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John F. A. Sawyer

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BLACKWELL PUBLISHING
350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA
9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK
550 Swanston Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia

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First published 2006 by Blackwell Publishing Ltd

1 2006

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The Blackwell companion to the Bible and culture / edited by John F. A. Sawyer.

p. cm.—(Blackwell companions to religion)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-4051-0136-3 (hardback : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 1-4051-0136-9 (hardback : alk. paper) 1. Bible—Influence. 2. Christianity and culture—Biblical teaching. 3. Bible—Criticism, interpretation, etc. I. Sawyer, John F. A. II. Series.

BS538.7.B62 2006

220.09—dc22

2005034703

A catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library.

Set in 10 on 12.5 pt Photina
by SNP Best-set Typesetter Ltd, Hong Kong
Printed and bound in Singapore
by COS Printers Pte Ltd

The publisher's policy is to use permanent paper from mills that operate a sustainable forestry policy, and which has been manufactured from pulp processed using acid-free and elementary chlorine-free practices. Furthermore, the publisher ensures that the text paper and cover board used have met acceptable environmental accreditation standards.

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CHAPTER 9

Islam

Stephen N. Lambden

In the context of current anti-Islamic reverberations and the 'clash' (to be loose and imprecise) between the Jewish-Christian-Western and the Islamic-Eastern 'civilizations', few subjects can today be regarded as of greater significance than an empathetic, balanced consideration of the positive, symbiotic and intertextual relationships between the Bible and the Qur'ān, the foundational scriptural books of Judaism, Christianity, Islam and a plethora of associated religious and spiritual movements. For more than a millennium and a half, the alleged differences, contradictions and idiosyncratic dimensions of the Bible and the Qur'ān have been vociferously and voluminously mouthed and penned by triumphalist Muslim polemicists and Islamophobic Western missionaries and orientalists. A consciousness and appreciation of the oneness of humankind and the legitimacy and interrelated beauty of its multi-faceted religiosity and scriptural legacy should today lead towards a renewed respect for the moral and inspirational value of both the Bible and the Qur'ān. Both these sacred texts claim to be divinely inspired and each has generated a massive amount of expository literature over hundreds of years. Each should be taken seriously in a spirit of humble fellowship, and new pathways to mutual appreciation be assiduously explored.

A twenty-first-century global scriptural perspective can attempt to redress aspects of the aforementioned age-old prejudices and imbalances by focusing upon respected and established modern perspectives about the Bible and the Qur'ān as well as complementary insights generated by past exegetes. Academic perspectives and theological methodologies incorporating new, non-prejudiced, intertextual and related hermeneutics must be allowed to speak out in the arena of dialogue and mutual understanding (Hary 2000; McAuliffe et al. 2001–5, 2003; Reeves 2004). We know far more about the Bible and the Qur'ān and their centuries of transmission, translation and interpretation today than was ever possible in the past. The modern editing and study of ignored and newly discovered scriptural and related texts and mss. in a plethora of languages (including Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Ethiopic, Syriac and Arabic) reveal data that were unimagined by past scholars and exegetes. Methodological approaches and

historico-critical tools have been developed and refined over the past few centuries that today permit a more balanced and open-minded, potentially insightful evaluation of these many new materials and the light they throw upon issues in biblical and the related field of Qur'ānic studies. Qur'ānic studies and Muslim dialogue would be enriched by a greater awareness of modern biblical studies and associated academic disciplines.

The study of the 'Dead Sea Scrolls' discovered from 1947, along with the numerous other biblical and related finds from the Judaeen desert, has revolutionized biblical studies and thrown much suggestive light upon Qur'ānic studies (Tov 2002, in Herbert and Tov 2002; Rabin [1957] 2001), as has the study of the fourth-century CE Nag Hammadi codices discovered in Upper Egypt in 1945, and other Hermetic and Gnostic writings. Recent research on Jewish and Christian pseudepigraphical writings, as evidenced in the *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* (Issue 1 1987) and the massive work of DiTommaso, *A Bibliography of Pseudepigrapha Research* (2001), has thrown new light on elements in the Qur'ān, Tafsīr (Commentary), Ḥadīth (Tradition) and related literatures. The Qur'ānic Solomon narratives (Q. 21:82, 34:12–14), for example, are illuminated by select passages within the evolving *Testament of Solomon* cycle (c. second–ninth century CE?), not unknown in Syriac and Arabic versions also (Harding and Alexander 1999). The discovery of early (first–third century AH) Qur'ān codices (*maṣāḥif*), 'manuscripts' and other fragments in Ṣan'ā' in 1972 (Puin, in Wild 1996; Leehmuis, 'Codices of the Qur'ān', in E-Q 1:347–51) should also be mentioned at this point, especially since the study of early Qur'ān texts and their paleographical dating, variant readings and transmission history has taken major leaps forward in the past decade (Déroche, 'Manuscripts of the Qur'ān', E-Q 3:253–75).

Despite such discoveries which have opened up new vistas and challenges within both biblical and Qur'anic studies, medieval and pre-twentieth-century attitudes still dominate much of the Jewish-Christian-Muslim debate and dialogue. Muslim scholars, for instance, seldom refer to the modern findings of western biblical scholars, often reprinting anti-biblical material based on dated and inaccurate medieval polemic. Attitudes considered quintessentially biblical or Qur'ānic-Islamic need reappraisal in the light of the above-mentioned finds and related advances in Semitic scriptural research. Many essential doctrinal, textual and hermeneutical ideas need rethinking and rearticulation at both the academic and theological level, if the true relationship between Jewish, Islamic and Christian traditions is to be properly understood and appreciated.

The Bible and the Qur'ān

Though not simply a new Bible, there is little doubt that the Qur'ān is in various ways neo-biblical. Its opening ordering of the sūrahs ('sections'), as a cluster of 'seven long sūrahs', reflects the initial gravitas of a five-fold Pentateuch (or Torah) and a four-fold Gospel mode of scriptural commencement. Frolov in this connection translates the following ḥadīth of the Prophet, 'I was given the seven long suraḥs instead of the Torah, the suraḥs of a hundred verses instead of the Gospel . . .' (Frolov 2002: 194). Although

echoes of the Bible permeate the Qur'an, very little Jewish or Christian scripture is directly cited or straightforwardly alluded to, a fact reflected in the Islamic doctrine that the Qur'an both expounds and supersedes past sacred books as 'Archetypal Scripture' (*umm al-kitāb*, 'Mother Book'; Q.13:39; 43:4, etc.). The Qur'ān can thus be viewed as an Arabic intertextual yet metatextual or supratextual universe which both interacts with and transcends the Bible. It would be difficult to adequately fathom its historical and scriptural depths outside of a knowledge of its biblical substrate. Though the Qur'ān transcends the Bible, this and related sacred books remain hauntingly omnipresent within it.

Though the Jewish and Christian Bibles were known at least orally to Muhammad and his contemporaries, they were largely bypassed. Most scholars today affirm the Arabian prophet's considerable awareness of oral channels of biblical and post-biblical religious tradition, but hold back from affirming the contemporary availability of an Arabic Bible. Transcending the limitations of biblical Scripture, the Qur'ān presents itself as a revealed (*waḥy*) text communicated piecemeal in history to Muhammad between c.610 and 632 CE. It is a collection of divine revelations in Arabic, new and pre-eminently 'clear' (*mubīn*), which abrogate biblical Scripture and claim a miraculous inimitability (*i'jāz*).

The Islamic Bible as sanctioned in the Qur'ān includes four bodies of biblically related scripture:

(1) *Antediluvian and later Ṣuḥuf* ('scriptural pages', Q. 20:133; 53:37; 74:52; 87:8–19).

