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# Discussions on the Influence of the Judeo-Christian Culture on Hadiths

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## Abstract:

Although it is difficult to determine the first Western scholar to claim the influence of Judaic culture on *hadiths* or tried to relate *hadiths* to the biblical texts, the Frenchman Barthelmy d'Herbelot (d. 1695) was the first orientalist to claim that many chapters in the *hadith* literature, including *al-kutub al-sitta*, were borrowed from the Talmud.

The ideas and claims of some Western scholars such as Alois Sprenger, Ignaz Goldziher, Georges Vajda, and S. Rosenblatt up to the end of the 18th century led to many discussions that were defended and developed with new arguments by many Western scholars. Nowadays, the reflection of these claims in the Islamic world has become a serious *hadith* problem. In addition to the role of the conversion movement in the early Islam and the first Jewish converts to Islam, the non-Arabs known as *al-mawālī*, especially in the Umayyad period, and poets like Umayya ibn Abi al-Salt of the *Jāhilliyya* period, who were believed to have read the early holy books, and preachers, are the most important factors playing a role in this influence. This study attempts to analyze the claims, opinions, and factors from the perspectives of the Islamic literature and Muslim scholars' views towards the Jewish-Christian tradition.

**Key words:** Jewish culture, *hadith*, influence, *isrāiliyyāt*, claims, conversion, *mawālī*, preachers

## Introduction

It is difficult to make a distinction academically between the opinions that say that the Jewish tradition has influenced *hadiths* and the claims that it has influenced the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad. The Western scholars who address the influence of the Jewish tradition on *hadiths*<sup>2</sup> most often attempt, in order to portray their opinions, to convey the influence of the Jewish tradition on the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammed; and further on *hadiths*, Islamic history,<sup>3</sup> jurisprudence,<sup>4</sup> *kalām* (theology),<sup>5</sup> *tafsīr*,<sup>6</sup> and *tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism).<sup>7</sup> On

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<sup>2</sup> For the influence of the Jewish-Christian tradition on the Islamic tradition see Ozcan Hıdır, *Yahudi Kültürü ve Hadisler* (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2006), pp. 21-35.

<sup>3</sup> Franz Rosenthal, "The Influence of the Biblical Tradition on Muslim Historiography", *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis-P.M. Holt (London: 1962), pp. 35-45; Gordon D. Newby, "An Example of Coptic Literary Influence on Ibn Ishaq's Sīra," *JNES XXXI* (1972): 22-27. See also Haim Schwarzbaum, *Biblical and Extra-Biblical Legends in Islamic Folk-Literature* (Waldorf-Hessen: Publisher, 1982), pp. 39-45.

<sup>4</sup> Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Some Religious Aspects of Islam* (Leiden, 1981), pp. 17-47; Brinner, W.M. and S.D. Ricks, *Studies in Islamic and Judaic Traditions* (Atlanta, 1986), pp. 65-150.

the whole, Western scholars contend that the influence of the Jewish tradition extends to all Islamic sciences.

The most important claim is that the Prophet based the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* on Judeo-Christian traditions. In addition, Western scholars have contended that the Judeo-Christian culture has partially influenced the methodology of *hadiths*, *hadiths of al-ḥiṭān wa'l-malāhim* (discord and epics), *qudsī hadiths*, *tafsīr*, and that there are certain portions of *ahādīsu'l-al-anbiyā* that have been appropriated from the Bible. They have especially portrayed the claims that say that some *hadiths* were taken literally from the Bible. To prove their contentions they published several books and articles. In particular, such claims were made by scholars in the West from around the end of the eighteenth century until the middle of the twentieth. We will focus on these claims in the discussion below.

### Historical Survey of the Opinions of the Influence of Judaic Culture on *Hadiths*

It is very difficult to determine the authenticity of the orientalist claims that the *hadith* is based on the Judeo-Christian tradition. However, the French orientalist Barthelmy d'Herbelot (d. 1695) claimed<sup>8</sup> that most of the six books (the most important *hadith* books) and many parts of the *hadith* literature were appropriated from the Talmud. This claim can be considered to be the first claim in this series, which says that the Judeo-Christian culture influenced *hadiths*. Later on, the claims<sup>9</sup> of Alois Sprenger (d. 1893), Ignaz Goldziher<sup>10</sup> (d. 1921), and Georges Vajda paved the way in this field. Goldziher's claims were expressed in his book *Muhammedanische Studien*; especially his articles, "Ueber Bibelcitate in Muhammedanischen Schriften," "Ueber Judische sitten und hebraische aus Muhammedanischen Schriften," and especially the most seminal article "Hadith and New Testament." These articles especially paved the way for Western scholars who followed

<sup>5</sup> Wolfson Austryn, *Kelam Felsefesine Giriş*, trans. by Kasım Turhan (Istanbul, 1996), pp. 84-85; Aḥmad Amīn, *Ḍuḥā al-Islām*, vol. I (Cairo, no date), pp. 352-56.

<sup>6</sup> Schwarzbaum, *Biblical and Extra-Biblical Legends*, pp. 23-28.

<sup>7</sup> Shlomo Dov Goitein, *Jews and Arabs: Their Contacts Through the Ages* (New York, 1974), p. 148; F.E. Peters, *Children of Abraham. Judaism, Christianity, Islam* (New Jersey, 1982), pp. 133-55. For the claims that say Islamic mysticism has been influenced by the external factors see Abdullah Aydınli, *Doğuş Devrinde Tasavvuf ve Hadis* (Islamic Mysticism and Ḥadīth in the Early Period) (Istanbul, 1986), pp. 71-75.

<sup>8</sup> For this claim see Ahmed von Denffer, *Literature on Ḥadīth in European Languages: A Bibliography* (Leicester: 1401/1981), p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> Alois Sprenger, "On the Origin and Progress of Writing Down Historical Facts among the Muslims," *JASB (New Series)* XXV (1856): 303-29, 375-81.

<sup>10</sup> Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies* (London: 1967), II, 346. For the claims that the *hadiths* are based on the Christian tradition see Alfred Guillaume, Karl Ahrens, and Richard Bell. There are, aside from Goldziher's above-mentioned article "Ḥadīth and the New Testament," some other articles like W.H.T. Gairdner's "The Ḥadīth and the Injil," *Muslim World* V (1915): 349-79; Neil Robinson's "Varieties of Pronouncement Stories in *Sahīh Muslim*: A Gospel Genre in the Ḥadīth Literature," *ICMR* V/2 (1994): 123-46.

him in their claims that Judeo-Christian culture influenced the *hadiths* and vice versa.

The first study to claim that the Judaic culture influenced the *hadiths* was George Vajda's article "Juifs et Musulman Selon le Hadîr." In this article<sup>11</sup> Vajda pointed to some studies that claimed the Judaic culture influenced *hadiths*, and later on he contended that the *hadiths* themselves – a view he himself found very doubtful – influenced the formation of opinion concerning the Jews and their scriptures.<sup>12</sup> Vajda based his opinion on the following works: the *hadiths* of the six books, the *al-Muvatta'* of al-Imam al-Mâlik, and the *al-Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal. He also classified the *hadiths*, contained in the aforementioned publications dealing with the Jews, that convey the attitudes of the Muslims towards the Jews as well as the attitudes of the Jews towards the Prophet and the Muslims in general.<sup>13</sup> I will argue that Vajda mainly evaluated the Muslim's stance towards the Jews and contended that there was a strong influence of Judaic culture on *hadiths*. However, Henry Lammens argues that it does not come as a surprise that the Muslims plagiarized some sayings from the Torah and Gospel. According to him, many of the narratives and concepts in the *hadith* literature attributed to the Prophet and the companions were borrowed from foreign sources.<sup>14</sup> Hamilton R. Gibb contended that some wise sayings that belong to the Judeo-Christian culture and Greek philosophy were attributed to the Prophet and, as such, compiled as *hadiths*.<sup>15</sup>

Based on the studies that conveyed the influence of the Judaic culture on the *hadiths* as such, the first comprehensive study that dealt with this particular issue was W.R. Taylor's "Al-Bukhârî and the Aggadah." In this article Taylor appropriated some of these *hadiths* from *al-Sahih* of al-Bukhârî and some haggadic texts from the Talmud and Midrash. Taylor compared these *hadiths* with the texts, and concluded that these *hadiths* were appropriated from the Talmud and Midrash. Afterwards, he also said that there were many narratives in the *hadith* literature in general, especially in al-Bukhârî, that were taken from haggadic literature. He then studied the ways of and how these narrations were transmitted to *hadith* literature. According to Taylor's opinion, a large amount of the oral information, narrations, stories, and folkloric information entered in Islamic literature in general, and *hadith* literature, in particular, during the transcription of the Talmud and Mishnah and after the formation of *hadiths* via the Jews living in the Arabian Peninsula, as well as the church fathers and Christian community.<sup>16</sup> S. Rosenblatt

<sup>11</sup> Georges Vajda, "Juifs et Musulmans Selon le hadîr," *JA* CXXIX (1937): 58.

<sup>12</sup> Vajda, "Juifs et Musulmans Selon le hadîr," pp. 58, 59, 60.

<sup>13</sup> Vajda, "Juifs et Musulmans Selon le hadîr," pp. 60, 62.

<sup>14</sup> Henri Lammens, *Islam: Beliefs and Institutions* (London: 1929), pp. 72, 83.

<sup>15</sup> Hamilton A. Roskeen Gibb, *Mohammedanism: An Historical Survey*, (Oxford: 1949), p. 75. Additionally, Gibb claims that early Islamic sources are formed with these cultures and information that belong to West-Asian civilization. See *Mohammedanism*, pp. 82.

<sup>16</sup> W.R. Taylor, "Al-Bukârî and the Aggadah," *Muslim World* XXXIII/3 (1943): 191, 193, 194, 198-201.

claimed in his article, "Rabbinic Legends in Hadith," that there are many narratives that represent the rabbinic/orthodox Judaic concepts. Taylor discussed some possibilities of the transmission of these narratives and information. Like Taylor, Rosenblatt argued that the narratives that were appropriated from orthodox Jews via ways similar to those mentioned above were disseminated among the Muslims in the Aramaic language. As a consequence, the narratives, which were spread via Muslim narrators and authors, were transmitted into *hadith* literature – which he called Mohammedan Midrash – and *tafsir* and Islamic historical books. Rosenblatt's main aim was to convey a strong cultural connection between the followers of the religion of Muhammad and the followers of the religion of Moses.<sup>17</sup>

It is apparent from the title of Rosenblatt's article that he looks at the issue in a dogmatic way because he labeled Judaism a *sharia* law of Moses and characterized Islam as the religion of Muhammad in order to insinuate that the Prophet founded Islam, thus possibly denying Qur'anic revelation. If we accept his views of severing the connection between revelation and Islam, then the primary sources of Islam (the Qur'an and *Sunnah*) could have been influenced by the Judeo-Christian culture and formed as such. Rosenblatt later conveys some common and similar topics in *hadith* literature: he considers the narratives in the *tafsir* and historical books to be *hadiths* dealing with the prophets Adam, Abraham, and Moses, who are found in both Islamic and Judaic literature. He endeavored to prove that these narratives were appropriated from Jewish sources.<sup>18</sup>

Many Western scholars who try to establish relationships between the *hadiths* and the ancient religious cultures in general and Jewish culture in particular analyzed the Qur'an and *hadiths* linguistically as they did in their "Jewish source theory of Islam."<sup>19</sup> They discovered that some words are common to Semitic languages (Hebrew, Syriac, Aramaic, and Arabic). Afterwards, they decided that these common words are a testimony to the influence of the ancient cultures, especially Jewish culture, on the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. According to these claims, these words might appear to be Arabic, but in reality, according to superficial studies, they are inherited from other cultures because, they argue, even if these words appear to be Arabic, they are derived from foreign words taken from the Jewish sources of *Hidjaz*.<sup>20</sup> The sources of these arabicized words are Aramaic and Hebrew words commonly used by the Jews of Medina who spoke the Arabic language and employed these words in their rituals. These words entered the *hadiths*

<sup>17</sup> Samuel Rosenblatt, "Rabbinic Legends in Hadith," *Muslim World XXXV/3* (1945): 237, 238.

