because they had been touched repeatedly during Pilgrimage/Hajj. The site is mentioned in many narratives, and although it was not officially examined by archeologists, it seems to be an old artifact that would unlikely have come to be installed by later Muslims. One explanation is that the footprints held a statue in pre-Islamic Pagan times. It would have been incorporated later by Islam. While this is not impossible, it still lacks any evidence and conflicts with the narratives of anti-Pagan attitude. It is an unreasonable scenario that the Arabs or early Muslims would remove the statue but keep its footrest.

The Tabernacle is often depicted with a Bronze fire altar and a Basin. The so called Makam sits at the correct location in front of the door of the Kaaba, and it is apparent that it could be imagined as a basin. The deep site of the foot marks could be used for water for the purification ritual of the priests' feet before entering the Tabernacle/Kaaba.

The Black Stone is oriented exactly towards the east, indicating the Kaaba's intended original and sacred direction.



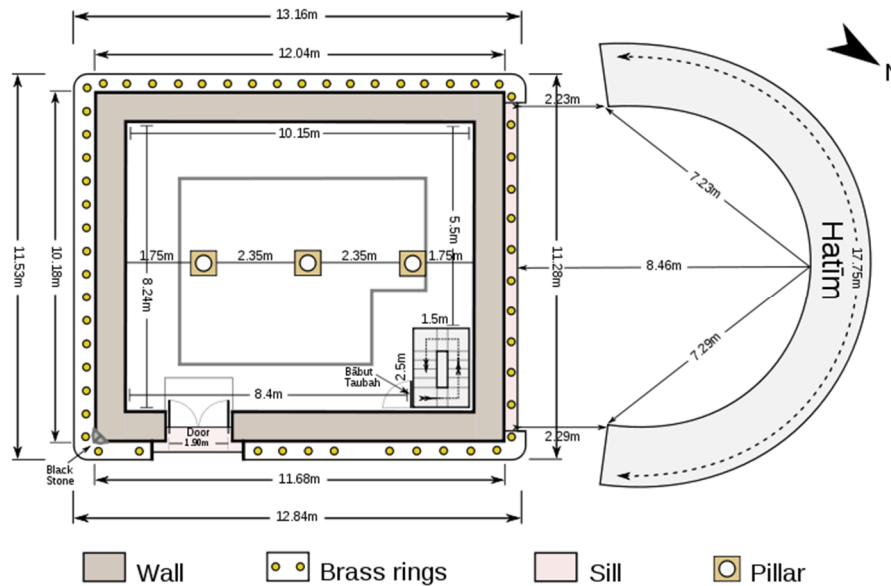
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Depiction of the Tabernacle, note the Bronze Altar and the Bronze Laver are directed towards the entrance of the tabernacle.

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Photograph of the Makam in front of the Kaaba's door. The discrepancy of color between the upper and deeper layers of the foot prints suggests that the upper layer could be a later addition.



A diagram showing the door to the Kaaba and the Black Stone, which is directly facing east.