Muslims believe in pre-Mosaic divine revelations to numerous prophets who lived between the time of Adam (prophet and the first man in Islam) and the biblical-qur'ānic Moses. In the Qur'ān and elsewhere, such writings are several times referred to as (pl.) *ṣuḥuf* (sing. *ṣaḥīfah*), loosely, scriptural 'leaves', 'pages' or 'scrolls'). This is succinctly expressed in the 'History of Prophets and Kings' of al-Ṭabārī (d. 923):

It is said that the leaves [ṣuḥuf] which God revealed to Abraham were ten in number. I heard this [related] from . . . Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī: I asked, 'O Messenger of God! How many books [*kitāb*] did God reveal?' He said, 'One hundred and four books. To Adam he revealed ten leaves [*ṣaḥā'if*], to Seth fifty leaves, and to Enoch thirty leaves. To Abraham he revealed ten leaves [*ṣaḥā'if*] and also the Torah, the Injīl, the Zabūr, and the Furqān.' I said, 'O Messenger of God! What were the leaves of Abraham?' He answered, 'They were all proverbs . . . And they included parables.' (Ṭabārī, *Tārīkh* [1997] I:187; trans. Brinner, *History II*:130–1)

Numerous other Islamic sources register similar traditions which have something of a basis in the vast Jewish, Christian, Gnostic pseudepigraphical literature ascribed to pre-Mosaic figures. These include, for example, writings such as an Apocalypse and Testament of Adam, three or more books of Enoch and writings ascribed to Noah (the *Sepher ha-Razim*, 'Book of Mysteries') and Abraham (*Sepher Yetsirah*, 'Book of Formation'). Islamic literatures ascribe many Arabic texts to these and other antediluvian figures as well as later sages and prophets. Most await translation and study.

(2) *The Tawrāt ('Torah', 'Pentateuch', 'Hebrew Bible') of Moses.*

In the Qur'ān, the term *Tawrāt* (18 times) often indicates ancient scripture sacred to Jews. In the *Tawrāt* the advent of Muhammad as *al-nabī al-ummī* 'the Gentile-unlettered prophet' is predicted (Q. 7:156) and many attempts have been made to identify this reference. The *Tawrāt* is only a few times loosely cited: for example, Exodus 21:25–6 at Q. 5:45a ('hand' and 'foot' replace 'nose' and 'ear'), and Genesis 32:33 (25) where Jacob–Israel is said to have allowed 'all food' to the 'children of Israel' except what Israel (Jacob) 'forbade unto himself' (cf. Q. 3:87). It has been recently been suggested that the Prophet introduced a revised form of the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:1–17; Deut. 5:6–21) in Qur'ān 17:22–39 and 6:151–3 though this has no clear Islamic precedent (Brinner 1986; Lewinstein, E-Q 1:365–7). Muhammad, it might be suggested, could have been made aware of the *Tawrāt* through his companion Zayd ibn Thābit (d. 655 or 675/6) who had received instruction in Hebrew (and Syriac) at a Jewish school (*midrās*).

Post-qur'ānic Islamic literatures contain many thousands of *Tawrāt* quotations, many of which are not to be found either in the Pentateuch or any other biblical text. An example of this is to be found the *Kitāb al-Jalāl wa'l-jamāl* 'Book of the Divine Majesty and Beauty' of Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī (d.1240). Commenting upon Q. 51:56, he quotes the following extra-qur'ānic revelation (*ḥadīth qudsī*) allegedly contained in 'His [God's] Torah' (*tawrāt*):

God . . . revealed in his *tawrāt*, 'O Son of Adam, I created everything for thy sake and I created thee for My sake. So do not subjugate what I created for My sake to that which I created for thine own sake.' (Ibn al-'Arabī, *Rasā'il*, 15)

Note the use here of the biblical phrase *yā ibn ādam* ('O Son of Man'). Ibn al-'Arabī does not appear to cite the canonical Bible but often quotes non-canonical Islamo-biblical citations from pre-Islamic prophets.

The Q. also refers to divine revelations to Moses as *alwāḥ* (sing. *lawḥ*) scriptural 'Tablets' (Q. 7:145–51 cf. Exod. 24:12), *kitāb* 'the Book' and *al-Furqān* 'the Criterion' (Q. 21:49). Muslim commentators have given rich interpretations to the 'Tablets' given to Moses on Sinai. The wide-ranging *Fihrist* 'Bibliographical Compendium' of the probably Persian Shī'ī, Baghdadī book dealer, Abū'l-Faraj Ishāq b. Warrāq al-Nadīm (d. 990) records a great deal relating to the Bible and related traditions including the fact that a certain Aḥmad had it that the *alwāḥ* 'tablets' revealed to Moses on Sinai were 'green' in colour with the writing on them 'red like the rays of the sun' (Fihrist, 38/Dodge, 43). In his seminal *al-Insān al-kāmil* . . . 'The Perfect Man . . .', the Shī'īte Sufī 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. c.1428) writes: 'God sent down the *Tawrāt* unto Moses on nine *alwāḥ* (cf. Q. 17:101), and commanded him to communicate seven of them and abandon two . . . The [seven] *alwāḥ* contained the sciences ('*ulūm*) of the ancients and moderns.' In view of the description of the *Tawrāt* in Q. 5:46, al-Jīlī also has it that the first two *alwāḥ* were characterized by 'Light' and 'Guidance' (Insān, 1:114). Elsewhere, it is said that God sent down to Moses 'nine Tablets' but commanded him to divulge only seven of them. Two were made of 'Light', the *lawḥ al-rubūbiyya* 'the tablet of Lordship' and the

lawḥ al-qadr ‘the tablet of Destiny’, and were set aside. The other seven were made of marble, each exemplifying a divine quality, save the seventh which had to do with guidance on the religious path:

Tablet 1 = *al-nūr* (Light)

Tablet 2 = *al-hudā* (Guidance) (cf. Q. 5:44)

Tablet 3 = *al-ḥikma* (Wisdom)

Tablet 4 = *al-taqwā* (Piety – the Fear of God)

Tablet 5 = *al-ḥukm* (Justice)

Tablet 6 = *al-ʿubūdiyya* (Servitude)

Tablet 7 = ‘The explication of the way of felicity as opposed to the way of misfortune [distress] and the clarification of what is foremost’ (1:114–15).

This, al-Jīlī asserts, is the substance of what God commanded Moses to instruct the people.

The huge and widely respected early nineteenth-century commentary of the ‘Alīd Sunnī Abū al-Thanā’, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ālūsī (d. 1854) also provides detailed comments upon the tablets which God gave to Moses on Sinai. Expounding the words, ‘And We wrote for him [Moses] upon the Tablets something of everything (Q. 7:145a), Ālūsī records various opinions as to the number of tablets, their substance, their scope and their writer:

[Regarding] their number, it is said that there were ten and [also that there were] seven or two . . . the tablets were [made of] green emerald. The Lord . . . commanded Gabriel and he brought them from [the Garden of] Eden . . . Others say that they were [made] of ruby . . . I say that they were of emerald . . . It is related from the Prophet, ‘The Tablets which were sent down unto Moses were from the Lote-Tree of Paradise (*sidr al-jannat*) and the length of the Tablet(s) was twelve cubits. (*Rūḥ al-maʿānī* V:55)

(3) *The Zabūr* (‘Psalter’, ‘Psalms’).