<sup>18</sup> Rosenblatt, "Rabbinic Legends in Hadith," p. 238.

<sup>19</sup> For these claims see my article: "The Jewish Source Theory of Islam" (in Turkish), published in *ILAM Arastirma Dergisi*, III/1: 155-69.

<sup>20</sup> A.S. Yehuda, "A Contribution to Qur'an and Hadith Interpretation," *Ignaz Goldziher Memorial Volume*, I (Budapest: 1948), p. 280.

by way of the Prophet's usage and the narrators who came after him.<sup>21</sup> We can say that this linguistic outlook is found in most oriental studies until the mid-twentieth century.

In addition to these opinions that contended that the Jewish culture influenced the *hadiths*, some Western scholars claim that social, cultural, and geographical factors also played a role in influencing the *hadiths*. For instance Joshua Finkel, who is known for his study on the cultural history of Arabian Jews, claimed that most of the Arab tribes in the *Jahiliyya* period accepted Judaism, which is why they applied Jewish law and culture in their daily life. Many of the Jewish legal injunctions and aspects of Jewish culture that were applied by the Prophet were also utilized by the above-mentioned Arab tribes. As a result, these injunctions were presented as *hadiths* uttered by the Prophet. The same view has been expressed by Charles Cutler Torrey and Abraham Katsh. In addition, Franz Buhl broadened the horizon of this influence and said that the Iranian/Zoroastrian culture also influenced *hadith*. He writes:

During the Islamic conquests, Islam appropriated many ideas from the Jewish, Christian, and Iranian cultures, and these were transmitted as *hadiths* attributed to the Prophet. The Qur'an disagreed with many of these.<sup>22</sup>

A.S. Yehuda does not purport a direct influence but does give vital importance to the discussion of this issue. According to him, we can thus question if the origin of these narrations and information is Jewish or not. He writes:

If Jews of the Arabian Peninsula did not have the Bible or some sections of it, the narrations and information that were appropriated from the Qur'an, there is not a shadow of a doubt that these were orally transmitted.<sup>23</sup>

In this statement Yehuda expresses doubt that there was borrowing from the written text (Bible); he contends only that there is an oral borrowing. In his attempt to substantiate this oral borrowing he refers to Abū Hurayrah's (d. 58/677) narrative where the Prophet says that the Jews used to read the narratives in Hebrew and exegete it for the Muslims in Arabic. Yehuda furnishes only this narration and no other.

David Samuel Margoliouth said that we can connect the Prophet's *hadiths* and the Bible with the Apocrypha. In his article, "Comme il Est Ecrit L'Histoire D'un Texte," A. L. de Premare discusses *al-hadith al-Qudsī*: "...". Here he makes a connection between this *hadith* and the apocryphal books of Jewish and Christian cultures. According to him, in addition to some of the Christian missionaries, some Arab traders traded with the Arab Christians who lived in Hire. During these interactions the Muslim traders appropriated some of the Arab Christian borrow-

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<sup>21</sup> Yehuda, "A Contribution to Qur'ān and Ḥadīṭ Interpretation," p. 281. According to Yehuda, some scholars mention the words *kalaq* and *saqīna*, which are of Aramaic origin, and the words *qissis* and *qiyāma*, which are of Syriac origin, as examples of their claims.

<sup>22</sup> Buhl, F., "The Character of Muhammad as a Prophet", *Muslim World*, 1/4, 1911, s. 356.

<sup>23</sup> Yehuda, "A Contribution to Qur'ān and Ḥadīṭ Interpretation," p. 281.

ings. In addition, he thinks that, as we have construed from this *hadith*, the ideas that are linked to Judeo-Christian culture at the time of the Prophet were found in the Arabian peninsula. As a consequence, he purports that the aforementioned *hadith* was appropriated word for word from the ancient divine books. It is most likely, according to Alfred Guillaume's studies, that the influence of Christian culture on the *hadith* is greater than that of Jewish culture. He claims that some Jewish and Christian concepts, sayings, injunctions, and narratives, of which the Prophet Muhammad writes in the Qur'an, are found in the *hadiths*. According to him, as al-Kindi demonstrated in his treatise, there were opportunities for cultural interactions, and *hadith* books convey to us samples of these cultural interactions found in the Qur'an. Based on this, Guillaume stated that many *hadiths*, which were conveyed after the death of the Prophet, were mostly borrowed from Jewish and Christian cultures as well as Greek philosophy. For instance, he claims that some ritual practices (*ibadaat*) that deal with chastity, such as ablution and *tayammum*, are essentially found in Judaism and these ritual practices were appropriated in Islam via Arab traditions, and that we can find a close resemblance between the *hadiths* and Talmud. Also, according to him, the Prophet was influenced by Jewish culture and we can spot unequivocally the lines of this influence in the *hadiths*. I hold that this evaluation does not take into account that there are common concepts, doctrines, and beliefs among these Abrahamic religions. Also, this analysis opened a wrong door in substantiating the origins of *hadiths*.

The issue of the influence of the Jewish tradition on the *hadiths* has been dealt with at present, especially in Germany and Israel.<sup>24</sup> In these studies in general, in addition to the issue of creation, previous prophets, the divine/*qudsi hadiths*, the writing of *hadiths*, *isnad*, and some particular *hadiths* have been studied from the point of their connection with the Jewish culture. These studies do not contain the unfounded claims and dogmatic ideas found in 19th century and the beginnings of the 20th century that were reflected in the aforementioned studies. Rather, in most of them, if not in all, the tone is neutral and objective. For example the studies of Meir Jacob Kister<sup>25</sup> deal with the religious and cultural situations in the pre-Islamic as well as the Islamic era, and he also deals with the Prophet's view of Jews and Judaism as well as those *hadiths* that have a direct connection with the Jewish culture. In these studies he tried to refrain from direct claims but conveyed the relations between these *hadiths* and the subjects that he studied with Jewish culture.

From another perspective Haim Shwarzbaum endeavored to clarify the folkloric and cultural influences of the Bible in the *hadiths*. He stated first that this

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<sup>24</sup> German and Israeli studies dealing with Islam display special attention for and have different relationships with the *hadith* issues in general and the influence of Jewish culture on Islam, the Qur'an, and *hadiths*.

<sup>25</sup> See the list of these studies in *JSAI* IX (1987). Also, for an evaluation of Kister's studies and the founding of orientalism in Israel see Ozcan Hidir, "Hadith Studies in Israel and M. J. Kister," in *A New Reading of Orientalism: A Symposium of Islamic Studies in the West* (Ankara, 2003), pp. 275-85.

topic has not been researched either by orientalists or cultural historians. In his book *Biblical and Extra-Biblical Legends in Islamic Folk Literature*, under the headings "The Biblical Elements in the Qur'an" and "Biblical Elements in Hadith Literature," he studied the Jewish influence on Islamic sciences. However, Shvarzbaum's claims, in comparison to Kister's aforementioned claims, do not display much rational thinking and scientific evidence, and are polemical in nature. In addition, his claims rely heavily on the many studies of Western scholars rather than primary sources. From another point of view, Steven Wasserstrom – in addition to employing more or less the same contentions as Shvarzbaum – argues that the *hadiths* reflect the haggadic and pseudopigraphic cultures that belong to Jewish and Christian literature.

The claim of the influence of Jewish culture on the *hadiths* was transformed into a prior acceptance in some contemporary Islamic studies that did not pertain to *hadiths*. For example, Austryn H. Wolfson, in the introduction to his book *The Philosophy of Kalaam*, discusses foreign influences on *kalaam*. Afterwards, he writes:

"In addition to the undoubted influence of Jewish cultures on the Qur'an and *hadiths*, there is a Jewish influence on *kalaam*."<sup>26</sup>

The influence of the pioneering orientalists' studies is conveyed on some intellectual studies in the Islamic world. The most famous illustration is the book by Abu Rayya, an Egyptian author, called *Adwa ala al-Sunna al-Muhammadiyah* (Illuminations on the Muhammmadian Sunnah). In this book, in the chapter "Al-Israiliyyat wa al-Masihiyat fi al-Hadith" (Jewish and Christian Cultural Influences in Hadiths), he studied the topic from an orientalist perspective and was even far ahead of them in some instances in his illustrations. Another example is provided by another Egyptian author, Ahmad Amin (d. 1954) who claimed that there are many narratives, and the biblical texts, abundant in *hadiths*, were transformed in the *hadith* literature by those who belonged to the Jewish and Christian religions. In Turkey some people turned our attention to the influence of Jewish culture on *hadiths*, but these studies highlighted, more than previous ones, the influence of Christian religious books' on divine/*qudsi hadiths*. We find a trace of this influence in the writings of Tayyip Okic, a famous Yugoslav Muslim scholar at the faculty of theology at Ankara University, who writes:

It is well-known that some narrations that were appropriated from Biblical literature have been transformed as *hadith*. There is a big role in this transformation to those who converted from Judaism and Christianity to Islam in the early period of Islam.<sup>27</sup>

In the light of the aforementioned, Okic states that the origin of these *hadiths* has been proven by *hadith* scholars. He adds that the *hadith* scholars pointed to the origins of these narrations and *hadiths*, by affirming that "it is stated in the *israiliyyat*" and "as mentioned in the Torah." An example of the preceding is that

<sup>26</sup> Wolfson, H. A., *Kelam Felsefesine Giriş*, translated in Turkish by Kasım Turhan, Istanbul 1996, p. 84.

<sup>27</sup> Okic, Tayyip, *Tefsir ve Hadis Usûlunun Bazı Meseleleri*, Istanbul 1995, p. 232.

“the hypocrite has two eyes for crying” is a pseudo-*hadith*. Okic uses the example of the evaluation of some Muslim scholars concerning this *hadith*, such as al-Shawqani (d. 1834) from Yemen, who stated that this *hadith* is only ascribed to the Prophet, although it is mentioned in the Torah.

As a consequence, the influence of Jewish culture on *hadith*, as Ignaz Goldziher (d. 1921), Georges Vajda, and Rosenblatt contended in their separate studies, has been defended in recent years by many Western scholars who developed their opinions on this basis. These influences, whose effects are clearly visible in Muslim countries, comprise a great modernist *hadith* problem. For further clarification of the topic, we have to study some factors that are usually viewed as being influential; we will first look at the factor of the conversion movement to Islam in the early period and the role of the converts in this influence.

