VI. Islam

The Jews and their religion are prominent in the Qurʾān, and are thus of indisputable importance for Islam in its formative period. Strikingly, the term *Yahūd*, typically a collective signifying either Jews in general or those in the immediate social context of the qurʾānic prophet and his movement, appears only eight times, in seven verses that are all contained in the longer sūras found at the beginning of the Qurʾān that date to the later Medinan period (2:12, 113; 5:18, 51, 64, 82; 9:3). The sole attestation of the singular noun *Yahūdī* appears in S 3:67, which states that Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but rather a gentile (*ḥanīf*) and one who submits (*muslim*). Sūra 2:140 says something similar about all three patriarchs, using the collective form *Hūd* instead of *Yahūd*; this lexeme is also found in 2:111 and 135.

Curiously, there are about an equal number of references to Jews in the Qurʾān that use the locution *alladhīna hādū*, a verbal expression that seems to mean simply "those who are Jews." There is no obvious contextual reason in these passages why Jewish identity should be signaled in this way instead of with the basic noun *Yahūd*. This construction is found ten times in as many verses (2:62; 4:46, 160; 5:41, 44, 69; 16:118, 146; 22:17; 62:6), mostly in different chapters from those in which *yahūd* appears (again predominantly Medinan), with the conspicuous exception of three instances in *Sūrat al-Māʾida*, in which, as noted above, *Yahūd* appears four times, more than in any other sūra.

Translators have sometimes sought to distinguish this verbal construction by rendering *alladhīna hādū* as "those who follow Jewish law," "those who call themselves Jews," and so forth. One might imagine that some parallel here with the Greek ἰουδαΐζειν or similar locutions from Christian discourse is possible, with *alladhīna hādū* referring to "Judaizers," people adopting Judaism by abandoning some other religion or otherwise turning away from their traditional customs. However, there is little evidence available about the Arabian religious milieu in which Islam emerged that would justify such speculation. The traditional sources do not indicate anything that suggests that the Jews of the Ḥijāz were Judaizers of any sort, or anything other than groups claiming ancestral affiliation with Judaism, which has tended to be the scholarly consensus as well.

As a category of identity, community, and behavior, qurʾānic *Yahūd* often appears in conjunction with certain other categories. References to Christians, *Naṣārā*, appear about a dozen times in the Qurʾān, most often in some sort of juxtaposition with Jews (and never in a verbal form, though the noun *Naṣārā* may be paired either with *Yahūd* or *alladhīna hādū*, suggesting that these two ways of referring to Jews are simply synonymous). Israelites, *Banū Isrāʾīl*, is a much more common term, being attested over forty times in more than fifteen different chapters. This term usually designates the Israelites of biblical history, especially in narratives relating their waywardness and obstinacy to the wrongdoing of *Yahūd* in the present. This term stands in close relationship with another rubric through which the Qurʾān addresses the history of God's previous relationship with humanity, namely *Ahl al-Kitāb*, "People of the Book." This term appears over thirty times in over a dozen different sūras. Israel/the Jews are the preeminent example of such "scriptuaries," being the people of Moses to whom the Torah was revealed, though it is clear that this term is meant to encompass a much broader category of people, with Israel/the Jews retaining a particular ethnic connotation and *Ahl al-Kitāb* perhaps intended to transcend it. (Notably, we sometimes find expressions such as *alladhīna ūtū al-kitāb* or *alladhīna ataynāhum al-kitāb*, "those to whom scripture was given," standing in for *Ahl al-Kitāb*, which again suggests that *alladhīna hādū* is simply a circumlocution for *Yahūd* without any deeper significance.)

The significant amount of material in the Qurʾān and early Islamic tradition that reflects substantial contact and engagement with late antique biblical and Jewish tradition has historically encouraged Western scholars to posit a direct influence of Jewish informants on Muḥammad as the author of the Qurʾān. This approach to the Qurʾān's allusions to Judaism and adaptations of Jewish lore, particularly material pertaining to the history of Israel, its prophets, patriarchs, and other episodes narrated in biblical tradition, holds that such material was essentially foreign to Arabian culture at large and not well integrated into the pagan society of the Jāhiliyya, despite the simultaneous (and paradoxical) tendency for scholars to recognize that Arabia had been exposed to monotheism through Jewish migration, Christian missionizing and the like long before the rise of Islam. The adaptation of this biblical and Jewish material in the Qurʾān has conventionally been read as a means by which Muḥammad sought to appeal to his Jewish contemporaries, in the hope that they would embrace him and validate his mission as the continuation and fulfillment of ancient prophecy.