The term *zabūr* designates the revealed book of 150 (or so) ‘Psalms’, attributed to David (alone) in Islamic literatures (Q. 4:161; 17:57; 21:105). It may reflect the Hebrew term *mizmôr* (‘Psalm’) or be a popular general designation for this Davidic part of scripture (Jeffery 1938: 148–9). The plural *zabur* means ‘scripture’ in general (Q. 26:196 etc.). Psalm 37:29a (cf. 37:9b, 11a) as a citation from the *Zabūr* is quoted at Qurʾān 21:105b, ‘My righteous servants who shall inherit the earth’. This stands out as the only fairly literal biblical citation in the Qurʾān. During the first Islamic centuries, versions of the Psalms were much cherished by Muslim philosophers, ascetics, Sufis and others. *Zabūr* texts were early translated, even recreated into Arabic (Schippers, ‘Psalms’, E-Q 4:314–18), most notably perhaps by Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. 728 or later) who composed a still extant and variously entitled *Kitāb Zabūr Dāwūd* (Khouri 1972: 258f. and EI² article). As with the *Tawrāt*, Islamic literature contains large numbers of *Zabūr* citations often with no identifiable relationship to the biblical Psalms. In his commentary

on the Shīʿī ḥadīth compendia of Kulaynī, Ṣadra al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 1640) cites the *Zabūr* with the following introduction:

And as for the *Zabūr*, God (exalted be He), said [therein], ‘O David! Say unto the learned [Rabbis] of the children of Israel and their monks: “Address such people as are God-fearing. And if you do not find among them the fear of God, then converse with the learned ones. And if you do not find it with them, converse with the wise. The fear of God, knowledge and wisdom are three realities which exhibit a degree of oneness such that if but one of them is absent in any one of My creatures, I have desired his destruction.”’ (Sh-Kafi 1992, vol. 3: 99–100)

Illustrative of a developed Islamic view of the *Zabūr* are the following statements of ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī. For him, *Zabūr* is a Syriac term meaning ‘book’. It was sent down for David, as the most sensitive of the people and one especially good and virtuous. A recluse, hardly appearing before his people, he only made the *Zabūr* known to a select group. It mostly consisted of religious exhortations and praises of God. It is without a religious law (*sharīʿa*) save for a few specified verses (al-Insān, 1:121–4).

(4) *The Injīl* (‘*Evangel*’, *Gospel[s]*) of *Jesus*.

Twelve times used in the Qur’ān, the Qur’ānic Arabic *Injīl* translates the Greek *evangelion* ‘good news’, ‘gospel’ (cf. the Ethiopic cognate *wangēl*, ‘Evangel’, Jeffery 1938: 71–2). It evidently signifies the original *kerygma* of Jesus as well as the Scripture of Christians at the time of the Prophet. Though now lost, an Arabic *Injīl* probably existed around or just after the time of the Prophet (EI² *Indjīl*). Muhammad may have had some exposure to New Testament concepts through Warāqah b. Nawfal, the biblically learned cousin of his first wife, Khadījah bint al-Khuwaylid (d. c. 619 CE) (Ibn Ishāq-Guillaume, 83). From Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. c. 732) and Ibn Ishāq (d. 765) to the polymath Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī (d. 1051) and the mystically inclined ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111) among many others, Muslim thinkers throughout the centuries have cited the New Testament in biblical or Islamo-biblical forms. Thousands of texts ascribed to Jesus or the *Injīl* exist in the Islamic sources. They often express Islamic perspectives rather than anything Jesus might have uttered, but must still be viewed as important expressions of Islamic spirituality. Sayings of Jesus or sayings from the *Injīl* are especially significant in Islamic mysticism and Shīʿī gnosis (Asín Palacios 1919, 1926; Ayoub 1976; Khalidi 2001).

A one-time disciple of the unworldly ‘Umayyad preacher Abū Sa’īd Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 728), the important early Iraqi preacher and moralist Abū Yaḥyā Mālīk b. Dīnār (d. c. 747) frequently cited Jewish sources and was greatly influenced by Christianity (Pellat EI² VI:266–7). Known as the *Rāhib* (monk-ascetic) of the Arabs, he is presented by Tor Andrae as the Muslim originator of the Islamo-biblical version of the following story of Jesus, the disciples and the dead dog:

Jesus and his disciples walked past a dead dog. The disciples said: ‘How disgustingly he stinks!’ But Jesus said: ‘How white his teeth are!’ In this manner he exhorted them not to speak ill of anyone. (Isfahani, Ḥilyā 2:283 trans. Andrae [1947] 1987:17)

Versions of this story are found in the writings of various Persian poets including the *mathnawī* poem entitled *Bustān* ('Orchard') of Shaykh 'Abū 'Abd Allāh Sa'dī of Shīrāz (d. c.1292). A poetical version is also found in the *Khamsah* of Nizāmī: 'Even pearls are dark before the whiteness of his [the dead dog's] teeth!' (trans. Alger, Poetry of the Orient: 70; Khalidi 2001: 127).

The deeply spiritual and intellectual mystic Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 1240) quite frequently cited the Injīl, though rarely, if ever, the canonical Bible. He claimed mystic intercourse with the celestial Jesus which evidently made concrete biblical consultation and citation unnecessary. Jesus, the fountainhead of the Injīl, converted him, taught him and ever watched over this deeply qur'ānocentric mystic (Futuhat vol. III: 341; vol. II: 49; Addas 2000: 25–6). Islamo-biblical pericopae relating to Jesus or the Injīl are found in the writings of many Shī'ī sages, philosophers and theologians. Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 1640) attributes the following words to Jesus, which obviously say more about Mullā Ṣadrā or his source than anything Jesus himself might have uttered:

Out of the community of Muhammad . . . are the '*ulamā*' (the learned), *ḥukamā*' (the wise, philosophers). In view of (their) [legal] comprehension (*fiqh*) they are even as prophets (*anbiyā*'). They will be made content by God with but little of providence (*al-rizq*) and God will be satisfied with them through a mere token of their action. They will assuredly enter Paradise through [their uttering] 'There is no God but God'. (Sh-Kafi 3:100)

For many disciples of Ibn al-'Arabī in particular, both the *Tawrāt* and the Injīl anticipate the Qur'ān. They become quintessentially proto-qur'ānic writings mystically registered in the Qur'ān, just as the whole Qur'ān was thought to have been registered in the *basmalah*, its first letter 'b' or its dot as the alphabetic locus of created Reality and the divine Word. 'Abd al-Raḥman Jāmī (d. 1492), like other Sufīs of the school of Ibn al-'Arabī including al-Jīlī (d. c.1428: *al-Insān*, 1:111–14), expressed this in the 28th section of his composite Arabic-Persian *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ* (The Deliverance of the Texts), which comments upon aspects of Ibn al-'Arabī's *Naqsh al-fuṣūṣ* (The Imprint of the Bezels). Focusing upon the mysteries of the 'bezel' relative to 'the peerless wisdom in the Muhammadan Word', the Qur'ān is equated with the Logos-like *naḥs* ('Self') and *ḥaqīqa* (Reality) of Muhammad seen as

a singular expression of the combination of the entirety of the divine books. He said, 'God revealed one hundred and four books from heaven.' Then he deposited the knowledge of these one hundred in these four; that is, the *Tawrāt*, the *Injīl*, the *Zabūr* and the *Furqān* 'Criterion' (= the Qur'ān). Then he deposited the knowledge of these four in the Qur'ān. He then deposited the knowledge of the Qur'ān in the substance of its [114] sūrah. Then he deposited the substance of its sūrah into *al-Fātiḥa* 'the opening Sura'. Whoso has a knowledge of the commentary (*tafsīr*) on has a knowledge of the commentary upon all the revealed books of God. Whosoever recited it (*al-Fātiḥa*) it is as if he had recited the *Tawrat*, the *Injīl*, the *Zabūr* and the *Furqān*. (Jāmī', *Naqd*: 275)

Jāmī's mystical conflation of all the revealed books in this way, so that the substance of the Bible as contained in the *Tawrāt*, *Zabūr* and *Injīl* is spiritually subsumed within the essence of the Qur'ān, to some degree, rendered biblical citation and knowledge

secondary or unnecessary. It also highlights the essential 'oneness' of Abrahamic, biblical-qur'ānic sacred writ (Lambden 2002).