### **The Factors that Paved the Way to the Claims of the Jewish Influence on *Hadiths***

If we examine the claims of Western scholars concerning the Jewish cultural influence on *hadiths* closely, we will see that there are some factors that have paved the way to these claims. The first and most important factor is the role of the conversion movement in the early period of Islam and the first Jewish and Christian converts to Islam. Although it is said that the conversion movement in this period had more influence on the transmission of narrations related to *is-railiyyat* in the Islamic literature, we will restrict the topic here to the role of Jewish converts to Islam in the transmission of Judaic culture in *hadith* literature.

#### *The Role of the First Jewish Converts to Islam in the Transmission of Judaic Culture in Hadith Literature*

In the narrations/*hadiths* the psychological process and aspects of conversion of some companions and followers like Abdullah ibn al-Salam, Ka'b al-Akhbar, and Wahb ibn al-Munabbih have been stressed. They were the first Jewish converts to Islam whose names have been mentioned more often in the claims of Jewish cultural influence on Islam and *hadiths*.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, it is claimed that those first converts to Islam added their former religious-cultural knowledge and heritage in a totally natural process to the new religion and these additions were later reflected in *hadith* and *tafsir* literature.<sup>29</sup> Whether or not these claims are true, it is obvious that, for more concrete information, studies are needed<sup>30</sup> that deal with

<sup>28</sup> For this kind of psychological process and aspects see Abū al-Fida' Ismā'il ibn 'Omar ibn Kaṭīr, *Al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya*, I (Cairo: 1414/1993), p. 17.

<sup>29</sup> For claims of this sort see E.I.J. Rosenthal, *Judaism and Islam* (London/New York: 1961), pp. 8-9; Gordon Daniel Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet* (Columbia: 1989), pp. 10-11; Abū Rayya, *Adwā' 'Alā al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya* (Cairo: n.d.), p. 118.

<sup>30</sup> In the last two decennia some important studies have been published that deal with conversion from one religion to another as a fact. One of the important studies in this area is the book by Ali Kose called *Conversion to Islam* (London: 1996). More specifically, there are some studies that exam-

the psychological, political, and socio-cultural aspects of conversion to Islam, especially in its early period. For this reason, it is very important to find the sources of the knowledge regarding *israiliyyat* in *hadith* literature in order to study the extent to which converts can apply their former cultural knowledge and heritage to a new religion.

As a religious term, conversion means the adoption of a new religious identity or a change from one religious identity to another. This typically entails the sincere affirmation of a new belief system.<sup>31</sup> Arabic uses the term *al-ih̄t̄ida* to describe this conversion. But in the Qur'an and other early classical Islamic sources we do not find the word *al-ih̄t̄ida*. Instead, the Qur'an uses the word *aslama*. It is well known that at the time of the Prophet Mohammed there were many people who had converted from different religions, mainly Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism. And we also know that after the death of the Prophet Mohammed there were some who abandoned Islam. So, Islam distinguished between these two phenomena that were initially understood by the majority of the researchers as one, and since it is the word for conversion, it is not used as one term. It is also noted that there is a difference between the conversion of *Ahl al-kitab* and idolators with respect to the conversion process and the factors that played a role in this process. And one must also differentiate between converts from religions that are of divine origin, like Judaism and Christianity, and religions that are not.

On the other hand, all those who had converted from other religions to Islam in the formative period of Islam were viewed as converts because the most important thing with the advent of Islam, especially in the early period, was either complete acceptance or complete rejection of the Islamic message. To some extent, the sociological, religious, political, and psychological motivations and reasons for conversion at the time of the Prophet Mohammed can differ from those for conversions to Islam in modern times because the fact that the Prophet was alive at that time is a major motivation for conversion. For that reason, the Jewish, Christian, and Zoroastrian converts at the time of the Prophet Mohammed are fully accepted by Muslim community. But after the Prophet Mohammed the basically religious motivations changed into political and socio-cultural ones.<sup>32</sup> Ibn Khaldun, a great Muslim sociologist, mentions the name of Yakub ibn Killis (d. 381/991), a Jew from Baghdad, who later converted to Islam as an example of

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ine conversion to Islam in the early period of Islam see W.M. Watt, "Conversion to Islam at the Time of the Prophet," *JAAR XLVII/4* theme issue (1980): 721-31.

<sup>31</sup> Conversion may also be conceived in other ways, such as adoption into an identity group or spiritual lineage. "Conversion" occurs not only from one religion to another but also between different groups, such as Protestant denominations, within the same faith, when this involves a felt change of identity rather than other reasons such as convenience. English-speaking Muslims sometimes prefer the term "revert" to describe converts to Islam, since that religion teaches that all infants are born Muslims until they become members of another religion through religious rituals.

<sup>32</sup> Maḥmūd Miqdād, *al-Mawālī wa Niẓām al-walā'* (Damascus 1408/1988), p. 149.

conversion for political reasons.<sup>33</sup>

Whatever the religious or cultural backgrounds of the converts may be, for our subject it is particularly important to know to what degree the religious-cultural history of the converts in the formative period of Islam influenced their philosophy of life and their understanding and interpretation of the religion after they embraced Islam. Naturally, it can be said that their former knowledge and religious views can possibly arise on some occasions and in some discussions. But it is actually natural for that to occur. At that time, the only important aim for them was to adapt to and obey the new religion, Islam. To this aim they gave their utmost sincerely. In spite of this, some of them conveyed their former religious and cultural views and feelings to the new religion.<sup>34</sup> In his important book *Hujjatullah al-Balighah* Shah Waliyyullah al-Dihlawi, in order to protect religions from falsification of their holy texts, accepts the confusion and mixing of nations/religions with one another so that they cannot be differentiated:

A man believes in one religion and his heart is full of his belief and knowledge of this religion. And then he converts to Islam but in his heart the tendencies of the former religions are still present and his heart is always occupied with this former knowledge. As a result he tries to find a place in Islam for former religious-cultural knowledge. For this purpose he even legitimizes the forged *hadiths* as authentic and also sometimes tries to make up remarks himself and relate them as *hadiths*.<sup>35</sup>

As evidence for his opinion al-Dihlawi gives a *hadith* narrated by Ibn Majah and al-Darimi,<sup>36</sup> two of the important *Sunni* canonical *hadith* collections. According to him, in these imports from other cultures we find Israelite narrations, sermons from the *Jahiliyya* period, Greek philosophy, remnants from Babylonia, and knowledge about Persian history and religion. According to him, stories of the Messenger of God becoming angry when the Torah was read in his presence or Omar beating people who were looking for the books of Daniel were primarily precautions to prevent the infiltration of information from Christian, Jewish, and other religious sources, such as religious-cultural information and rumors, into Islam.

In spite of these major events, we see that some converts, mainly those from Judaism to Islam after the time of the Prophet Mohammed, made comparisons between some aspects and practices of former beliefs and the new religion. As a result it is said by some Western and Muslim scholars that, especially in the early period of Islam, some converted companions and followers of Jewish and Christian origin played a role in the spread of Jewish knowledge in Islamic literature, including the *hadiths*. Rashid Rida (d. 1935), a great Egyptian Muslim scholar,

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<sup>33</sup> Ibn Kaldūn, *Kitāb al-'Ibar wa dīwān al-Mubtada' wa al-Kabar* (Beirut: 1399/1979), vol. IV, pp. 9, 16, 55; vol. V, p. 546.

<sup>34</sup> Abdullah Aydinli, *Dogus Devrinde Tasvvuf ve Hadis* (Islamic Mysticism and Ḥadīth in the Formative Period) (Istanbul: 1986), pp. 71-2.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibn Māja, *al-Sunan*, Muqaddima, bāb: 8; al-Dārimī, *al-Sunan*, Mukaddima, bāb: 17.

sees, for example, Ka'b al-Akhbar, a Jewish convert to Islam at the time of Caliph 'Omar, as one of the important transmitters of Israeli narrations into Islamic sources, especially *tafsir* and *tarikh* literature.<sup>37</sup> And Ahmad Amin (d. 1954), another Egyptian scholar, says in his book *Duha'l-Islam* as well that Jewish converts of Yemeni origin like Ka'b al-Akhbar and Wahb ibn Munabbih, had an important role in introducing Jewish culture into Islamic literature.<sup>38</sup> According to him, as a result of Islamic concurrences, many people who were talented in poetry, literature, and wisdom sayings were integrated with or mixed with Arab Muslims as slaves. Additionally, they were also reading the written traditions of former religions and nations and, after their conversion and acceptance into the Islamic community, they began to talk about these traditions and practice them in daily life. Ahmad Amin advances the claim that the Islamic sciences, including Islamic beliefs, were totally under the influence of these converts:

It is not reasonable to think that a Byzantine, Syrian, and Persian, or Coptic Christian convert can suddenly leave the tradition that he received from his ancestors and understand Islam as Muslims understand it. No, it is impossible! Because, it goes first of all against psychological findings.<sup>39</sup>

A Zoroastrian's understanding of God differs, according to Ahmad Amin, from that of a Christian of Byzantine origin. And also, for him, there are differences and even contradictions in their understanding of heaven, hell, angels, Satan, prophets, and the hereafter. In his view, those converts, including authentic ones, have understood Islam not like the Arabs do but added their former perceptions and customs to the new religion, Islam. Additionally, they also interpreted and understood Islamic terms with meanings close to similar terms in the religion of their forefathers, in line with their former religions.<sup>40</sup> Similar views have also been expressed by Moshe Perlmann, a scholar who specializes in Jewish-Muslim polemic literature. He adds that, as a reaction to the influence of Jewish culture (*is-railiyyat*), which came about because of Jewish converts to Islam, especially after the first century of Islam, Muslim scholars began to write polemical books against Judaism and Judaic culture.<sup>41</sup>

If the opinion of Ahmad Amin is analyzed in the light of what we have said in relation to conversion, we can see that he has pointed to only one aspect of the phenomenon of conversion. As we can see in studies that deal with the phenomenon, it is very natural for the person who has converted to Islam to do his best in practicing the new religion in order to give extra meaning to his conversion. In this case, we cannot accept Ahmad Amin's view without qualification. It is possible

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<sup>37</sup> Rashid Ridā, *Tafsir al-Manār* (Dār al-Fikr), vol. I, p. 9; vol. VIII, pp. 356, 449; vol. IX, pp. 190, 472-76; vol. X, p. 328.

<sup>38</sup> Ahmad Amin, *Duḥā al-Islām*, vol. I (Cairo: n.d.), p. 350.

<sup>39</sup> Ahmad Amin, *Fajr al-Islām* (Cairo: n.d.), p. 94.

<sup>40</sup> Amin, *Fajr al-Islām*, p. 94.

<sup>41</sup> See Moshe Perlmann, "Polemics between Islam and Judaism," in *Religion in a Religious Age* (Cambridge: 1974), p. 104.

to find converts to Islam who accepted Islam for political, cultural, and economical motivations and reasons. But it is not easy to accept Ahmad Amin's generalizations about some non-Arab (*mawālī*) companions like Abdullah Ibn Salam, Salmān al-Fārisī (d. 36/656), and Bilāl al-Habashī (d. 20/640). The claims<sup>42</sup> that the conversions of non-Arabs to Islam at the time of the Prophet Mohammed constantly concerned the Torah and Gospel and more generally Judeo-Christian culture must be proven via acceptable evidence.