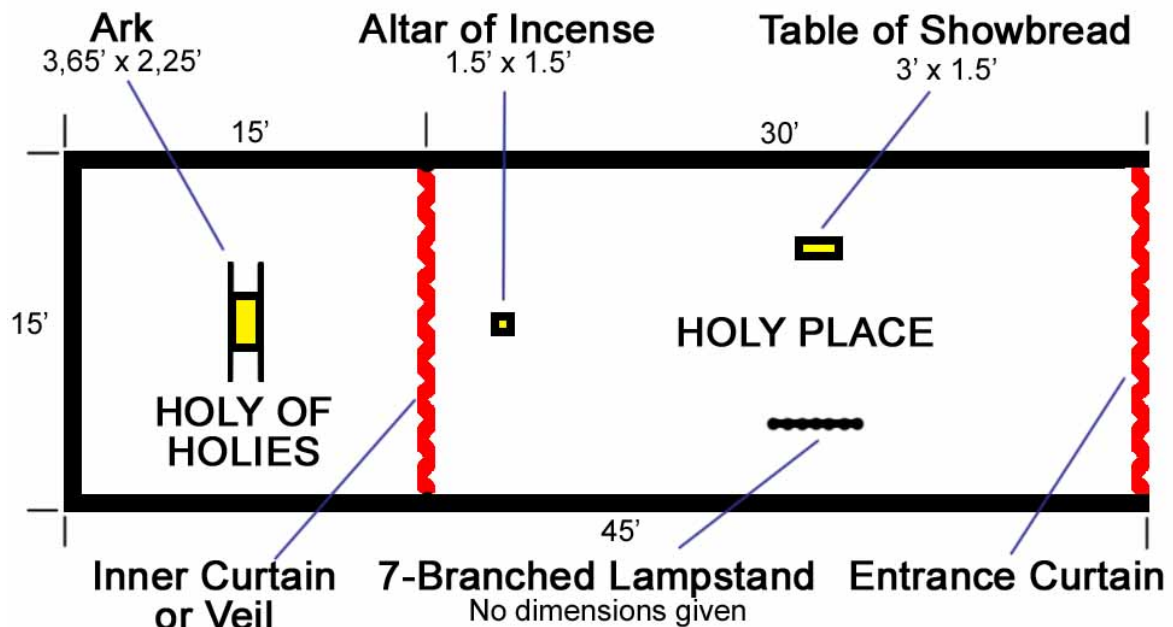
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At one end of the Kaaba is the door of repentance Bab Al-Tawba (باب التوبة), which is made of pure gold worth several million dollars. This door leads to a separated chamber with a ladder that leads to the roof of the Kaaba. To keep a separate chamber and a golden door for a simple ladder makes little sense unless there was a tradition that had been transmitted from generation to generation concerning the special holiness of the inside of the Kaaba. While the present day golden door was dedicated by the Saudi king, it was a replacement of an older door. Some sources mention that there was a veil accompanying the old door similar to the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem.

The redirection of the Quiblah (القبلة) from Jerusalem to Mecca is particularly difficult to justify. The classical view suggests that the prophet, leader, or caliph would have changed the direction of the prayers from the Holy Temple of Jerusalem to a Pagan temple in Mecca. Even with the use of force, this task must have faced immense difficulty unless it had already fit neatly into the existing frame of mind of those that would later

come to view themselves as Muslims. Changing the direction of the prayers from one Shekhenah dwelling to another, while retaining the same concept, seems more plausible. In fact, while the Temple of Jerusalem had been razed in the early second century and lay abandoned for hundreds of years, the Kaaba could have been deeply rooted within the Judaic religious minds as a worthy replacement.



Tabernacle in the Wilderness

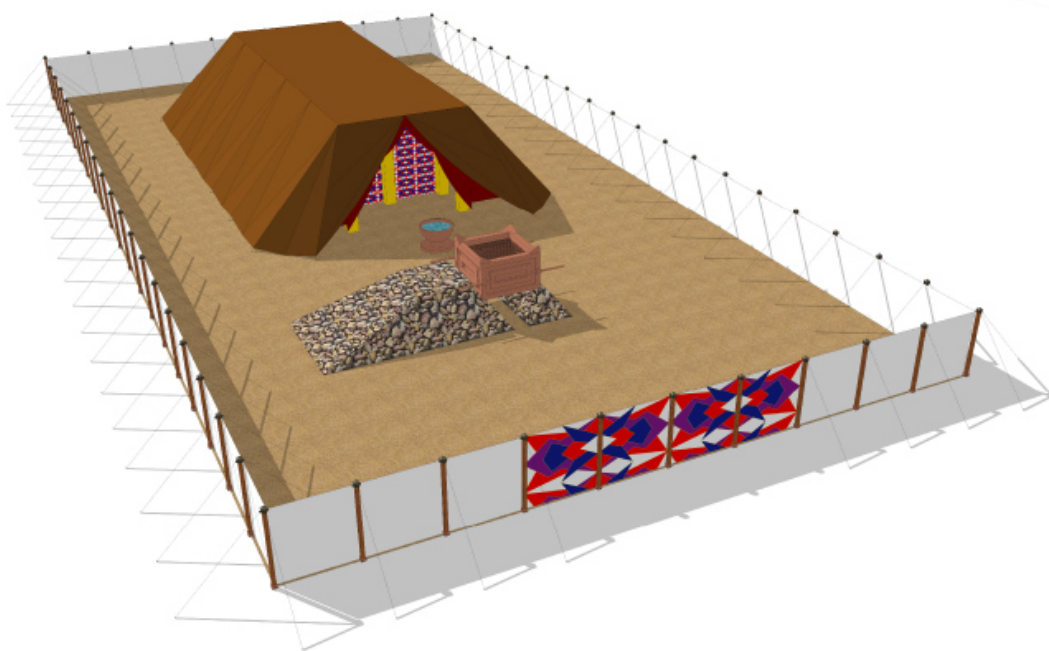
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It is prohibited to perform circumambulation in between the Hutim (حطيم) and the Kaaba, supposedly because Ishmael and Hagar had been buried somewhere in between. However, this claim contradicts another tradition where the name comes from the Arabic root hatama (حطم), which relates to the act of destruction of the Kaaba. There, Hutim is the remnant of a destroyed portion of the sacred building. Allegedly, the Quraysh did not have enough funding to fully restore their temple. Hence, they reduced the restoration to the present day dimensions. Given that this additional restoration would have incorporated a few meters of a simple masonry wall, this tale of a shortage in funding by the Quraysh is difficult to accept.