However, our knowledge of the actual Jewish presence in Arabia at the time when the Qurʾān was revealed, and thus the circumstances under which it engages with forms of Judaism current at that time, is uncertain. The traditional sources on early Islamic history – the *sīra*, *tafsīr*, and related literatures – supply a significant amount of data that may appear to provide some background to these often obscure references to Jewish tradition, providing context through extensive portrayals of the ac-

tual Jewish communities of the Ḥijāz that are addressed in the Qurʾān.

The tradition paints the following picture. Muḥammad had extremely limited contact with Jews during the Meccan phase of his career (610–22), and so only vague references to older monotheistic tradition are found in the qurʾānic material the tradition correlates with it. However, this phase was followed by a period of significant and impactful involvement with three major Jewish tribes in Yathrib/Medina during the second phase of Muḥammad's career (622–32). The qurʾānic material conventionally dated to the Medinan period appears to exhibit significant knowledge of Jewish tradition and engages the Jews directly as its interlocutors. After the community's *hijra* or emigration from Mecca to Yathrib, Muḥammad's Meccan followers and the major Jewish tribes of the city (Banū Qaynuqāʿ, Banū Nadhīr, and Banū Qurayẓa, the latter two of which were called the Kāhinayn due to their claim of priestly descent) appear to have cooperated with one another, at least initially. This was a consequence of the treaty between the major factions of the city that scholars have called the "Constitution of Medina."

However, due to the failure of the Jewish tribes to support Muḥammad's people – or to their outright treachery, for example by colluding with Muḥammad's Meccan adversaries of the tribal confederation of Quraysh – they were gradually removed from the city by various means, from exile to execution, though numerous individuals from among their number were integrated into the *umma* through conversion to Islam, marriage, and so forth. The falling out with the Jews serves to explain numerous shifts in the practices of the early community, most notably the change in the *qibla* or direction of prayer from Jerusalem to Mecca (alluded to in S 2 : 143–144). Likewise, the Qurʾān seems to preserve direct testimony to the Jews' new role as a subject people, subordinated to the Muslim *umma* but guaranteed life and religious liberty in exchange for payment of a special tax or levy (the *jizya*, legislated in S 9 : 29).

With the advent of revisionist approaches to Islam in the 1970s, scholars came to question numerous aspects of this traditional account. One of the goals of this critique has been the separation of the Qurʾān as a genuine artifact of the proto-Islamic movement from that traditional account, which arguably seeks to make the Qurʾān, a product of its time, fit the norms and understandings of a mature Islamic community separated from it by a significant gap in time, space, and cultural expectation. This has meant that more sophisticated approaches to the Qurʾān's engagement with older monotheisms – its location in its original literary and religious milieu – can no longer reduce that engagement to a simple relationship of passive borrowing and direct influence. This has also meant that the traditional account of Muḥammad's struggle to found his community in the face of opposition from pagans, hypocrites, and Jews alike has been characterized as mythology, a narrative of *Heilsgeschichte* or sacred origins that reflects later understandings of where Islam came from and what its ultimate significance in world history is.

The revisionist critique has opened up new perspectives on both the qurʾānic material pertaining to Jews and Judaism and the traditional accounts of Muḥammad's interactions with the Arabian Jewish tribes. Aspects of the Qurʾān's portrayals of Jews and Judaism have been profitably linked to the anti-Jewish discourse of varieties of Christianity contemporary with the emergence of Islam. For example, the Qurʾān repeatedly indicts the Jews for their killing of the prophets (cf., e.g., S 3 : 181–183) and their mendacious misinterpretation of the scriptures (described in several verses using verbs such as "change," "conceal," "forge," "cloak," and "distort") revealed to them. Reynolds and other scholars have convincingly demonstrated that these passages closely echo allegations found in Christian sources, which encourages speculation that the Qurʾān is here mimicking late antique anti-Jewish discourse and an agnosticism regarding the question of whether it really responds to encounters with Jews in its environment.