Aside from the Sufi mystical appropriation of the Injīl and other pre-Islamic scriptures, Shī'ī ḥadīth collections include texts that establish a close connection between pre-Islamic scripture and the authoritative Being of various (Twelver Shī'ī) Imams as loci of Islamic authority and persons truly biblically aware. The Imams and especially the twelfth messianic Qā'im ('Ariser') or Mahdī inherit the real pre-Islamic scripture and Abrahamic-Isrā'īliyyāt traditions as well as the secrets of future events either in oral, mystical ways or in the form of varieties of an inscribed, though 'unwritten', scroll known as the *Jafr* (lit. inscribed cow-hide) ('Ali, *Kitab al-jafr*; al-Bursi, *Mashariq*, 94; Mulla Sadra, *Sh-Kafi* 2: 85–9; Majlisi, *Bihar*² 1: 238f.; 47:270ff.). The future messianic Qā'im is expected to appear in possession of varieties of this *Jafr*, including divinatory dimensions of the 'ilm al-ḥurūf, the qabbalistic 'science of letters' or gematric prognostication. According to Imam Ja'far al-Šādiq (d. c.765) and others, there were two types of *Jafr*: (1) *al-jafr al-abyaḍ* 'the white jafr' with pure recensions of the *Ṣuḥuf* of Abraham, the *Tawrāt* of Moses, the *Zabūr* of David and the *Injīl* of Jesus as well as the *mushaf* (Scroll) of Fātimah; and (2) *al-jafr al-aḥmar* 'the red jafr', a bag containing the weaponry of the prophet Muhammad or of the messianic Qā'im as the bearer of the sword.

'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī's consideration of the Injīl also includes the following interesting passage,

God sent down the Injīl unto Jesus in the Syriac language and it is recited in seventeen languages. The beginning of the Injīl is 'In the Name and the Father and the Mother and the Son' like the beginning of the Qur'ān, 'In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate'. His community takes this utterance (*al-kalām*) according to its outer sense. They suppose that the Father and the Mother and the Son are tantamount to the Spirit, Mary and Jesus. Thus they say: 'God is the third of three (Q. 5:73) and they do not realize that the intention of 'the Father' is the name Allāh (God). And the 'Mother' is His Being, the Divine Essence which is expressive thereof through the substance of Reality. And in the 'Son' is the 'Book' which is indicative of absolute existence for he is the subsidiary and outcome of the substance of His Being. Hence God, exalted be He, says, 'and with Him is the Archetypal Book (*umm al-kitāb*)' (Q. 13:39b). (al-Jīlī, *al-Insān* 1: 143–4)

The real Injīl is here painted in distinctly proto-qur'ānic terms. The true Gospel must be expressive of Islamic perspectives and be in the language of Jesus, assumed to be Syriac-Aramaic as it is in several other medieval and some later Islamic sources. The original Injīl was thought to have been written in Hebrew or Syriac (Aramaic) being replaced by inadequate Greek Gospels, or texts in other languages. Such a viewpoint was expressed, for example, by numerous medieval and later writers, including al-Jāhiz (d. 869), 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 1025), and al-Shahrestānī (d. 1153). Established New Testament scholarship affirms that the four canonical Gospels were originally written in Greek though the existence of earlier Aramaic or Hebrew texts has been voiced since the first Christian centuries and is today fundamental to those 'criteria for authenticity' surrounding the scholarly quest for the genuine, Aramaic kerygma or logia of Jesus (Casey 1998, 2002; Peterson 1989). As indicated in the above passage, it was following and developing

Qur'ānic polemic that Muslim scholars contested Christian doctrines, including the Trinity, Incarnation, Sonship, Atonement, Crucifixion and Resurrection, etc. Existing New Testament texts were often viewed as not being proto-Islamic enough as well as textually corrupt, indirect representations of the original Injīl.

The always singular Qur'ānic Injīl (Gospel – not Gospels) may refer to a unified original Gospel. Such a text is believed by Muslims to have been revealed to Jesus though he is not known to have written or personally directed the writing of anything (cf. though Rev. 1:1f.). The Injīl may have something of a prototype in Tatian's (d. 185 CE) *Diatessaron*, a conflation of the four gospels into a continuous narrative, written around the year 170 CE, and widely used in Syriac-speaking churches until the adoption of the four separate Gospels probably in the fifth century CE (see Peterson 2001). The Injīl of the Qur'ān is assumed to be identical to the Gospel in the hands of the Prophet's Christian contemporaries (Q. 5:47).

Statements are attributed to the Shī'ī Imams which are interesting in the above connection. The first, sixth, seventh and eighth Shī'ī Imams are presented in various Shī'ī sources including the *Iḥtijāj* (Religious Disputation) compilations of al-Ṭabarsī (d. c.1153) and Majlisī (*Bihar*² vols 9–10) as having an impressive knowledge of the Bible and of the Jewish and Christian religions. In Ibn Bābūya al-Qummī's (d. 901) *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* ('Book of the Divine Unity', c.950), there is an account of the conversion of the (now unknown) Christian Patriarch Bārīha by the eighth Imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim (d. 799) and the Shī'ī theologian Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 796). The Imam is presented as having an unsurpassed knowledge of *al-kitāb* 'the Book' (Bible, New Testament) and its *ta'wīl* 'exegesis'. He is said to have recited the Injīl/Gospel in Christ-like fashion and explained to the astounded Bārīha that 'We [the Imams] have the [Abrahamic] books as a legacy from them. We recite them as they did, and pronounce them as they did' (*Tawḥīd*, 275; trans. Thomas 1988: 54ff., 60). In a debate with the (Armenian) Patriarch (*al-jāthilīq*), the Jewish Exilarch (*rā'is al-jālūt*) and others (Ibn Bābūya, *Tawḥīd*, 417), Imam 'Alī al-Riḍā' (d. 818) is said to have shown his expertise in all past sacred scriptures in their original languages (Hebrew, Persian, Greek, etc.). He exhibited a perfect knowledge of biblical prophecies fulfilled in Islam, for example, and stunned the Jewish Exilarch by reciting verses of the Torah and a conflation of Isaiah 21:7 with parts of Psalm 149 (*Tawḥīd*, trans. Thomas, 1988: 73 n.53, 77). When asked by the Christian Patriarch to explain how 'the first Gospel' had been lost, rediscovered and reached its present form, he replied that the Gospel was lost for a day, then rediscovered when John and Matthew communicated it. Claiming a greater knowledge of Gospel origins than the Patriarch, Imam al-Riḍā' explained:

I know that when the first Gospel was lost the Christians met together with their experts and said to them: 'Jesus, son of Mary, has been killed and we have lost the Gospel. You are the experts, so what can you do?' Luke and Mark said to them: 'The Gospel is in our hearts and we will produce it for you book by book, every one . . . we will recite it to you, each and every book, until we have brought it together for you completely.' So Luke, Mark, John and Matthew sat down and wrote for you this Gospel after you had lost the first Gospel. But these four were disciples of the first disciples. (Ibn Bābuyā, *Tawḥīd*, 425–6 trans. Thomas, 74 cf. *Bihar*² 10: 306f.)

In this text the Imam understands that the extant Gospels are not first-hand, eye-witness accounts and acknowledges the fourfold origins of the canonical Gospels. Though an alleged first Gospel (= the qur'ānic Injīl) had been lost, it was recovered by 'disciples of disciples'. This Imam does not accuse Christians of *taḥrīf* 'falsification' and in fact quite frequently cites canonical Bible texts. Others, however, perhaps a majority of Muslims, have not been so favourably disposed.

Accusations of Scriptural *Taḥrīf* 'Falsification' and *Tabdīl* 'Alteration'

Accusations of tampering with biblical Scripture for polemical or selfish reasons were common within all varieties of Judaism and Christianity from the early centuries CE. Recent careful textual analysis suggests that biblical texts were somewhat malleable in Antiquity, even leaving room for the occasional 'orthodox' rewriting ('corruption') of Scripture (Ehrman 1993; Kannaday 2004: 5ff.). From pre-Christian times Jews accused their Samaritan neighbours and various Christian groups of tampering with sacred writ (Tov 2001: 80ff., 94–6, Lowry 1977). Justin Martyr (d. c.165 CE) objected to Jews who contested the veracity of the Greek (LXX) version of Isaiah 7:14, accusing them of 'imprudent and selfish thinking' (Hengel 2002: 29ff.). The second-century Christian ascetic Marcion of Sinope (d. c.160 CE) affirmed only the partial veracity of select letters within the 'corrupted' Pauline corpus and the Gospel of Luke and considered the Hebrew Bible the aberrant production of the false God of this world, not the benign 'Father of Jesus Christ'.