On the other hand, Tayyib Okic, a Yugoslav Muslim scholar, points out that it is known that some sayings were taken from the scriptures of Jews and Christians and were later on transformed into *hadiths*. He gives some examples of such *hadiths* that, in his opinion, are taken from Judeo-Christian culture and says: "We also know the role of some Jewish-Christian converts in this transformation process."<sup>43</sup>

If we look at his references, it is clear that he has been deeply influenced in this opinion by Ignaz Goldziher. Actually, his purpose here is to pay attention to the importance of studies in this field. E.I.J. Rosenthal has also pointed to the role of Jewish-Christian converts in the early period of Islam in introducing their culture into Islam.<sup>44</sup> He also said that there were conversions to Islam in the region of Iraq, which was a religious centre for Jews at the time. According to him, those converted Jews compared some rules in the Talmud and *halakhah* with parallel rules in Islamic law and other Islamic sciences. Moreover, he says that the Prophet Muhammad had also received his information about Judaic culture and texts not from reading Jewish religious texts but orally from Jews who converted to Islam.<sup>45</sup> Although he did not mention any names, it is obvious that he is referring to some converted companions from Judaism like Abdullah ibn Salam.

According to him, these converts played a role in transmitting not only the halakhic traditions of Judaism into Islam but also, in addition to folklore, narrations, and legendary stories of some figures in the Bible.<sup>46</sup> With respect to this G.D. Newby points out that in the formative period of Islam great numbers of converts were Jews and they spread the popular stories of this period concerning Judaic culture. He says:

The moral motivation and spirit which form the expectations of Muslims on a religion should be like what is endowed to Islam by those who converted to Islam. Hence we can say that the example of Judaism has played an important role in the formative period of Islam.<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, B. Lewis and S. Wasserstrom have also pointed to the role of Jewish

<sup>42</sup> For claims of this kind see, ṣādiq al-Amīn, *Mawqif al-Madrassa al-'Aqliyya min al-Ḥadīth*, vol. I (Riyad: 1998), p. 487.

<sup>43</sup> Tayyib Okic, *Tefsir ve Hadis Usulunun Bazı Meseleleri* (Some Problems of Methodology in *Tafsir* and *Ḥadīth*), (Istanbul: 1995), p. 232.

<sup>44</sup> Rosenthal, *Judaism and Islam*, p. x.

<sup>45</sup> Rosenthal, *Judaism and Islam*, pp. 8, 9.

<sup>46</sup> Rosenthal, *Judaism and Islam*, p. 10.

<sup>47</sup> Gordon Daniel Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet*, pp. 10-11.

converts to Islam in the islamization of Judaic cultures and becoming popular within the Islamic circle.<sup>48</sup>

In line with these views and claims, the narrations of Ka'b from *Ahl al-kitab*<sup>49</sup> after his conversion to Islam before Omar, which the latter supported because the narrations did not contradict Islam, play an important role.

After having reported this narration, Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1372) says that many companions and their followers, basing themselves on Omar's attitude, saw no harm in further spreading the narrations of Ka'b al-Akhbar, which later on turned out to be false. It can be said that these narrations paved the ground for legitimizing Jewish narrations in the early Islamic literature.

Omar, who is well known as being very critical in controlling the authenticity of the *hadiths* and his cautious approach to Israeli narrations, allowed the Israeli narrations of Ka'b because he took Ka'b's physiological situation and his recent conversion to Islam into consideration. By doing so, Omar wanted to familiarize him with Islam and left the situation to time. Although this attitude had a damaging effect with regard to the harmful results of the Israeli narrations, it can be considered a strategic attempt to gain the heart of Ka'b.

### *al-Mawālī*

One of the arguments that is used with respect to the influence of external cultures on Islam and, in particular, the *hadiths* is the role of *al-mawālī*,<sup>50</sup> i.e. non-Arabic Muslims<sup>51</sup> who influenced Islamic society on the levels of science, government, and politics in the late Umayyad period.<sup>52</sup> The *mawālī* matter has been dealt with in the *hadith* literature and is discussed under "ma'rifat al-mawālī min al-ruwāt va'l-ulamā."<sup>53</sup> Attention has been drawn to the importance of the *mawālī* issue in the context of *hadith* interpretation.

A *hadith* narrated by *Sunan Ibn Majah* and *Sunan al-Darimi* points out that one of the reasons for the Jews going astray was the intermingling of races beyond recognition, establishing a society consisting of foreign and mixed elements who judge only according to their own insights. In consonance with this, the Prophet

<sup>48</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton: 1984), p. 70; Steven Wasserstrom, "Jewish Pseudepigrapha in Muslim Literature: A Bibliographical and Methodological Sketch," *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed: John C. Reeves (Atlanta: 1994), pp. 90-91.

<sup>49</sup> Ibn Kaṭīr, *Al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya*, I, p. 17.

<sup>50</sup> For further information on the influence of *mawālī* on *hadiths* and *hadith* sciences see the unpublished Ph.D. dissertation by Mustafa Ozturk in Turkish *Mevālinin Hadis Rivayetindeki Yeri -Hicri I. ve II. Asr* (The Role of Mawālī in Ḥadīth Transmission), Marmara University (Istanbul: 2002).

<sup>51</sup> Najdat Hammāsh, *al-Idāra fī al-'Asr al-Umawī* (Damascus: 1980), p. 338; Miqdād, p. 135.

<sup>52</sup> Abd al-'Azīz Muḥammad Lumaylīm, *Waḍ' al-mawālī fī al-Dawla al-Umawīyya* (Beirut: 1993), pp. 84, 85-86.

<sup>53</sup> Hākīm, Abū 'Abd Allah al-Nīsābūrī, *Ma'rifat 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, ed. al-Sayyid Mu'azzam Ḥusayn (Beirut 1397/1977), pp. 196-202; Abū 'Amr 'Uṭmān ibn Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-ṣalāḥ, *'Ulūm al-ḥadīth*, ed. Nūr al-Dīn 'Iṭr (Damascus: 1984), pp. 358-62.

said:

The affairs of the Jews were going well. In the end, slaves from different races among them i.e. children from women taken as slaves from other races grew and judged according to their own insights. Therefore they made them go astray.<sup>54</sup>

Although this narration reports on Jews, as Shah Waliyyullah al-Dihlawi indicates,<sup>55</sup> it is possible that similar harmful situations can occur elsewhere as a result of mixing.

Some Western scholars refer to the role of *mawali* in the second part of the ninth century when studying the impact of ancient cultures on Islam in general and on *hadith*, *kalam*, and *fiqh* in particular. One of the first to study this role was Goldziher, who argued that the role of the Arabs in science was very limited both in quantity and quality and the real actors here were the *mawali*.<sup>56</sup> The French orientalist G. Van Vloten (1903) emphasized the existence of such a relationship between the concept of the *mawali* and the conversion movement.<sup>57</sup>

Patricia Crone argues that, after the Islamic conquest, there was a period in which non-Arabs were integrated into the Arabic Islamic society. Within a short period of time they influenced the Arabs, their superiority was acknowledged, and they played an important role in determining the foundation of the Islamic faith.<sup>58</sup> Crone's ideas, which can also be understood as arguing that non-Arabs living in the newly conquered areas offered their knowledge and competence to the new society that they joined and in which they were assimilated toward creating a new Islamic society, are right. However as Harald Motzki also indicated, when the biography literature is studied in this respect, one can see that the number of Arab scholars is not as small as is assumed. According to Motzki, the theory of the domination by non-Arabs in the development of Islamic sciences is an oversimplification. This understanding, as Motzki indicates,<sup>59</sup> is related – if implicitly – to the hypothesis that the sophisticated structure of Islamic culture cannot be attributed to tribes living far from the developed civilizations of the antique world and that V. Kramer and Goldziher, who argue that non-Arabs played a primary role in the success of Islamic culture, share this in the final conclusion.

G. D. Newby also claims that the *mawali* played an important role in passing on the sources of Islam concerning the People of the Book. According to him, the

<sup>54</sup> Ibn Māja, *al-Sunan*, bāb: 8; al-Dārimī, *al-Sunan*, al-Muqaddima, bāb: 17. Narrations by Ibn Māja and Dārimī support each others in terms of meaning although there are some differences between them. The *ḥadīth* of 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr al-'Āṣ in *al-Sunan* of Ibn Māja, is considered a weak *ḥadīth*. The *ḥadīth* of 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr narrated by Dārimī is a *mawkuḥ ḥadīth*, which is a saying by the companions.

<sup>55</sup> Shāh Waliyy Allah al-Dihlawī, *Ḥujjat Allah al-Bāliġa*, ed. Muḥammad Sharīf al-Sukkar, vol. I (Beirut: 1410/1990), pp. 352-53.

<sup>56</sup> Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies* (London: 1967), vol. I, pp. 112-13.

<sup>57</sup> G. Van Vloten, *Emevî Devrinde Arap Hakimiyeti, Şia ve Mesîh Akîdeleri Üzerine Araştırmalar*, trans. by Mehmet Said Hatiboglu, (Ankara: 1986), p. 25.

<sup>58</sup> Patricia Crone, "Mawla," *Et*, vol. VI (Leiden: Brill, 1991), p. 877

<sup>59</sup> Harald Motzki, "The Role of Non-Arab Converts in Early Islamic Law," *Islamic Law and Society*, VI/3 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 294-95.

*mawali* acquired the Jewish, Christian, and Iranian culture in a natural way, if we take their places of birth into account. Although Newby claims that the influence of ancient cultures passed on by the *mawali* is concentrated in the *tafsir* tradition, he hints that the same logic is also applicable to the *hadiths*. As an example, he mentions Hasan al-Basri (d. 110/728), whom he describes as “the son of an Iranian slave,” who proved himself as a *hadith* and *kalam* scholar, an ascetic, and a reformist. The other person to whom he refers is Qatada ibn Dima (d. 117/735),<sup>60</sup> whom he describes as a rival of Hasan al-Basri with respect to Qur’anic exegesis.<sup>61</sup> Although Hasan al-Basri is of *mawali* origin,<sup>62</sup> records suggest that Qatada is of Arabic origin and that he disliked the *mawali*.<sup>63</sup>

Even though this claim by Newby seems to differ from those of others, it is in reality parallel to the ideas of Ahmad Amin (1954). Ahmed Amin says that, as a result of the conquest, many people from different races and religions joined the Arabs as slaves and that these people in due time learned Arabic and mixed Arab traditions with their own cultural background. According to him, first Persian/Iranian and Byzantine cultures and afterwards different cultural customs mixed with the commandments of the Qur’an and the *Sunnah*. Furthermore, wisdom sayings and philosophical statements by these people combined with those of the Arabs.<sup>64</sup> These claims and findings of Ahmad Amin actually show the existence of a relationship between the conversion movement and *mawali* because being a *mawali* is generally a status acquired as a result of conversion.