It rather seems an attempt by Muslim writers to describe or reposition mysterious and otherwise inexplicable words, many of which are simply misconstrued from their Hebrew origin.

The "Hutim" seems related to the Hebrew word Khateem (חֲטִיִּים), meaning sins (a plural form). This would be in accordance with the concepts of the Jewish sacrifice at the Tabernacle where the disciples touch the sacrificial animal, thus transferring the disciples' sins into the animal. After being slaughtered, the animal's blood was sprinkled near the entrance of the Tabernacle, and the sacrifice would have been burned at the nearby fire altar. Thus, the sins were burned with the animal. Letting go of sins at the altar is a tradition of Jewish theology, and the place of Khateem (sins) could relate to the concept of the Kaaba, whether this Khateem was an altar or place of burying the remnants of the animals. An archeological excavation would shed light to the purpose of these features.



Depiction of Tabernacle with fire altar and basin in front of the entrance of the Tabernacle.

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Shekhenah (Hebrew שכינה)

The highest level of meditation or commitment to God for devout Jews is that one would start feeling the Shekhenah (God's presence). When Jewish Rabbis teach about the Shekhenah, they are relating to a most sacred feeling in Judaism, and this can be noted even in the Rabbis' facial expressions while they teach the important concept of "God's presence".

In traditional Judaism, the site of God's presence on earth was the Temple of Jerusalem (bait ha mickdash **בית המיקדש**) or the holy house (the same concept as the Kaaba). The exact location for God's presence is in the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant was situated. Essentially, the ark contained the Shekhenah and was thus the holiest place of God's presence.

In contrast, the Koran uses the word Sakinah (سكينة), which means "Tranquility" in Arabic. While the Sakinah is obviously similar to the Hebrew Shekhenah and shares some of the meaning, it lacks the holistic concept of the Jewish notion of Shekhenah. The Koran relates to Sakinah (سكينة) three times. Two are in relation to God bringing down Sakinah (tranquility) onto the hearts of the believers. The third mention of Sakinah, however, relates to a sign of kingship of a biblical king. There, God informs the people that the king "shall come with a chest (ark) which contains the Sakinah (tranquility سکينة) from God and the remains of the lyrics of what the children of Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) have left and the angels bearing it". This verse is clearly referring to the Ark of the Covenant, and the Arabic Sakinah/Tranquility (سكينة) as a feeling emerges as an irrational misfit. It is almost like saying that this box contains the feeling of happiness, which bears no theological logic.

As being related to the Jewish word Shekhenah/God's presence (שכינה), the Koranic verses only make sense: of course, the site of God's presence is the Ark. Jewish thought and terminology have originally shaped the Koran, but later Arabic exegesis, whether intentional or in ignorance, attempted to sever any relation of the Koran to its Jewish roots. The Arabic Sakinah/Tranquility is in fact identical with the Jewish Shekhenah/God's presence. Whoever wrote the Koran was intimately acquainted with Judaism, which again supports on the suspicion of a Quraysh / Muhajireen / Sadducee / Levite connection.