Accusations along these lines are to be found in the Qur'an though the veracity of the whole Bible is not contested:

a section of them [the Jews] heard the word of God and then, having understood, they deliberately falsified it (*yuharrifūna*) (Q. 2:75b) . . . some among the Jews distort the words out of their context (*yuharrifūna*). (Q. 4:46a)

Following a few qur'ānic verses primarily directed towards Jews (e.g. 2:75b; 4:46a; 5:13a; 5:41b, cf. 4:48, 5:16), and exaggerating and extrapolating for apologetic or polemical reasons, Muslim writers from early on in the evolution of Islam condemned both Jews and Christians for indulging in the *taḥrīf* 'scriptural falsification' or *tabdīl* 'textual alteration' of the biblical text. Dialogue has never recovered from such attacks despite the fact that the Qur'ān itself does not support radically negative views of biblical Scripture, as both learned Muslims and Western scholars have frequently pointed out (Montgomery Watt: 1991: 30; Ayoub 1986: 3). The qur'ānic use of the imperfect active form *yuharrifūna* 'they falsify' does not support the post-qur'anic theory of the corruption of the whole Bible, although belief in the *taḥrīf* ('falsification') of the Bible became widespread in the Muslim world. Muslim Bible study and quotation were outlawed or inhibited, and to this day Jewish-Christian-Muslim dialogue about the Bible remains difficult in the light of issues surrounding accusations of *taḥrīf*.

Insufficient attention has been given to those great Islamic thinkers who distinguished between *taḥrīf al-naṣṣ* 'textual falsification' and *taḥrīf al-mā'nā* 'falsification of

meaning' in Jewish and Christian Bible exegesis. Despite prejudices born of exaggerated notions of biblical *taḥrīf*, there were a fair number of apologists, thinkers and philosophers, both Sunnī and Shī'ī, who cited the Bible with confidence and apologetic acumen. Aside from the Shī'ī historians al-Ya'qūbī (d. c.905) and al-Mas'ūdī (d. 956), who cited and gave weight to the integrity of biblical Scripture, a distinguished example is the Iranian (possibly Ismā'īlī) thinker Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (d. 1153), best known for his *Kitāb al-milal wa'l-niḥal* 'The Book of Religious and Philosophical Creeds', which is recognized today as the first history of religion text in world literature (Wasserstrom 1997: 128). Aside from his positive view and knowledge of the Bible evident in his *Kitāb al-milal*, almost no attention has been paid to the prologue to his incomplete Persian *Tafsīr* work *Mafātīḥ al-asrār wa maṣābiḥ al-abrār* 'Keys of the Mysteries and Lamps of the Pious'. Therein, it is stated that despite some Jewish twisting of scriptural word(s) out of context (Q. 4:46), there existed a single recension (*naskh*) of the *Tawrāt*, representative of the *alwāḥ* 'Tablets' given to Moses and entrusted to the safekeeping of the sons of Aaron. The *Tawrāt* did not lose its status as an honourable expression of the 'Word of God' (*kalām Allāh*). This is clear from the qur'ānic reference to it as 'a guidance and a light' (Q.5:44a). The Injīl 'Gospels' are likewise the 'Book of God' (*Kitāb Allāh*) although existing in four differing recensions with innumerable differences deriving from their four authors. The extant Gospels are thus not wholly the 'Word of God' but contain portions of the true Gospel, just as the Qur'an is not wholly present in the commentaries of the Islamic commentators. That there is *wahy* ('divine inspiration') in the existing Gospels is also apparent from the Qur'an which states that the Injīl confirms previous scripture (Q. 3:3, 50) (Shahrastānī 1997: 122–3).

Even the far-sighted and brilliant Muslim historian Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406), who pioneered the philosophy and sociology of history and is well known for his rejection of polemical views of biblical *taḥrīf*, upholds the genuineness of the Bible with reference to Q. 5:43[7] and in view of a tradition handed down from Ibn 'Abbās to the effect that a religious community is unable to wholly, materially corrupt their sacred book (Fischel 1958, 1967). In his famous, though still uncritically edited *Muqaddimah* (Prolegomenon), he argues for the authenticity of the Bible: 'the statement concerning the alteration (of the Torah by the Jews) is unacceptable to thorough scholars and cannot be understood in its plain meaning' (*Muqaddimah*, trans. Rosenthal 1: 20–1). Most Muslim editions of this work, including the very recent Beirut 2004 edition, omit the paragraph about the falsity of the Muslim accusation of biblical *taḥrīf* ('corruption') though it is almost certainly authentic (cf. Lazarus-Yafeh 1992: 48).

In the nineteenth-century Muslim world there was a recrudescence of polemical, anti-biblical writing in response to evangelical Orientalism and Christian missionary propaganda. The widely distributed Orientalist, anti-Islamic *Mīzān al-Ḥaqq* 'The Balance of Truth' by the German Protestant missionary Carl Gottlieb Pfander (1803–65), early published in Armenian (1831), Persian (1835) and Arabic (1865), sparked off many anti-biblical Muslim responses. The most famous of these, focused mainly on the issue of biblical *taḥrīf*, was the *Izhār al-ḥaqq* (The Manifestation of the Truth) of the learned Indian Shī'ī Muslim writer Raḥmat-Allāh ibn Khalīl al-'Uthmānī al-Kairānawī [al-Hindī] (d. Mecca, 1891). Born out of a debate with Pfander held in

Agra (British India) in 1854, Kairānawī sought to underline the magnitude of biblical *tahrīf* with a detailed critique of biblical texts. His work stands out as one which took some account of the ‘folly’ of ancient and mid-nineteenth-century ideas about the biblical text (Powell 1976: 53). It is based on now-dated Western biblical scholarship, including the massive *Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures* by the English theologian and bibliographer Thomas Horne (1780–1862), and contains highly selective presentations of medieval Islamic anti-Bible materials. Kairānawī, for example, accurately records Horne’s denial of the Davidic authorship of the biblical Psalms and rejoices in Patristic and mid-nineteenth-century Western ‘confusion’ about the authorship of the *Zabūr* (Psalms) (Izhar, 1:138, referring to Horne 1828, 4: 102–3). The *Izhār al-ḥaqq*, first published in two volumes in 1867 and then in subsequent translations into French (1888) and English (1989–90 and 2003), was an effective response and is still highly regarded in the biblically uneducated Muslim world. No detailed and up-to-date Western analysis of the contents of the *Izhār al-ḥaqq* in the light of contemporary biblical scholarship seems to have been attempted. This and a fresh study of *tahrīf* in the same light remain something of an academic and theological desideratum (Schirmacher 1992).

Finally, in this connection mention should be made of the zealous evangelical missionary Henry Martyn (d. Tokat 1812) whose missionary propaganda precipitated more than a dozen Persian and Arabic treatises, several of which dwell upon biblical *tahrīf*. Martyn not only translated the Hebrew Psalms and Greek New Testament into Persian, but his preaching and literary activities in and around Shiraz in 1811–12 led Shī‘ī mullas and mujtahids to pen detailed treatises. Of these, several were published in nineteenth-century Iran and a few others were summarized by the Oxford Semitic scholar Samuel Lee (1783–1852), himself the author of a response to accusations of biblical *tahrīf* (falsification) (Lee 1824). Other responses to Henry Martyn, which frequently exhibit a high level of biblical knowledge, include the leading mujtahid of Shiraz Mīrzā Ibrāhīm Fasā‘ī, Mullā Aḥmad Narāqī (d. c.1829), and the Ni‘matallāhī Sufi Mullā Muhammad Riḍā’ Hamadānī (d. 1841) whose erudite writings raised *tahrīf* issues in such great detail (Lee 1824: 161–450) that Samuel Lee was moved to write the above mentioned defence published in his *Controversial Tracts* (Lee 1824: 451–584).