An important orientalist who mentions the influence of the *mawali* on the *hadith* tradition is A.L. Premare. He suggests that those who transmitted *hadiths* from Abu Hurayrah were not Arabs but *mawali* whose position resembled that of slaves, constituting a lower level in society, and that they were very active in the transmission of the *hadiths*. According to Premare, those who narrated from Abu Hurayrah were dispersed across a vast geographical space and encountered a multicultural environment. He uses Sufyan ibn Uyaynah (198/814) as an example here. Ibn Uyaynah is one of the narrators of the divine (*al-qudsi*) *hadith* that reads as follows: “I prepared for my believing servants things which no eye saw, no ear heard of and which they cannot imagine.”<sup>65</sup>

<sup>60</sup> For his biography see Ibn Sa’d, Abū Abd Allah Muḥammad, *al-Tabaqāt al-kubrā* (Beirut: 1388/1968), vol. VII, p. 229; Shams al-Dīn al-Dahabī, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, ed. Shu’ayb al-Arna’ūt *et al.*, vol. V (Beirut: 1406/1986), p. 269; Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Tahdīb al-Tahdīb*, vol. IV, (Beirut: 1412/1991), p. 540.

<sup>61</sup> Gordon Daniel Newby, “The Drowned Son: Midrash and Midrash Making in the Qur’an and Tafsir,” *Studies in Islamic and Judaic Traditions* (Atlanta: 1986), p. 21.

<sup>62</sup> Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqāt al-kubrā*, vol. VII, p. 156; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma’ārif*, ed. Tarwat Uqqāсах (no place of publication: 1992), p. 440.

<sup>63</sup> Al-Dahabī, *Siyar a’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. V, p. 273.

<sup>64</sup> Amīn, *Fajr al-Islām*, pp. 93. Also, for his views of the influence of *al-mawali* on cultural, political, and social life of the Arabs see Amīn, *Fajr al-Islām*, pp. 84-96, 152-58.

<sup>65</sup> Al-Bukārī; Bad’ al-Kalq, ḥadīth: 8; Tafsīr (32), ḥadīth: 1; Tawhīd, ḥadīth: 35; Muslim, *al-ṣaḥīḥ*, Janna, ḥadīth: 2-5; al-Tirmidī, *al-Sunan*, Tafsīr, ḥadīth: 32, 56; Ibn Māja, Zuhd, ḥadīth: 39; al-Dārimī, al-Sunan, Rikāk, ḥadīth: 105; Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal, al-Musnad, vol. II, pp. 313, 438, 466, 495. This *hadith* is one

According to him, Sufyan met Al-A'mash (d. 148/765) and Abdurrazzaq (d. 211/826), primarily in Yemen and in some other locations, and narrated two different versions of the aforementioned *hadith*.<sup>66</sup> Taking into account Abu Hurayrah's ranking position among the companions in *hadith* narration,<sup>67</sup> Premare's conclusion, based on the narrators of this particular *hadith* whom he generalizes as the narrators following Abu Hurayrah were not Arabs but *mawali*, has no sociological and rational explanation. On the other hand, Meir Jacob Kister from Israel draws attention to the role of *mawali* influence on *hadiths* through the knowledge and traditions of ancient cultures by saying that the *hadith* tradition, stories about former prophets and religious leaders, was spread by new Muslims of whom *mawali* constituted the major part.<sup>68</sup>

The usage of *mawali* in the Umayyad period for "non-Arab peoples"<sup>69</sup> requires emphasizing the role of the Shiites and the Shiite movement as non-Arabs in the transfer of Jewish culture to Islamic resources.<sup>70</sup> The reason for this is that Judaeo-Christian knowledge and traditions were accepted by Shiites living in the Iraq area in the 2nd and 3rd centuries after the *Hijrah*.<sup>71</sup> In this respect, they draw parallels between the political, social, and cultural difficulties they encountered and those of the Jews, which resulted in appreciating Jewish prophets more and seeing them as heroes.<sup>72</sup> The Book of Jubilees in the pseudo-epigraphic literature that influenced the *Shiite* tradition is important in this respect.<sup>73</sup> Although it can be said that the Shiites played an important role in the transfer of knowledge and traditions that bore Judaeo-Christian features to Islamic resources from the first century after the *Hijrah*, stronger arguments are required.

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that is said to have entered the canonical *hadith* books through the influence of Judaic culture. For more information on critical views on this *hadith* see Ozcan Hidir, *Yahudi Kültürü ve Hadisler*, pp. 358-63.

<sup>66</sup> A. Louis de Premare, "Comme il Est Ecrit: L'Histoire D'un Texte," *SI* LXXX (1989): 42-43.

<sup>67</sup> Ibn Hāzīm, *Asmā' al-ṣaḥāba al-Ruwāt*, ed. Sayyid Kisrawī Ḥasan (Beirut: 1412/1992), p. 37; Abd al-Rahman Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talqīh fuhūm Ahl al-ʿAṭar* (Cairo: n.d.), p. 363; Ibn al-ṣalāḥ, *ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth*, p. 265; al-Dahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. II, p. 632.

<sup>68</sup> Kister, Meir Jacob, "... Lā Taqrā'ū al-Qur'ān 'Alā al-Muḥaḥfiyyīn wa-Lā Taḥmilū al-ʿIlm 'An al-ṣaḥāfiyyīn: Some Notes on the Transmission of Ḥadīth," *JSAI* XXII, 1998, p. 162.

<sup>69</sup> Corci Zeydan, *İslām Medeniyeti Tarihi* (History of Islamic Civilization), ed. Zeki Magāmiz, IV (İstanbul: 1974), p. 91.

<sup>70</sup> The resemblance between the Shiite and Judaic resources in the approach to the interpretation of some verses played an important role in the spreading of Judaic narrations in Islamic literature. However, some Western scholars have drawn attention to the resemblance between the Shiite and Judaic resources in recent years. One of the most important studies on this topic has been carried out by I. Friedlaender, see his "Jewish Arabic Studies," *JQR* (1912): 481-516.

<sup>71</sup> Wasserstrom, "Jewish Pseudepigrapha in Muslim Literature," p. 92.

<sup>72</sup> Uri Rubin, "Prophets and Progenitors in the Early Shī'a Tradition," *JSAI* I (1979): 55; Wasserstrom, "Jewish Pseudepigrapha in Muslim Literature," p. 92.

<sup>73</sup> Rubin, "Prophets and Progenitors in the Early Shī'a Tradition," pp. 56-58.

### *Poetry, Poets, and Jahiliyyah Traditions*

In addition to the claims that *Jahiliyyah* poetry is not authentic and that it was composed in later periods,<sup>74</sup> there are also claims that the *Jahiliyyah* traditions and the poets in this era and their poetry influenced the Qur'an, the Prophet, and thus the *hadiths*. Actually, it can be understood from the refusal of such claims by the Qur'an that the Meccan idolaters accused the Prophet, among others, of being taught by poets in the first years of the Qur'anic revelation.<sup>75</sup>

Nabia Abbott indicates that some knowledge of the Bible reappears in the *Jahiliyyah* poetry and culture and says:

Besides the fact that whether there was a translation of some or major parts of the Bible, there are strong evidences that Biblical ideas and thinking influenced the *Jahiliyyah* poetry and the pagan culture in that period.<sup>76</sup>

Abbott argues in fact that the influence of *Jahiliyyah* poetry and culture on the Prophet and the *hadiths* is an influence on the Prophet and the *hadiths* by the past cultures in general and by Judaism in particular. Carl Brockelmann speaks of the influence by *Jahiliyyah* poetry on Qur'anic stories, which is equivalent to an influence on the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>77</sup>

We think that the most important work on *hadiths* from the point of view of narration technique that contains parts from *Jahiliyyah* poetry is "On the Origins of the Poetry in Muslim Tradition Literature" by Guiter H.A. Juynboll. Although Juynboll does not mention any direct influence on the *hadiths* by the *Jahiliyyah* poetry, he does try to determine the origin of the *hadiths* containing passages from poetry by using the method of a common link and key narrator<sup>78</sup> originally used by J. Schacht<sup>79</sup> and which Juynboll revised and extended,<sup>80</sup> and by methods of dating *hadiths*.<sup>81</sup> Using this method Juynboll reaches the conclusion that A'mash (147/764), as one of the narrators of the *hadith* "It is better for one of you to fill his stomach with pus than filling it with poetry,"<sup>82</sup> is the key narrator and that, in re-

<sup>74</sup> For claims like these see Muhammed Mustafa Hedārah, "Mawqif Margoliouth min al-Shi'r al-'Arabī," *Manāhij al-mustashriqīn fī al-Dirāsāt al-'Arabīyya al-Islāmiyya*, vol. I, p. 396.

<sup>75</sup> Qur'an: 36:70; 69: 1-2.

<sup>76</sup> Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Early Arabic Literary Papyry*, vol. II, p. 5.

<sup>77</sup> Brockelmann, *Tārīkh al-Adab al-'Arabī*, vol. I, p. 114.

<sup>78</sup> For the use of the "common link" method, see G.H.A. Juynboll, "Islam's First Fuqahā," *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Hadith*, ed. G.H.A. Juynboll (Variorum: 1996), p. 294.

<sup>79</sup> Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: 1950), p. 171.

<sup>80</sup> Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition: Modern Discussions of Sunna in Egypt and Pakistan* (Cambridge: 1996), p. 85.

<sup>81</sup> For a critical review of the methods of dating *hadiths* and their application by Goldziher, Schacht, and Juynboll, see Özcan Hidir, "Şarkiyatçıların Hadisi Tarihlendirme Metotları," *Hadis Tetkikleri Dergisi*, 1/1 (2003): 97-115.

<sup>82</sup> Al-Bukārī, *al-ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Adab, ḥadīth: 92; Muslim, *al-ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Siir, ḥadīth: 7-9; Abū Dāwūd, *al-Sunan*, al-Adab, ḥadīth: 87; al-Tirmidī, *al-Sunan*, al-Adab, ḥadīth: 71; Ibn Māja, *al-Sunan*, al-Adab, ḥadīth: 42; al-Dārimī, *al-Sunan*, al-Isti'dān, ḥadīth: 69; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, vol. I, pp. 175, 177, 181; vol. II, pp. 39, 96, 288, 331, 355, 391.

sponse to this, the *hadith* "For sure there is wisdom in (some) words"<sup>83</sup> was fabricated as being from the Prophet Mohammed.<sup>84</sup> However, he does not provide any information regarding the actual person who composed the *hadith* and says that it originated in the second century after the *Hijrah*, when there were many attempts at such fabrication, and tries to provide a foundation for his claims. He then examines lines mentioned in the *hadiths* belonging to some *Jahiliyyah* poets such as Imru'l Qays, Tarafah, and Labid (41/661),<sup>85</sup> who later became a Muslim. He first studies a very famous line by Labid: "Ala kulli shay'in ma halallāhu bātīlun=Everything is false but Allah."<sup>86</sup> He says that his intention is not to question Labid's poetic ability but to find out who first transferred Labid's poems to the *hadiths*, saying in effect that the Prophet did not write these statements. He compares the lines by Tarafah<sup>87</sup> with the lines of the Prophet the latter is reported to have said during the Khaybar and Khandaq battles.<sup>88</sup>

Although it has been said that the Arabs were using the Arabic script three centuries before Islam,<sup>89</sup> it is a known fact that the Prophet was illiterate even though the most Western scholars argue the opposite. Apart from a few exceptions,<sup>90</sup> the classical Islamic sources do not allow us to be optimistic with respect to the view that the Prophet read books from past cultures<sup>91</sup> and that he had discussions with the People of the Book. He also did not attend gatherings of the poets and listen to books being read.<sup>92</sup> However, as Charles C. Torrey put it,<sup>93</sup> there

<sup>83</sup> Al-Bukārī, *al-ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Adab, ḥadīṭ: 90; Tirmidī, *al-Sunan*, al-Adab, ḥadīṭ: 69; Ibn Māja, al-Adab, ḥadīṭ: 41; al-Dārimī, al-Isti'zān, ḥadīṭ: 68; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, vol. I, pp. 269, 273, 303, 309, 313, 327, 332; vol. III, p. 456; vol. V, p. 125; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, vol. VI, pp. 171. This ḥadīṭ was also narrated by the plural form of the word *ḥikma*, i.e. *ḥikam* (see al-Tirmidī, *al-Sunan*, al-Adab, ḥadīṭ: 69; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, vol. VI, pp. 171-72).