Shalom!

Salam (سلام) is a common word in the Koran, meaning peace. The word also serves as a general greeting for Muslims, in the phrase Al-Salamu Alykum (السلام عليكم). This type of greeting is regarded as a symbol to Muslims' loyalty to Islam and to their religious social identity. The word Salam appears 19 times in the Koran, all of which in the indefinite form Salam (سلام peace) rather than the publicly used definite phrase (the peace السلام). The commonly used phrase in the Islamic narratives is the definite (Al-Salam) in the same way that it is used among Muslims today. Hence, this deviation must be very old.

Using the phrase in the Koranic indefinite form (Salam) sounds strange to Arabs. Even if some form of Koranic indefinite method is used in colloquial language, it is never used in formal classical Arabic or in formal writings. Yet, the Koran's instructions to the prophet are clear to "say peace on you", or "the greeting of them is peace," and the like. Probably the only appearance is in the definite form in the meaning of a greeting.

Hebrew clarifies the significance of this small difference between the Koran, the Islamic narrative, and the public view. Shalom (שלום) is the first word to learn for beginners in Hebrew lessons. While a common word in Hebrew, it is not used in a defiant form such as "Hah-Shalom Aleechem" (the peace be upon you), for example. It is always used in the indefinite Koranic phraseology "Shalom Alechem" (Hebrew: שָׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם *shālôm 'alêkem*).

It is ironic that modern Jews use the Koranic phraseology while modern Muslims do not.

Believers or Muslims?

It appears that Islam may have started as a communion of different communities with two major components, the Jewish and non-Trinitarian Christian ones, which collectively form "the believers."

The Koran addresses a third group, Al-a'arab (الاعراب), which means the Bedouin Arabs or dwellers of the desert. Those people are usually addressed with a negative connotation (except in a few instances), denying them the title of believers. In the literal translation, the Koran says "you did not believe but say we submitted". The term "submit" is understood as "we became Muslims." This has always been a puzzle. The Koran stresses that its language is Arabic, yet it portrays the Arab desert dwellers with

aversion and views them as inferior. In contrast, tradition portrays them as the pure Arabs because they are not mixed by intermarriage. Given that their bloodline is pure Arabic, many attempts have been made to rationalize the negative Koranic position. This is complicated by the fact that the Koran does not confirm the prophet as an Arab. When the Koran mentions that "we sent you a messenger from yourselves," it creates a circular reasoning, and attempts to prove that the prophet was Arabic were to lead to nowhere.

If the a'arab (الاعراب) of the Koran were indeed not part of the community of the believers (at least not yet) but the language of the Koran is clearly Arabic, then the prophet (from yourselves) must have been an Ishmaelite, which is not strictly Arabic. This could be the reasoning for the decree by Caliph Omar Bin Abdeaziz (عمر بن عبد العزيز)⁴ where he pronounced equality between the a'arab (desert dwellers, the Bedouin Arabs) and the Muhajireen (the immigrants, i.e. Ishmaelites). Thus, the term Muslim in the practical sense of early Islam could have meant the a'arab/desert dwellers/Arabs (اعراب) while the rest of the believers were addressed as Muhajireen or Ansar. It was not until the Umayyad period where the term Islam became known. Instead, the Koran states that "the religion in God's possession is Islam and the one who seeks other religion will not be accepted from him"? If this verse was old, it cannot be reconciled with the above notions. It is commonly overlooked that the Koran follows Hebraic thought, rather than Christian. The Syriac linguistic elements have nothing to do with Koranic "Philosophy." The word "religion" does not exist in the Torah. The Hebraic notion of religion is a way of life, an integral part of being. Similarly, being a Muhajir or a believer would provide the notion of religion without specifically using the term.

It is in the context of addressing Gentiles/A'arabs/Arabs that the term Muslim is used. However, as the believers are the core of the new believers' movement (religion), their leader should be the commander of the believers not the commander of the Muslims.

Sacred Valley of Tuwa

In the Koran, an order to Moses is mentioned to "put off your shoes, you are in the sacred valley Tuwa". The Valley of Tuwa presents a mystery

Reigned 717-720 CE.