Negative Islamic *tahrīf* doctrines propagated from medieval times by Ibn Ḥazm and others, inhibited Muslim Bible study and acted as a barrier to adequate awareness of Western biblical scholarship. Very few Muslim commentaries upon biblical texts exist, though notable exceptions include learned Persian Shī‘ī scholars of the Safavid and Qajar periods including Sayyid Aḥmad ibn Zayn al-‘Ābidīn al-‘Alawī (d. c.1650), author of four volumes (‘Alawī 1995; Corbin, *Elr.* 1: 644) and Muhammad Bāqir ibn Ismā‘īl Ḥusaynī Khātūnābādī, (d. 1715), who wrote a recently published Persian commentary upon the four Gospels, the *Tarjumah-yi anājīl-i arba‘ih* (ed. Ja‘fariyan, 1996). A relative of his was involved in the biblical translation project of Nādir Shāh Afshār (r. 1688–1747) (Netzer, *Elr.* IV: 298).

Shī‘ī-Shaykhī contributions generated by disciples of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā‘ī (d. 1826) and Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī (d. 1843) to the debate with western evangelical Christianity, notably those of the polymathic and anti-Bābī third Shaykhī leader Karīm Khān Kirmānī (d. 1871) and his followers, have yet to be studied (Kirmani, Nusrat).

But it can be confidently stated that it was the quasi-Shaykhī-rooted Bābī-Bahā'ī religions which successfully made the transition from Islamic Shī'ism to biblically affirmative post-Islamic religiosity (Lambden 2002). Bahā'ī leaders and their zealous disciples embraced and made good use of the Bible in their attempt to convert their hearers, including missionaries and others who themselves had largely failed to make converts in the Muslim world.

Islamic Bible Citations

By about the middle of the eighth century, biblical quotations began to become numerous in a wide range of Islamic literatures. They may be loosely divided into five categories, none of which need be regarded as aberrant or 'false'. First, the number of *literal, accurate* Bible citations increased markedly in the second and third centuries of the Islamic era, though it was not until the circulation of printed Arabic, Persian and Turkish Bibles from the sixteenth century CE, that segments of the literate Islamic world had direct access to the complete text of the Bible. Early examples of straightforward Arabic Bible citation, including verses from Genesis 1 and New Testament texts, are found for example in statements attributed to the (Twelver) Shī'ī Imams, and certain of the writings of 'Abd-Allāh Ibn Qutayba (d. 889), whose accurate knowledge of the New Testament is evidenced in his reference to three sets of fourteen generations (Heb. David = D + W + D = 4 + 6 + 4 = 14) separating Abraham and Jesus (*K. al-Ma'ārif*, 34) in line with Matthew 1:17. An interesting juxtaposition of a literally conveyed biblical logion of Jesus, and an Islamo-biblical version is found in the *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'* of Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī:

Jesus walked past a woman who said, 'Happy, happy is the womb that carried you, and the breasts that suckled you' (Luke 11:27–8). But Jesus [the proto-Muslim] said, 'No, happy is the one who reads the Qur'ān and keeps that which is written therein.' (*Ḥilyā* IV: 119, trans. Tor Andrae [1947] 1987: 27)

Other examples are Matthew 6:21 (= Luke 12:34) cited, for example, by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), *Kitāb al-zuhd* (The Book of Asceticism) and Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* (The Meccan Disclosures) 2:812: Jesus said, 'Place your treasures in heaven, for the heart of man is where his treasure is' (cf. Khalidi 2001: 71). The negative form of the 'golden rule' ascribed to Jesus (Matt. 7:12/Luke 6:31; Matt. 5:39b/Luke 6:29) is cited by the sixth Shī'ī Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. c.145/760): 'Whatsoever you do not wish to be done to yourself, do not do the same to anyone else. And if anyone should strike you on the right cheek, then let him strike the left one also' (cited Majlisī, *Biḥār*² 14:287).

A second category may be defined as *interpretive, paraphrastic or extended citations containing elements of textual divergence or apologetic rewriting*. Recreated citations of Deuteronomy 33:2 ('The Lord came from Sinai'), for example, are found in numerous Islamic sources including the writings of 'Alī al-Ṭabarī (fl. mid-ninth cent CE) and Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī (d. 1051). The opening words are sometimes extensively rewritten to

avoid anthropomorphism, while other parts of this text are interpreted to express an Islamic view of salvation history fulfilled in Muhammad and Islam. A beautiful example appears in the Shi'i prayer *Du'ā al-simāt* (Supplication of the Signs) ascribed to Muhammad al-Bāqir (d. 126/743):

I beseech Thee, O my God! by Thy Glory through which Thou did converse with Thy servant and Thy messenger Moses son of 'Imrān in the sanctified [Sinaitic] regions beyond the ken of the cherubim above the clouds of Light beyond the Ark of the Testament (*al-tābūt al-shahāda*) within the Pillars of Light; in Mount Sinai and Mount Horeb in the sanctified vale in the blessed spot in the direction of the Mount [Sinai] situated at the right-hand side of the [Sinaitic] Bush [Tree]. (cited al-Kaf'amī, *al-Miṣbāḥ*, 561)

Another example is the interpretive citation of John 16:7f. as a messianic prediction of the advent of Muhammad as the Fāraqlīṭ (Paraclete = 'Comforter') who will communicate all mysteries:

The Son of Man (Ibn al-bashar) [= Jesus] is going and Fāraqlīṭ (Paraclete) [= Muhammad] will come after him. He will communicate the secrets unto you and expound all things. He will bear witness unto me just as I have borne witness unto him. I, verily, have come unto you with parables but he will come unto you with [clear] exegesis (*bi'l-ta'wīl*). (Majlisī, *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn*, cited al-Aḥsā'ī, *al-Kashkūl*, mss, 2: 538–9)

A third category contains *citations exhibiting significant textual 'rewriting' and interpretation*, particularly to highlight cases of scriptural fulfilment in Muhammad and Islamic history. Expansions or conflation of Isaiah 42:1f. are cited by several authors in this way as intimations of the person of Muhammad in the Tawrāt (Torah = Hebrew Bible). Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī's (d. 870) provides a good example:

He [God] said in the Tawrāt, 'O thou Prophet! We assuredly sent you as a witness, a herald of good-tidings (*mubashshir*) and a protector of those [Arab] unlettered ones. You are my Servant and my messenger (cf. Isa. 42:1). I have named you al-Mutawakkil ('The Trusting [in God]'), one neither given to hard-heartedness nor crudity: not shouting out in the streets (cf. Isa. 42:2a–3). He will not requite evil for evil, but shall pardon and forgive. God will never withhold his grasp upon him until through him he straightens a twisted [Arab] community such that they exclaim 'There is no God but God', thereby opening the eyes of the blind, the ears of the deaf and the uncircumcised [hardened] hearts (cf. Isa. 42:6–7). (Bukhārī, *Sahīh*, *Kitāb al-tafsīr* on Q. 48:8)

Another example is the rewritten, Islamo-biblical form of the 'Lord's Prayer' (Matt. 6:10–13; Luke 11:3–5) attributed to Muhammad as found in the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 888):

Our Lord God, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom [is] in heaven and on earth; as Thy mercy is in heaven, so show Thy mercy on earth; forgive us our debts and our sins. Thou art the Lord of the good; send down mercy from Thy mercy and healing from Thy healing on this pain, that it may be healed. (Abū Dawud, *Sunan* I, cited in Goldziher, trans. Stern 1971 (Muslim Studies) II: 350)

There is a tradition that, just prior to this prayer, Muhammad said that 'if anyone suffers or his brother suffers' he should recite it (*ibid.*).