<sup>84</sup> G.H.A. Juynboll, "On the Origins of the Poetry in Muslim Tradition Literature," *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Hadith*, ed. G.H.A. Juynboll (Variorum: 1996), pp. 183-88.

<sup>85</sup> For biographical information on Labid ibn Rabia, one of the companions, see Ibn Hajar, al-'Asqalānī, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba*, vol. III (Beirut: 1327), pp. 326-27.

<sup>86</sup> Al-Bukārī, *al-ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Adab, ḥadīṭ: 90; Müslim, *al-ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Siir, ḥadīṭ: 2-3; Al-Tirmidī, *al-Sunan*, al-Adab, ḥadīṭ: 70; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, vol. I, p. 393.

<sup>87</sup> Al-Tirmidī, *al-Sunan*, al-Adab, ḥadīṭ: 70; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, vol. VI, pp. 31, 138, 146, 156, 222.

<sup>88</sup> Al-Bukārī, *al-ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Jihād, ḥadīṭ: 34; al-Mağāzī, ḥadīṭ: 29, 38; al-Adab, ḥadīṭ: 90; al-Da'awāt, ḥadīṭ: 19; al-Tamannī, ḥadīṭ: 7; Muslim, *al-ṣaḥīḥ*, Jihād, ḥadīṭ: 123-25, 132; al-Nasāī, *al-Sunan*, Jihād, ḥadīṭ: 29; al-Dārimī, *al-Sunan*, al-Siyar, ḥadīṭ: 19; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, vol. III, p. 431; vol. IV, pp. 47, 48, 50, 52, 282, 285, 291, 302.

<sup>89</sup> Nāsir al-Dīn al-Asad, *Maṣādir al-shi'r al-Jāhili wa Ḥikmatuhā al-Tārīkiyya* (Egypt: 1988), p. 33.

<sup>90</sup> For the evaluation of these exceptions and proofs see Özcan Hıdır, *Yahudi Kültürü ve Hadisler*, (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2006), pp. 150-206.

<sup>91</sup> There is the report about the book, *Majallatu/Hıqmatu Loqman* (see Ibn Hishām, *al-Sira*, vol. I, p. 427; al-Ṭabarī, *al-Tafsīr*, vol. IV, pp. 46-7) in the hands of Suvayd ibn Samit, who was well known for his honorability and nobility and who belonged to the Aws tribe, with whom the Prophet Muḥammad had a meeting in Mecca during which Suvayd ibn Samit read a piece from it. The Prophet said he liked it but what he had (the Qur'ān) was better. Aside from this report, however, there is no evidence in the sources that shows that the Prophet was aware of the content of ethical, social, judicial, and religio-cultural books during the Meccan period.

<sup>92</sup> Ali ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī, *al-Dīn wa al-Dawla fī itbāt nubuwwat al-Nabiyy Muḥammad*, ed. 'Adil Nuwayhiz (Beirut: 1402/1982), p. 104.

is the possibility that the Prophet was orally influenced by the Jewish and Christian poets in the *Jahiliyyah* period in a religious and cultural way. The Qur'an, on the other hand, describes the Prophet as a person who does not have anything to do with poetry and that poetry does not adorn him.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, the Qur'an tells us that the Qur'an is not the word of a poet,<sup>95</sup> that the poets are followed by people who go astray, except for poets who become believers and do good things.<sup>96</sup> Together with this, one should ask what kind of teaching the Prophet could gain from poetic products belonging to the *Jahiliyyah* period in which poets had a very important role<sup>97</sup> and were seen as supernatural personalities.<sup>98</sup>

The content of the *Jahiliyyah* poetry is mainly twofold. Poets like A'sha describe the traditions of the church, but their main theme is wine. The Qur'an decisively prohibits this. Thus, it is unthinkable to link the Qur'an to the poems of such poets. However, in the *Jahiliyyah* period we can find poems devoted completely to religious subjects. The poems of Umayyah ibn Abi al-Salt (5/626)<sup>99</sup> who is said to have books and met Jews and Christians in Damascus and Yemen<sup>100</sup> is an attentive and striking example of whom the Prophet said: "*His poems believe in me but his heart does not,*"<sup>101</sup> and that he liked his poems<sup>102</sup> and even approved of some of them by reciting them softly.<sup>103</sup>

The life hereafter, the description of heaven, and the religious stories of the past are the themes that are encountered most in the poems of Umayyah with a Qur'anic style.<sup>104</sup> It is also possible to see these themes in the poems<sup>105</sup> attributed

<sup>93</sup> Charles Catler Torrey, *The Jewish Foundation of Islam* (New York: 1967), pp. 36-7, 39, 41, 46, 47.

<sup>94</sup> Qur'an 36:69.

<sup>95</sup> Qur'an 69:41-42.

<sup>96</sup> Qur'an 26:224-27.

<sup>97</sup> Nihat Cetin, *Eski Arap Şiiri* (Poems of Ancient Arabs) (Istanbul: 1973), p. 9.

<sup>98</sup> Sawqî Dayf, *Tārîḫ al-Adab al-'Arabî*, vol. I (Cairo: n.d.), p. 138.

<sup>99</sup> Umayya ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Abi's-Salt ibn Abî Rabîa al-Saka'î is a poem in the Jahiliyyan period from the city of Tâ'if. It is reported that he was using some wise statements in his poems and also reading ancient holy books. He met with the Prophet Muhammad but he did not believe him (see Ibn Kaṭîr, *al-Bidâya wa al-Nihâya*, vol. II, pp. 225-33; Rashîd Riḍâ, *Tafsîr al-Manâr*, XI, p. 171).

<sup>100</sup> 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn el-Qurashî al-Iṣfahânî, *Kitâb al-Aġânî*, ed. Ibrâhîm al-Abyârî (Cairo: 1394/1974), vol. IV, pp. 1334-38. We must also state that al-Iṣfahânî has said that he read the first divine book that was sent by Allah (see vol. IV, p. 1335); al-Munâwî said that he was a Jew (see *Fayḍ al-qadîr sharḥ Jâmi' al-ṣaġîr*, ed. Aḥmad 'Abd al-Salâm, vol. I (Beirut: 1415/1994), p. 76).

<sup>101</sup> Al-Munâwî, *Fayḍ al-qadîr sharḥ Jâmi' al-ṣaġîr*, vol. I, p. 76; Abû al-Fidâ' Ismâ'îl b. Muahḥammad al-'Ajlûnî, *Kashf al-Kafâ' wa muzil al-ilbâs 'Ammâ Ishtahara min al-Aḥādîṭ 'Alâ Alsinat al-Nâs*, vol. I (Beirut: 1405/1985), p. 19. See also al-Iṣfahânî, *Kitâb al-Aġânî*, vol. IV, p. 1344.

<sup>102</sup> Muslim, *al-Ṣaḥîḥ*, al-Şiir, bâb: 1; Ibn Mâja, *al-Sunan*, al-Adab, bâb: 41; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, vol. IV, pp. 388-90.

<sup>103</sup> Ibn Abî Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. Kamâl Yûsuf al-Hût (Riyad: 1409), vol. VI, p. 172; Abû 'Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn Iṣḥâq al-Fâkihî, *Aḳbâr Makka fî Qadîm al-Dahr wa Ḥadîṭih*, ed. 'Abd al-Malik ibn Abd Allah Duhays (Beirut: 1414), vol. III, p. 203.

<sup>104</sup> Abdullah Draz, *Kur'an'in Atlasimasına Dogru*, trans. By Salih Akdemir (No place: 1983), p. 148. For his statements on paradise see Ibn Kallâd, *Amtâl al-Ḥadîṭ*, pp. 77-78. On his poems dealing with Islam, which he murmured during his last moment before dying, see Ibn Adî, *al-Kâmil*, vol. VI, p. 121; al-'Ajlûnî, *Kashf al-Kafâ'*, vol. I, p. 19.

to Waraqa ibn Nawfal who is considered a scholar and poet of Quraysh.<sup>106</sup> Judging from these themes, Alois Sprenger<sup>107</sup> and Carl Brockelmann especially see the lines of Umayyah as a meeting point between the Qur'an and the Bible. For example, Brockelmann explains the way the Prophet prayed in the Meccan period, his withdrawing to the cave of Hira, as the influence of Umayyah.<sup>108</sup>

First of all, these kinds of claims can be substantiated by solid proof that Umayyah influenced the Prophet. Besides the fact that we cannot find any support in the literature, it is also reported that Umayyah believed in the prophecy of the Prophet and that he left Damascus at the time of the al-Badr battle and returned when he heard that his cousin was killed.<sup>109</sup> The Prophet's statement about him that "*he almost became a Muslim*"<sup>110</sup> indicates that he intended to become a Muslim. The themes in Umayyah's poems that coincide with the Qur'an can be explained by the fact that he read previous holy books that bore elements of divine revelation and that he met Jews and Christians who preserved the true teachings. On the other hand, the hypothesis that Umayyah influenced the Prophet requires that one be certain that the poems attributed to him are really his poems. Furthermore, if one manuscript is to be considered the origin of another it is not enough that it be a genuine manuscript; it must also be older than the other one. It is very difficult to resolve the issue that Umayyah's poems were written before the Qur'an and the *hadiths* of the Prophet. The reason for this is that Umayyah was a contemporary of the Prophet and they were approximately the same age. Furthermore, in the light of historical records Umayyah lived eight years after the revelation of the last Meccan verses, and he wrote poems in this period. Moreover, Umayyah did not claim that he was a prophet. The Meccan idolators who did not leave any stone unturned in reproaching the Prophet and the Qur'an did not use Umayyah's poems as an argument against the Prophet. In addition, an internal evaluation of the poems of Umayyah ibn Abi al-Salt will reveal several different sources. For example, when he speaks about hell he follows the style of the Bible; when describing heaven he makes use of Qur'anic statements; but when he talks about historical events he uses folk legends and mythological sources.<sup>111</sup>

Another point in the issue of influence that is mentioned is the *Jahiliyyah* traditions and folk religions that are related to the old religions and mythologies. First of all, it should be stated that the Prophet was aware of the traditions, faiths, and ideas of the *Jahiliyyah* people among whom he lived. We should not think that he lived in isolation from social life. According to some verses in the Qur'an and other sources some people from the *Jahiliyyah* had knowledge of former religions,

<sup>105</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aġānī*, vol. III, pp. 965-68.