4

because it is never referred to in other scriptures. A similarity is again found in the Torah. The book of Exodus mentions the incident of God telling Moses "ata omed alin adamah kodesh hu" (אַתָּה עומד עליו, אֲדָמַת-קֹדֶשׁ הוּא), meaning "the place you are standing on is holy." However, the phrase sounds like the poetic English as for example saying "Holy is the place you are standing on." "Hu" in the Hebrew text is like "on" in English, and is thus just a pronoun. The relative Hebrew sentence is: "ata omed alin adamah kodesh hu."

Ata = You = אַתָּה

Omed = Standing = עומד

Aline = On = עליו

Adamah = Place/ land = אֲדָמַת

Kodesh = Sacred = קֹדֶשׁ

Hu = It = הוּא

The Koranic text says "you are standing on the sacred place **Tuwa**" (Tuwa = Hu). Hu in Hebrew is a three letter word (hey, waw, alef הוּא), which appears in the Koran correctly as (tet, waw, alef طوى). Two letters of the Arabic and Hebrew words match (waw and alef) This led some Christian writers to conclude that the authors of the Koran had directly copied from the book of Exodus. In short, Islam is deeply rooted in Judaic texts, and textual misconceptions would have later appeared as mysterious concepts in the Koran.

Shema Yesrael (שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל)

The creed of faith for the Jews is the Shema which states: "shema yesrael adoni elohino adoni eichad", which means "hear, O Israel: the Lord our God the Lord is one". The Islamic creed of faith is the Shahadah (الشهادة vs. Hebrew Shema). It states "ashhadu an la elah ella allah, waashhadu anna Muhammad rusul Allah" (اشهد ان لا اله الا الله و اشهد ان محمد رسول الله), "I testify that there is no god but Allah and, I testify that Mohammad is his Messenger". The conceptual similarity between the Jewish Shema and the Islamic Shahada is striking. The first part of the Islamic Shahadah is

nothing other than the Jewish Shema. Even the phonetics Shema/Shahadah are similar.

Making sense of it all

It seems that there must be some truths in the Islamic narrative. Denying the existence of a historical Muhammad seems to create more problems than it solves. However, the essence of Islam is Jewish, and it was implemented by a people of Jewish ancestry (Sadducees/Levites). The historical background surrounding the rise of Islam (namely the clashes between Persian and Byzantine empires) was important and probably crucial to the establishment of a new force in the region.

The Byzantine and Persian empires were extremely weak, torn apart by wars, and in a state of severe incapacity. The battle of Thekar (معركة ذي قار) in which the Lukhmides/Manathera (المناذرة) Ishmaelites won against the Persians was even before the appearance of Prophet Muhammad. The Islamic narrative puts the conflict into the year 609 CE.

Having a warrior prophet is a Jewish Messianic idea. Likewise, the idea of jihad and to fight to either death or victory can be traced back to the Zealots, who were probably closely related to the Sadducees (the later Quraysh).

It seems obvious that the Islamic narrative was trying to hide its Jewish (and to a much lesser extent Christian) roots. This brought forth a distorted picture of pre-Islamic Arabia and the rise of Islam, resulting in a prophet that had been able to bring a group of ignorant desert dwelling Arab tribes to a newly formed religion that eventually conquered the whole region and half the world.

Most of the early narratives were produced during the era of Persian influence (if not actual Persian reign). This combined with the negative Koranic approach toward the A'arabs helped forwarding their version of the story together with a negative view about the pre-Islamic conditions in Arabia. They pretended as if the culture of the entire region was that of ignorant, stone worshipping, and desert dwelling A'arabs. Whether the description of the A'arabs was true or not, they were not a core group of an emerging Islam (the believers' movement of Muhajireen and Ansar).

All this implies that the conquests started and continued without being motivated by Islam, and it is unlikely that a few divided, ignorant tribes

would conquer Persia and parts of the Byzantine Empire. Instead, we are dealing with tribes of Judaic ancestry, which were experienced in warfare and could build on the old Zealot traditions of Judea/Palestine. Given the weakness of the Persian and Byzantine empires, nearby tribes grabbed whatever they could take.