A fourth category consists of Islamo-biblical texts which *echo, conflate and/or transcend biblical text(s) in expressing a distinctly Islamic perspective with minimal or unclear biblical precedent*. To this category belong certain Islamic Merkabah ('Throne mysticism') and related texts (cf. Q. 2:255), found in Tafsīr works and mystical literature, and rooted in Ezekiel 1:1ff. and Revelation 4:6b–9. The possibly Zaydī (Shī'ī) commentator Muqātil b. Sulaymān al-Khurāsānī (d. Basra, 767) relays the following tradition from Wahb ibn Munabbih via the *ahl al-kitāb* ('possessors of scripture'):

Four angels bear the [divine] Throne [Seat] (*kursī*), every angel having four faces. Their legs are situated beneath the [foundational] Rock which lies beneath the lowest earth extending [for the distance of] a 500-year journey; and between all [of the seven] earth[s] is a 500-year journey! (1) [There is] an angel whose face has the appearance of a man [human form] which is the archetype of forms. Of God he requests sustenance for the progeny of Adam. (2) [There is] an angel whose face has the appearance of the exemplar of cattle which is the Ox. Of God he requests sustenance for the cattle [animals]. (3) [There is] an angel whose face has the appearance of the exemplar of the birds which is the Eagle [Vulture]. Of God he requests sustenance for the birds. (4) [There is] an angel whose face has the appearance of the exemplar of beasts of prey which is the Lion. Of God he requests sustenance for the beasts of prey. (Muqātil, *Tafsīr* I: 213 on Q. 2:255b cf. V:222)

The Qur'ānic image of the celestial Throne of God was of central cosmological and mystical importance as evidenced by the Qur'ānic 'Throne verse' (Q. 2:255). This text was given a variety of symbolic and esoteric interpretations by the twelver Imāms and by numerous Sufi and other exponents of the *'ulūm al-ghayb* (Islamic esoterica). While Ezekiel 1:10 mentions 'the four faces of the four creatures which he visioned', the Ezekiel Targum understands this to signify four multi-faceted faces (4 × 16) equalling 64 faces. The above tradition reflects such traditions.

A final category would include Islamic *pseudepigraphical texts and writings* (sometimes) with biblical-Qur'ānic ascription but often exhibiting little or no concrete biblical basis or substrate. Examples of this category are the many pseudepigraphical texts ascribed to Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel and others including, for example, the *ṣuḥuf* (sing. *ṣaḥīfa*) 'scriptural leaves' attributed to Idris, i.e. Enoch. These are paraphrased and set out in the *Sa'd al-su'ūd li'l-nufūs manqūḍ* ('The Felicity of Good Fortune for Blanketed Souls') of Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 1226) and the *Bihar al-anwār* (Oceans of Lights) of Muhammad Baqir Majlisī (d. 1699/1700) which cites no less than 29 titled, pre-Islamic pericopes ascribed to Idrīs–Enoch (*Bihar*², vol. 95: 453–72; cf. 11: 269).

There are also Islamicate recreations or versions of the *Zabūr* or *Mazamir* (Psalms) and the Book of Daniel such as the *Kitāb al-malāḥim li Dāniyāl* (The Book of the Conflagration of Daniel) existing in a number of Shī'ī recensions. According to one of these, knowledge of the cryptic predictions in the *Malḥamat Dāniyāl* enabled the Sunnī Caliphs Abū Bakr and 'Umar to gain successorship after the passing of Muhammad (Fodor 1974: 85ff.; Kohlberg 1992: 143). Then there are the extra-Qur'ānic 'divine sayings' (*ḥadīth qudsī*) attributed to biblical figures as transmitted by the Prophet Muhammad

or the Shī'ī Imams. These include a great deal of Islamo-biblical material, even whole pseudepigraphical books. According to some traditions the Prophet and the Imams were heir to pure forms of pre-Islamic sacred writ either orally or through secret and guarded channels. The well-known Sufi theological disclosure which commences, 'I [God] was a hidden treasure' is believed to have been revealed to the biblical-qur'anic David, while the following remarkable prayer for blessings upon all the prophets is attributed to his mother:

O my God! Blessings be upon [1] Hābīl (Abel), [2] Shīth (Seth), [3] Idrīs (Enoch), [4] Nūh (Noah), [5] Hūd, [6] Šālīh [7] Ibrāhīm (Abraham), [8] Ismā'īl (Ishmael) and [9] Ishāq (Isaac), [10] Ya'qūb (Jacob), [11] Yūsuf (Joseph), [12] and the tribes [of Israel] (al-asbāt), [13] Lūṭ (Lot), [14] Shu'ayb, [15] 'Ayyūb (Job), [16] Mūsā (Moses), [17] Hārūn (Aaron), [18] Yūsha' (Joshua), [19] Mīshā (?), [20] Khiḍr, [21] Dhū-l-Qarnayn ('Double-horned' [Alexander the Great]), [22] Yūnūs (Jonah), [23] Ilyās (Elijah), [24] Alyasa' (Elias), [25] Dhu'l-Kifl, [26] Ṭālūt (Goliath), [27] Dā'wūd (David), [28] Sulaymān (Solomon), [29] Zakā'riyya (Zachariah), [30] Yaḥyā (John [the Baptist]), [31] T-W-R-KH (= Turkh = Turk?), [32] Mattā (Matthew), [33] Irmīyā (Jeremiah) [34] Hayaqoq (Habbakuk), [35] Danyāl (Daniel) [36] 'Azīz ('Mighty'), [37] 'Īsā' (Jesus), [38] Shimūn (Simon [Peter]), [39] Jirjīs (St. George), [40] the Disciples [of Jesus] (al-ḥawariyyīn), [41] the (secondary) 'Followers' [of Jesus] (al-Atbā'), [42] Khālid [b Sinān al-'Absī]), [43] Ḥanzalah [ibn Šafwān] and [44] (the sage) Luqmān. (Majlisī, *Bihār*² 11:59).

This prophetological supplication is among very many devotional pieces which are attributed to pre-Islamic figures in Shī'ī literature. It lists over 40 messengers and related figures, in a loose and sometimes eccentric chronological order, and perhaps suggests Islamic devotion to some Israelite and related prophets, largely unmentioned in the Qur'ān.

These apologetic and interpretive Islamo-biblical citations which translate and make the biblical Hebrew text meaningful for succeeding generations, are in that sense no more 'false' than Jewish or Christian pseudepigraphical writings, recreations and re-translations of biblical texts. Islamic works in this category were considered important enough to be ascribed to such past sages and prophet figures as Adam, Enoch, Hermes, Moses, Solomon, Daniel, Jesus and others. Other examples include a proto-qur'anic *Munājāt Mūsā* ('Supplications of Moses'), Islamic recreations of the *Zabūr* of David sometimes reflecting the biblical Psalms (Schippers, 'Psalms' E-Q 4:314–18) and even an Islamic *Tawrāt* ('Torah') divided, like the Qur'ān, into sūrahs! These Islamo-biblical recreations with the many texts in Islamic sources ascribed to pre-Islamic scripture can be viewed as the fruits of a creative scriptural symbiosis among diverse 'people of the Book', and need not be dismissively or derisively ignored as a pseudo-biblical phenomenon.