<sup>106</sup> Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī, *'Umdat al-Qāri Sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukārī*, vol. I (Egypt: 1392/1972), p. 71.

<sup>107</sup> Alois Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohamet*, vol. I (Berlin: 1861-1865), p. 78.

<sup>108</sup> Carl Brockelmann, *History of the Islamic People* (London: 1952), p. 14.

<sup>109</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aġānī*, vol. IV, p. 1345; Kayr al-Dīn Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, vol. II (Beirut: 1990), p. 23.

<sup>110</sup> Muslim, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Si'ir, bāb: 4; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, vol. VI, pp. 172, 73.

<sup>111</sup> Abdullah Draz, p. 150.

racess, and cultures.<sup>112</sup> As a result, they asked the Prophet to perform the miracles that former prophets did,<sup>113</sup> used Christianity against the *tawhīd* faith,<sup>114</sup> and saw the worship of Jesus as akin to worshipping their idols.<sup>115</sup>

For this reason, different religions in the Arabian Peninsula and some religious and cultural ideas in the Bible were spread among the *Jahiliyyah* people. However, the Prophet always approached the culture in this period with suspicion and tried to maintain distance from it. Therefore, it is unthinkable that the Prophet naively accepted those beliefs. At least, this can be said for the beginning years of Islam. As can be seen from some narrations,<sup>116</sup> in later years the Prophet did not see any harm in mentioning events from the *Jahiliyyah*. However, he compared the customs and traditions of the *Jahiliyyah* with the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* in the Islamic period, and they were either accepted or rejected. For example, *tawāf* practices from the *Jahiliyyah* were rejected,<sup>117</sup> crying and gathering for eating after the death of someone were prohibited and regarded as *Jahiliyyah* customs.<sup>118</sup> In this respect, Goldziher's (d. 1921) claim that, as a clever observer and someone who naturally appreciated ethical values, the Prophet adapted practices not known in his society that he encountered in his military expeditions, is an attempt to remove the Prophet from the source of revelation and to portray him as a person who only had access to human resources. The ideas of M. Hodgson (d. 1968), Henri Lammens, and David S. Margoliouth, who were very much influenced by Goldziher and Schacht (d. 1969) whereby Schacht claims that the major part of the *Sunnah* originated from the pre-Islamic Arab customs and traditions,<sup>119</sup> should be seen in line with this. However, these claims do not resemble the truth both historically and scientifically for the Prophet's attitude towards former communities and societies, including *Jahiliyyah* society, is described by the Qur'an.<sup>120</sup>

On the other hand, such diverse and mostly opposite faiths like idolatries, Sabians, Zoroastrianism, Jews, and Christians existing on the Arabian Peninsula cannot bring about a new current. For all of these religious groups thought they had the truth. If the Prophet preferred any of them and spoke of them, we would en-

<sup>112</sup> As mentioned above, among them were Waraqaḥ ibn Nawfal and another *hanifs* (followers of the belief of the Prophet Abraham before Islam) from Mecca and also some poets like Umayyah ibn Abi al-Salt Nadr ibn al-Ḥārith and Nābiga al-Dubaynī, who had used some subjects in their poems especially related to ancient religions and cultures (see Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, ed. Mustāfa al-Saqqā and others, vol. I (Cairo: 1375/1955), p. 300.

<sup>113</sup> Qur'an, 21:5.

<sup>114</sup> Qur'an 38:7.

<sup>115</sup> Qur'an 43:57-58.

<sup>116</sup> Al-Tirmidī, *al-Sunan*, al-Adab, bāb: 70; Ibn Abī Shayba, vol. VI, p. 173. See also Shātibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt fi Uṣul al-Sharī'a*, ed. Abdullah Draz, vol. IV, (Egypt: no date), p. 72.

<sup>117</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiza'*, (Cairo: 1982), pp. 124-25.

<sup>118</sup> Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, vol. III, pp. 389-90; Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, vol. III, p. 550.

<sup>119</sup> Marshall Hodgson, *Islām'in Serüveni*, trans. by: Alp Eker et al., vol. I (Istanbul: 1991), pp. 280-81. And for Lammens, Margoliouth, and Schacht see Fazlur Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History* (Karachi: 1965), p. 17.

<sup>120</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Ana Konularıyla Kur'an*, trans. by Alparslan Açıkgenç (Ankara: 1996), p. 262.

counter a mixture in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.<sup>121</sup> Even though the question remains as to by which light the Prophet without hesitation revealed countless properties of Allah, his relationship with the metaphysical world, and his teachings about what will happen to humankind, it is obvious that a reason without steering of the revelation cannot be that sure of him. Additionally, the Qur'an emphasizes at the beginning of the revelation that the Prophet was unaware of what was Book and what faith was.<sup>122</sup>

### *Story and Storytellers (Qussās)*

A story (*qissa*) is a literary genre that talks about different subjects for different purposes, provides information about good and bad things that happened to former communities, tells subtle jokes or fairy tales completely made up with no relation to reality.<sup>123</sup> Stories and storytelling that have literary, scientific, and sociological aspects are also important for our purposes because the *Jahiliyyah* Arabs had, in addition to poetry and the art of speech, as a socio-cultural product, the tradition of telling and listening to stories that bore elements of past religions and cultures,<sup>124</sup> for each poet, speaker, and fortune-teller of an Arabic tribe was also considered to be a storyteller (*qās*).<sup>125</sup>

One can find information in the literature that this tradition of storytelling continued among the Arabs with the Prophet's encouragement after the appearance of Islam.<sup>126</sup> In this way the tradition of storytelling among the *Jahiliyyah* Arabs continued orally, both in style and form, in the post-Islamic era. However, these storytellers found fertile soil when the Arabs came into close contact with first the Jewish culture and then other foreign resources after the conquest. Since stories have an important place in the Qur'an and the *hadiths*, the storytellers became a focal point in such an environment<sup>127</sup> and prepared the way for the *Jewish* narrations to be spread.<sup>128</sup>

When dealing with the stories in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, one sees that, in

<sup>121</sup> Qur'an 4:82.

<sup>122</sup> Qur'an 42:52. See also Qur'an, 93:7.

<sup>123</sup> Hasan Cirit, *Hadiste Vaaz, Kısacılık ve Kussās*, Marmara University, Ph.D. dissertation (İstanbul: 1997), p. 45.

<sup>124</sup> Cirit, *Hadiste Vaaz*, p. 47.

<sup>125</sup> Cirit, *Hadiste Vaaz*, p. 47.

<sup>126</sup> For a narration that could be a basis for this issue, see al-Nasāi, *al-Sunan*, al-Sahw, ḥadīṭ: 99. For the narrations of Nadr ibn al-Ḥārīṭ, one of the famous storytellers of the Quraysh, who narrated some stories and reports of Iranian kings for challenging to the Qur'an, see Ibn Hisham, *al-Sira*, vol. I, p. 300.

<sup>127</sup> Çetin, "Arap," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. III (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı), pp. 292-93; Cirit, *Hadiste Vaaz*, p. 48.

<sup>128</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Muqaddima fi Uşûl al-Tafsîr*, ed. Maḥmūd Nassār (Cairo: no date), p. 42.

addition to the studies<sup>129</sup> dealing with their literal and socio-cultural aspects, many concern the Jews and their prophets. As a matter of fact, scholars like Abraham Geiger and Joseph Horowitz use the occurrence of Jewish stories and names in the Qur'an as a basis for their claim<sup>130</sup> that the Prophet took these from Jewish culture. Because we already have dealt with this aspect of the issue, here we will discuss the argument of the influence of Jewish culture on the *hadiths* with respect to the role of the storytellers limited to the period of the companions (*al-sahābah*) and the followers (*al-tābiin*).

The first Western scholar we could determine to have indicated the role of the Jewish culture on the *hadiths* is Ignaz Goldziher. Because he probably believed that the Prophet himself wrote the Qur'an, he says that the Prophet used the word *qasas* and dates the (official) application of storytelling to the period of Omar. According to him, Omar first allowed Tamīm al-Dārī (40/660), who was a genuine storyteller, to tell stories to the people.<sup>131</sup> During the period of Umayyad Caliph Muāwiyah, Ka'b al-Akhbār continued to be a storyteller.<sup>132</sup> He then claims that as storytelling became widespread among the people and threatened religious perceptions and the *hadiths*, scholars who became aware of the situation accused the storytellers of being *kharijite*.<sup>133</sup>

As an example of his claims, Goldziher points to Nawf ibn Fadālah al-Biqālī, who is known as an unknown narrator<sup>134</sup> and about whom Ibn Abbās said: "*Kadzaba aduwwullah*" (the enemy of Allah lies). According to this, Saïd ibn Jubayr (95/713) went to Abdullah ibn Abbās and told him that Nawf claimed that the person between Moses and al-Khidir (a friend of Moses according to the Qur'an) is not the Jewish prophet Moses<sup>135</sup> as stated in *Sūra al-Kahf*.<sup>136</sup> Abdullah ibn Abbās criticized Nawf and said "*kadzaba aduwwullah*."<sup>137</sup> It has been stated that the statement of Ibn Abbās was not meant to asperse Nawf but to accentuate the

<sup>129</sup> For the influence of stories and storytellers on *hadiths* see the dissertation by Hasan Cirit, *Hadiste Vaaz, Kıssacılık ve Kussās* (note 118 above). This dissertation was published as *Halkın İslam Anlayışının Kaynakları* (Istanbul: 2002).

<sup>130</sup> Abraham Geiger, *Judaism and Islam* (New York: 1970), pp. 73-156; Joseph Horowitz, "Jewish Proper Names and Derivatives in the Koran," *HUCA*, vol. II, 1925, pp. 150-84.

<sup>131</sup> Aḥmad Amīn, *Fajr al-Islām*, pp. 158-59.

<sup>132</sup> Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, vol. II, p. 152.

<sup>133</sup> Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, II, p. 154.

<sup>134</sup> Cirit, *Hadiste Vaaz*, pp. 142-43.

<sup>135</sup> It must be said that Moses, who was studied by al-Khidr in this *hadith*, is not Moses ibn 'Imrān but Moses ibn Misa ibn Ifrāsīm ibn Yūsuf; see al-Nasāi, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, vol. VI, pp. 387; al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuhfat al-ahwazī bi Sharḥ al-Jami' al-Tirmidī*, ed. Abd al-Wahhāb Abd al-Laṭif, vol. VIII (Cairo: n.d.), pp. 588-89.

<sup>136</sup> Qur'an 18: 60-82.