This is not to deny any activity of a prophet in Arabia, given that there are early Christian writings to confirm this, but it seems that he did not get a high status until many years (or even decades) after his death.

The core of Islamic theological heritage (and even today) is in Arabia, Iraq, and Persia. When Islamic shrines and the Koran's unknown origin were ignored, the theology of Islam seems to stem exclusively from Iraq/Persia, rendering Syrian and early Arabian theology missing. It seems that any remnant of theology formed during the Umayyad (الامويين) reign had been completely erased after the conquest of Syria and Arabia by the Abbasids. As this is highly unlikely, the inevitable conclusion would be that it never existed. There is ample evidence to demonstrate that the Sufyanic Umayyads were of a Christian denomination rather than Muslims as it is understood today. This topic is covered in detail, for example by A.J. Deus, and the reader is referred to the relative writings concerning the archeological and historical evidence. That the entire Sufyanic Dynasty must have been of a secular Christian branch is clear from outside writings, archeology, and astonishingly also from the narratives. Some Shiite narrators also share this view, in particular when referring to Yazid Bin Muwyyia (يزيد ابن معاوية).

Until today, the Umayyads are portrayed in a negative way by both Sunni and Shiites, with the difference that the Shiites use this as a pretext to seize control of the leadership while the Sunni/Persian side tries to reconcile their position and theology in order to maintain their rule of the state. This situation seems to originate from the Abbasid era, where the Persian/Abbasids were allied with the Shiites/Ishmaelites against the Umayyads. They may have split into Sunni/Persian and Shiite/Ishmaelite only after they had achieved their common goal of usurping the Umayyads.

That the axis of Islam lies between Arabia and Iraq may have been the cause which would have forced Abdulmalik (عبد الملك) to adopt Islam as a state religion. As Iraq was falling away from his control, this may have been his solution in order to hold his realm together. Soon, the empire fell

anyway into the hand of the two enemy-allies, the Persians and the Ishmaelites. However, this alliance fell apart as it tried to reconcile two mutually exclusive views. The Shiites/Ishmaelites supported a strict Sadducee rule, but the Persians could not give the Ishmaelites the upper hand.

The formal picture, which reached modernity, is of a distinct Abbasid flavor, including the family trees and relations to the prophet. Hence, many bloodlines and events were forged, including the Abbasid family line, which may rather be Persian.

The rise of political Zionism and the political claims to Palestine (in the context of a much larger global strategy) has complicated sincere scientific attempts to understand the anthropology of Arabia. This difficulty is further increased by extremist Arabic national movements that carry an ideology of consolidating all nations in the region (from ancient past until this day) as Arabs.

The Middle East is in complete turmoil. One cannot help the ironic imagination (not devoid of a little truth) that a patriotic Ashkenazi Jew, as a first example, could turn out to be a Christian convert from the “Khazars.” Yet, tracing his family line up to the ice age would not lead to Judea/Palestine. On the other hand, the second example, an Islamic suicide bomber, wanting to wipe out Israel and the Jews from the face of the earth, could turn out to be none less than a Jewish Levite. The third, a zealous Arabic extremist, who may be determined to destroy Iran, might turn out to be Persian himself. Within these, one could imagine a lonely indigenous Arab person, the fourth, standing near his camel under the desert sun and having scratched his head for two thousand years about what might be going on.

In fact, we think that the blind faith which had been (and probably still is) sold to people as a virtue, is the cause of the propagation of myths and politically motivated stories which serves to control and to some extent enslave the community.

Freedom is the most important single possession of any human being, and a person who is a victim of blind faith of tradition could be anything but free, that is why if the reader was motivated to search and learn, (regardless to the extent of agreement with this study), we would consider that goal of this essay has been perfectly achieved.

Where are the references?

This study was based on huge material of published books and papers of various backgrounds, yet no specific reference material is specified, as it is presumed that the reader would do his/her own research in order to check each and every bit of information mentioned here. Exception is taken with little known Hadiths, some Koranic verses, and A.J. Deus. He provided the pioneering spark that inspired this essay.

Comments and corrections are welcome at: omarnineveh@gmail.com

Peace!