Though genuine manuscripts representative of early Arabic Bible translations are few, Islamic pseudepigraphical texts and writings are numerous. Some Muslims claim to have rediscovered or creatively invented allegedly 'genuine' texts or portions of the *Tawrāt* (Pentateuch) of Moses, the *Zabūr* ('Psalter') of David, the original *Injīl* (Gospel) of Jesus as well as other books ascribed to pre-Islamic prophets. A modern example is the so-called 'Gospel of Barnabas'. This is a work of 222 chapters (200+ pages) ascribed

to a Christian companion of Paul originally named Joses then Barnabas (fl. first century CE, Acts 4:36, chapters 11–15), but it is essentially a sixteenth-century Islamic-created Gospel harmony, extant in only a few sixteenth–seventeenth-century mss of Spanish and Italian Morisco (Crypto-Muslim) provenance. It has been frequently reprinted and translated in the Muslim world (Arabic, 1908; Urdu, 1916, etc.) from the 1907 English translation of Lonsdale and Laura Ragg, though without their critical introduction in which it was exposed as a medieval ‘forgery’. Muhammad is mentioned by name in the ‘Gospel of Barnabas’ and many Muslims today view this as the only remaining authentic Gospel despite the fact that western scholarship has for long remained unconvinced of its veracity (Ragg 1907; Sox 1984; Slomp <http://www.chrislages.de/barnarom.htm>). A massive literature now surrounds the debate over this and related issues of scriptural preservation, transmission, falsification and veracity. Abrahamic religionists have long accused each other of tampering with sacred writ and of misquoting established scripture to suit selfish or polemical purposes.

The Bible, Islamo-biblica and *Isrā’īliyyāt* (‘Israelitica’)

By the tenth to eleventh centuries CE many, though by no means, all Muslims came to regard the Bible as largely or wholly ‘corrupted’. They repeated versions of a tradition banning qur’ānic-Islamic exposition through biblically related traditions known as *Isrā’īliyyāt* (‘Israelitica’), and played down prophetic traditions which advocated the opposite. The Arabic plural *isrā’īliyyāt* ‘Israelitica’ is derived from the biblical and qur’ānic figure Israel, also known as Jacob, father of the twelve tribes (Gen. 32:28, 35:10; cf. Qur’ān 3:87, etc.). In use from the early Islamic centuries in *Tafsīr* (qur’ānic exegesis) and other oral and literary connections (Khoury 1972: 227ff.; EI² XI: 34a), the term is indicative of data and traditions thought to have been transmitted by or derived from the Jews or ‘children of Israel’ (*banī Isrā’īl*), although its uses in a multitude of ancient and modern Islamic sources presuppose that *Isrā’īliyyāt* material can indicate a very wide range of Abrahamic-Israelite, biblical and associated scripture and tradition. Early on, this type of material was communicated by such Muslim believers and converts as ‘Abd-Allāh ibn ‘Abbās, the Father of Islamic *Tafsīr*, Rabbi of the Arabs and cousin of the Prophet (d. c.687), and Abū ‘Abd Allāh Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. c.728) perhaps the most important Muslim transmitter of *Isrā’īliyyāt*.

The term *Isrā’īliyyāt* initially had purely descriptive and neutral connotations (Adang 1996: 9, n. 49), but in some circles in later centuries it came to be used pejoratively though this negative use of *Isrā’īliyyāt* was not and never has been adopted universally in the Muslim world. *Isrā’īliyyāt* can indicate the biblical heritage and related Islamo-biblical materials transmitted in a wide range of Islamic literatures often by Jewish converts to Islam. A wide-ranging trajectory of 20 or more key categories of Islamic literatures rich in *Isrā’īliyyāt* traditions containing biblical and/or Islamo-biblical materials could today be confidently set down (cf. Lambden 2002 and forthcoming). This massive, symbiotic Islamic heritage bears eloquent testimony to the creative Islamic engagement, occasional remythologization and exegesis-eisegesis of Abrahamic and related scripture and tradition.

Without attempting a full overview, Islamic literatures containing Isrā'īlyyāt would include Islamic pseudepigraphical texts and biblically ascribed writings of the kind mentioned below (Sadan 1986). Significant in this respect are numerous *Tafsīr* (exegetical) and related literatures of Qur'ān commentary along with works of exegesis-eisegesis and hermeneutics (Newby 1979). In addition to *Ḥadīth* compendia of prophetic and other authoritative traditions where multitudes of Isrā'īlyyāt-related texts can be found, such materials are likewise fundamental to many *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (Stories of the Prophets) and related literatures such as works of *Mubtadā'* ('Beginnings'), *Awā'il* ('Originations') and *Mu'ammārūn* (the 'Long-Lived'). Works associated with *Nubuwwa* ('Prophetology') such as the *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa* ('Proofs of Prophethood') texts as well as volumes of Islamic *Sīrāh* ('Biography') and *Tārīkh* (History writing) often exhibit considerable biblical influence and the presence of Islamo-biblica or modes of Isrā'īlyyāt. Sufi and related literatures such as Persian poetry also contain thousands of biblical, Islamo-biblical and Isrā'īlyyāt motifs, texts and narratives as do Islamic *adab* (*belles lettres*) works, Wisdom literatures and those associated with religious disputation, dialogue and world religions. Finally, but not exhaustively, mention should be made of Islamic devotional literatures and works representative of messianism and apocalyptic eschatology which often contain a good deal that is biblically related or Isrā'īlyyāt informed.

Writings and literary remnants of emergent Islam and diverse orthodox-heterodox factions which proliferated throughout Islamic history, including Imāmī Shī'ism (Wasserstrom, bib. Modarressi 2003), various *ghulāt* ('extremist') groups, Zaydism and (proto-)Ismā'īlism, are replete with echoes of biblical and Isrā'īlyyāt traditions. So too are many of the little-studied literatures representative of the *'ulūm al-ghayb* (Islamic esoterica), including *Jafr* (gematric divination), *Sihr* (varieties of Magic), *Kimiyā'* (Alchemy) and dream-vision interpretation.

Only a few specific further examples of Islamo-biblica or Isrā'īlyyāt can be spelled out here which illustrate that widespread Muslim notions of *taḥrīf* failed to eclipse the wonderfully creative Islamic reaffirmation of the pre-Islamic scriptural heritage of humankind. Biblical and extra-biblically generated ideas, texts and motifs remained very much alive in the Islamic intertextual universe of discourse. A probable example of Isrā'īlyyāt is found in the occurrence of the Arabic loan word **هورقليا H-W-R-Q-L-Y-A** (pointing uncertain as *hurqalyā* or *havaqalyā*) in the *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* of Shihāb al-Dīn Yahyā Suhrawardī (d. 1191) when understood as originating from a somewhat garbled Arabic rendering of the Hebrew **רָקִיעַ הָרָקִיעַ** *ha-raqī'a* (= AV 'the firmament', Gen. 1:5-7, etc.), interpreted as a cosmogonic and mystical interworld. Another Shī'ī example would be the Arabic 'I am' type logion as translating **ἐγώ εἰμι . . . ἢ ἀλήθεια** ('I am the Truth') allegedly uttered by Imam 'Alī (d. 40/661) in his arcane and possibly *ghuluww* ('extremist') *Khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya* ('Sermon of the Gulf') (cited al-Bursī, *Mashariq*: 176).

Conclusion

This survey of the relationship between Islam and the Bible has in no way been motivated by an orientalist-type attempt to source-critically account for Islamic doctrines

and perspectives by dismissively registering their biblical roots or origins. The Islamic assimilation of the Bible in no way devalues the creative genius of Islam and its founder prophet. Sadly, the post-qur'anic assertion of the total loss or textual falsification of the Jewish and Christian Bible is without doubt the greatest barrier to dialogue and mutual appreciation among Abrahamic religionists or 'peoples of the Book'. Along with those Safavid works relating to biblical texts which have been mentioned above, the two mid-nineteenth-century volumes comprising *The Mohomedan Commentary on the Holy Bible* (1862, 1865) by the Indian Muslim modernist Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (d. 1898) remain virtually unique. Modern Muslim engagement with the Bible and biblical scholarship largely awaits balanced and unprejudiced realization. This is hardly surprising given the orientalist venom which pollutes much pre-modern evangelical and missionary discourse and the volume of triumphalist, ill-informed, sometimes anti-Semitic and anti-biblical-Isrā'īliyyāt propaganda which blackens the face of Islam. Hopefully the rise of a globally less prejudiced scholarship and an increasing awareness of the religious interdependence of all humanity, will remain fundamental and ultimately succeed.

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