<sup>137</sup> Al-Buḳārī, *al-Şaḥiḥ*, al-Tafsīr (18), bāb: 2-3; Muslim, *al-Şaḥiḥ*, al-Fadā'il, bāb: 170; al-Tirmidī, al-Tafsīr, bāb: 18; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, vol. V, pp. 117-18. See also Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, vol. VIII, pp. 262-65. It is also reported in *al-Şaḥiḥ* of Muslim that Ibn 'Abbas did not use the statement of "*Aduww Allah*=the enemy of Allah" but "*kaḍaba Nawf*=Navf lies" (see Muslim, *al-Şaḥiḥ*, al-Fadā'il, ḥadīḥ: 171). For additional information, see also the use of the statement of *kaḍaba* in the sense of "made a mistake," in Emin Āsıkkutlu, *Hadiste Ricāl Tenkidi* (Istanbul: 1997), pp. 36-9.

falseness by exaggerating it.<sup>138</sup>

Nabia Abbott, after drawing attention to the fact that the storytellers played an important role in propagating the *hadiths*, continues by stating that the Qur'an tells about past communities and prophets aided by fairy tale-like stories and folkloric elements found in the Bible. Abbot stresses the fact that the storytellers arose spontaneously and unofficially either from among *mawali* or Arabs, were accepted in the society, and that Umayyad caliphs like Mu'awiyah and Abdulmalik ibn Marwān (65-86/685-705) appointed official storytellers. He further claims that these storytellers told their stories emotionally and focused on motivating and encouraging aspects, and this in return caused this kind of narrations to be propagated and finally they became part of the *Sunnah* that is inherently variable in nature.<sup>139</sup> J. Pedersen studied the transfer of stories from past cultures told by the storytellers to the Islamic sources. Jan Knappert studied, in addition to the stories about past prophets, many cultural and folkloric elements, indicated the parallels between these and those found in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* and sought the origin of these stories in past cultures.<sup>140</sup> G.H.A. Juynboll emphasizes the relationship between the Jewish narrations and the stories of storytellers and states that the storytellers played an important role in the appearance of knowledge and narrations of past cultures in the *hadith* literature.<sup>141</sup> On the other hand, Ahmad Amin says that the storytellers brought many fairy tale-like and untrue narrations mainly from Judaism and Christianity and different communities into Muslim thought and opened the door for many false narrations to enter into the *hadiths*. As a source of all this information he points to Kā'b al-Akhbār and Wahb ibn al-Munabbih.<sup>142</sup>

Ali al-Qārī (1014/1605) and al-Munāwī (1031/1621) mainly, along with other Islamic scholars, interpreted the word "narrating" in the *hadith* "There is no harm for you in narrating from the Jews ..." in such a way that it paved the way for the storytellers. Perhaps, we can say that such interpretations of the *hadith* resulted in an over-consumption of the Jewish narrations that the storytellers needed as a source of fantasy.<sup>143</sup> While Ali al-Qārī says that the meaning of this *hadith*

<sup>138</sup> Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bārī*, vol. VIII, p. 265; al-Mubāraqfūrī, *Tuhfat al-ahwazī bi Sharh al-Jamī' al-Tirmidī*, vol. VIII, p. 589.

<sup>139</sup> Nabia Abbott, *Studies*, vol. II, pp. 14-15.

<sup>140</sup> Pedersen, "The Islamic Preacher, wā'iz, muḍakkir, qāṣṣ", in *Ignaz Goldziher Memorial Volume*, vol. I (Budapest: 1948), pp. 226-54; Jan Knappert, *Islamic Legends. Histories of the Heroes, Saints and Prophets of Islam* (Leiden: 1985), pp. 2-3.

<sup>141</sup> G.H.A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition: Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early Ḥadīth* (Cambridge: 1983), pp. 11-14.

<sup>142</sup> Ahmad Amīn, *Fajr al-Islām*, p. 160. Abū Sahba, a contemporary scholar, has pointed to the important role of the storytellers (*quṣṣas*) in the spreading of Jewish narrations. He also pointed to the influence of narrations by Abd Allah ibn Salām, Tamīm al-Dārī, Kā'b al-Akbār, and Wahb ibn Munabbih who converted to Islam from *Ahl al-kitāb* (see *al-Isrā'iliyyāt wa al-Mawzū'āt fī kutub al-Tafsīr* (Cairo: 1408), pp. 89-91.

<sup>143</sup> For the narrations on some statements of some former saints, wise individuals, and philosophers being used in Islamic literature as *Cadīts* by the storytellers, see al-Irāqī, *Fath al-muǧīl*, pp. 127-28; al-

is to provide the inspiring and fearsome stories in the Qur'an with details and to tell people the stories associated with shocking events,<sup>144</sup> al-Munāwī explains the *hadith* as: "It is not harmful to pass on story-like and inspiring information from the Jews even without an authentic chain ..." <sup>145</sup> It should not go unnoticed that these statements are very lenient and can lead to harmful consequences in the process of passing on story-like and inspiring information related to Jewish culture. As a matter of fact, Ibn Hadjar saw the attitude of the mystics/*sufis* who allowed the fabrication of *hadiths* for inspiring and discouraging purposes as a result of ignorance. According to him "inspiring and discouraging" is part of *shariah*.<sup>146</sup> Abū Zahw, one of the *hadith* scholars in the last century, complained about the lenient attitude of some of the scholars in the interpretation of the aforementioned *hadith* and disapproved of this behavior.<sup>147</sup>

In essence, it can be said that in the first and second century of the *Hijrah* this lenient attitude led to Jewish stories becoming widespread in Islamic society. Famous individuals passing on Jewish narrations and thus also becoming famous as storytellers or the fact that storytellers reported that they had read past (holy) books indicates that the storytelling preachers played an important role in this process. As a matter of fact Khatīb al-Bagdādī draws attention to the fact that the storytellers played an important role in passing on harmful and untrue narrations.<sup>148</sup> Storytelling preachers who appeared in mosques or public places for preaching purposes used the Jewish and Christian sources to provide the concise stories in the Qur'an with detail. As a result, many fairy tales unrelated to Islam spread among the Muslims and appeared in the history, *tafsir*, and *hadith* literature.<sup>149</sup> For example, one of the first *mufasssirs* and known for his storytelling in the Mosque of Marw<sup>150</sup> is Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (150/767) who included a great deal of information from Jewish culture in his *tafsir* and narrations, which is unacceptable from the point of view of reason and *shariah*.<sup>151</sup>

It is possible to agree with Goldziher to some extent in this regard, but his attempts to accuse all storytellers of bad intentions and to put the Islamic narration

Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-Rāwī fī Sharḥ taqrīb al-Nawawī*, ed. 'Abd al-Wahhāb 'Abd al-Latīf, I (Beirut: 1399/1979), p. 287; Yasar Kandemir, *Mevzū Hadisler* (Ankara: 1991), pp. 172-75.

<sup>144</sup> Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī al-Qārī, *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ Sharḥ Mishkāt al-maṣābīḥ*, vol. I (n.p.: n.d.), p. 218. See also, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī, *al-Tarātib al-Idāriyya*, trans. by Ahmet Özel, vol. III (Istanbul: 1990), p. 46.

<sup>145</sup> Al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadīr sharḥ Jāmi' al-ṣaḡīr*, ed. Aḥmad Abd al-Salām, vol. III (Beirut: 1415/1994), pp. 206-7; al-Kattānī, *al-Tarātib al-Idāriyya*, vol. III, p. 46.

<sup>146</sup> Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Sharḥ al-Nuḥba Nuzhat al-naẓar*, ed. Nūr al-Dīn 'Itr (Damascus: 1414/1993), p. 43.

<sup>147</sup> Muḥammad Abū Zahw, *al-Ḥadīṭ wa al-Muḥaddiṭūn* (Beirut: 1404/1984), p. 190.

<sup>148</sup> Al-Kaṭīb al-Bagdādī, *al-Jāmi' li Aḳlāq al-Rāwī*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Ṭahhān, vol. II (Riyad: 1403/1983), pp. 164-8.

<sup>149</sup> Ramzī Na'naa, *al-Isrā'iliyyāt wa aṭaruhā fī kutub al-Tafsīr* (Beirut: 1390/1970), p. 192.

<sup>150</sup> Shams al-Dīn al-Dahabī, *Mizān al-'Iṭidal fī Naqd al-Rijāl*, ed. Muḥammad al-Bijāwī, vol. IV (N.p.: Dār iḥyā' al-kutub al-'Ilmiyya, n.d.), p. 173.

<sup>151</sup> Ḥusayn al-Dahabī, *al-Isrā'iliyyāt*, p. 90.

tradition in a suspicious position are wrongheaded. For the *hadith* criticizers discovered Muqātil ibn Sulaymān attempting to use the chain tradition to reinforce his views that were false and related to Jewish culture and saw him almost unanimously as a liar and a *matrūq* narrator.<sup>152</sup> These *hadith* criticizers referred to<sup>153</sup> the relation of the narrators in their books with the past holy books in general and in particular with the Jewish holy books by stating “*qaraa al-Tawrāt wa’l-Injil*,” “*kāna yaqrau’l-kutub*,” or “*qaraa’l-kutub*”<sup>154</sup> as warnings to the coming generations.

However, if we put exceptions aside, reporting from former (holy) books and cultures was not considered as a point of disparagement for the narrator.

<sup>152</sup> Al-Buḳārī, *al-Tārīk al-kabīr*, ed. al-Sayyid Hāshim al-Nadwī, vol. VIII (n.p.: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), p. 14; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl*, vol. VIII (Beirut: 1371/1952), pp. 354-55; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-Majrūhīn min al-Muḥaddīṭīn wa al-Ḍuafa wa al-Matrūkīn*, ed. Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Zāyed, vol. III (Halep: 1402), pp. 14-15; Al-Kaṭīb al-Baḡdādī, *Tārīk Baḡdād*, vol. XIII (Beirut: n.d.), p. 161; Shams al-Dīn al-Dahabī, *Mizān al-’itidal fī Naqd al-Rijāl*, ed. Muḥammad al-Bijāwī, vol. IV (n.p.: Dār iḥyā’ al-kutub al-’ilmiyya, n.d.), pp. 173-74.

<sup>153</sup> For information on *hadith* scholars about such aspects of narrators see Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, vol. VII, p. 452; al-Buḳārī, *al-Tārīk al-kabīr*, vol. IV, p. 324; Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mizzī, *Tahḏīb al-Kamāl*, ed. Bashshār ‘Awaḍ Ma’rūf, vol. IV (Beirut: 1413/1992) p. 314; Shams al-Dīn al-Dahabī, *al-Kāshif fī ma’rifat man Lah Riwāya fī al-Kutub al-Sitta*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Awwāma, vol. I (Jeddah: 1413/1992), p. 278; vol. II, p. 31; al-Dahabī, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, Shu’ayb al-Arna’ūt and others, vol. IV (Beirut: 1406/1986), p. 413; Ibn Ḥajar al-’Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mizān*, vol. II (Beirut: 1406/1986), p. 316; vol. III, p. 150.

<sup>154</sup> Statements like *yaqra’ al-kutub* and *qurā’ al-kutub*, in which the term *al-kutub* is mentioned as absolute, is used in the sources, especially in the *jarḥ* and *ta’dīl* books (the books about the criticizing of narrators of *hadiths*) in the majority of them it is used in the sense of “reading of ancient religious and cultural books.” Hence this is also possible for the use of those statements about persons like Warāqa, Ka’b al-Aḳbār and Wahb ibn Munabbih, who are famous for their readings of those ancient holy books (see Ibn Abī Kātim/Hātim, *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl*, vol. IX, pp. 23; Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Tuqaṭ*, ed. al-sSayyid Sharaf al-Dīn Aḥmad, vol. I (n.p.: Daru’l-fikr, 1395/1975), p. 42; vol. V, pp. 333, 487; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb mashāhīr ‘Ulamā’ al-Amṣār*, ed. Manfred Fleischhammer (Beirut: n.d.), pp. 122-23). For an exception to what we have argued see al-Dahabī, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. IX, p. 448.