The depiction of Jews in the early tradition may likewise be seen as drawing on established tropes and literary schemata. In both the Qurʾān and early tradition, Jews and Judaism provide a negative foil for the construction of Muslim identity and norms. Thus, many scholars have emphasized the symbolic and ideological aspects of the portrayal of Jews in these contexts. In particular, Nirenberg's inclusion of the Qurʾān and early Islam in his broad-ranging *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (2013) provides compelling evidence for their continuity with ancient Christian manipulation of stereotypes about Jews and Judaism for rhetorical and ideological purposes. Similarly, as Maghen has shown in his groundbreaking *After Hardship Cometh Ease* (2006), the idea of divine legislation of deliberate difference from Judaism for Muslims (*mukhālafa*), especially in the form of alleviation of burdens imposed on the Jews for their crimes and obstinacy (*ikhtifāf*), provided jurists in the early Islamic period with a device for constructing and justifying legal boundaries between Muslims and Jews in the mixed milieu of the caliphate.

At the same time, the Qurʾān appears to endow the Jews with significant agency, particularly in recognizing their capacity to contest the message of its prophet. The Qurʾān reflects a deep concern with things the Jews say or claims their ancestors Israel made, particularly in subverting the message of the prophets sent to discipline them. The most obvious

examples here are those cases in which the Qurʾān complains about the ways Jews twist language – for example, when they were commanded to say, "We hear and obey (*samiʿnā wa-aṭaynā*)," they said instead "We hear and *disobey* (*samiʿnā wa-aṣaynā*)" (see S 4:46). We cannot know whether this clever, mocking wordplay is a record of a real engagement between the Jews of Medina and the prophet, but it is striking that the Qurʾān endows its Jewish interlocutors – factual or not – with a potent voice capable of disrupting Muḥammad's message.

However, despite the problematic historicity of most of the qurʾānic and traditional data, the attempt to write positive history of the Jews of Arabia, for example by correlating specific aspects of that data to rabbinic tradition, has proved perennially irresistible to some scholars, though this attempt is likely a quixotic one given the paucity of reliable evidence. It is probable that the Jews of the Ḥijāz were at most diffusely "rabbinic," meaning that traditions of interpretation of Israelite law, covenant, and Scripture going back to the Second Temple period likely had some currency and purchase in their community. But the sketchy evidence that can be derived from the sources cannot justify the claim made by some (e.g., Mazuz) that the Jews of Medina were totally rabbinized and Torah-observant according to an ancestral tradition that conforms by and large to the ideal form of Judaism enshrined in the classic documents of Palestinian and Babylonian Judaism – especially given that many contemporary scholars concede that this full-fledged rabbinic Judaism was not widely authoritative until the Middle Ages.

Whatever the case, the clear legacy of the prophetic period was a profound ambivalence towards Jews and Judaism. The prophet's opposition to (and elimination of) the original Jewish population of Medina – leading to the eventual removal of all Jews from the Arabian Peninsula, though it is unclear when this was actually realized – was readily interpreted as a precedent for the later community as it established itself at the apex of a new world-spanning caliphal empire that rapidly encompassed the Jewish populations of the Near East and Mediterranean under its rule. Unlike the situation in Christian Europe, religious minorities under Islamic rule, including Jews, enjoyed specific legal protections as *dhimmī*s (that is, receiving the protection of the so-called "Pact of ʿUmar"). Even the limited social and religious restrictions on *dhimmī*s were often ignored, and despite sporadic events of persecution, the protected status of Jews allowed communities under Islamic rule to flourish economically, culturally, and intellectually, in Iraq, North Africa, and, perhaps most famously, Spain.

Beyond this, Jews were recognized as an important source of information on matters of scriptural interpretation, and Muslim tradition preserves significant evidence of a considerable assimilation of lore from Jews and other members of the *Ahl al-Kitāb* who lived in close proximity to Muslims under the expanding dominion of Islam. The channeling of Jewish traditions into Islam likely occurred in a variety of ways – through conversion, direct transmission from individual informants, oral diffusion in mixed social settings, and so forth – though Muslim tradition tends to privilege particular individuals, converts, and disciples of converts, as the primary conduits for *kitābī* lore into Islam. This transmission was even given prophetic sanction, in the form of a Ḥadīth in which Muḥammad declared it permissible to "relate traditions from *Banū Isrāʾīl*, for there is no harm in it" (*ḥaddithū ʿan banī Isrāʾīla wa-la ḥaraja*). This injunction was at least at one time understood to authorize transmission of traditions from the Bible and lore of the *Ahl al-Kitāb* as long as they are consonant with the Qurʾān and the prophet's own teachings.

However, in the Middle Ages, some Muslim scholars became acutely self-conscious about this material with the development of Salafī ideology, particularly its characteristic privileging of a pure Islam inspired by the example of the prophet and his companions and purged of "foreign" influences. This critique of corrosive Jewish traditions within Islam – the so-called *Isrāʾīliyyāt* (see "Isrāʾīliyyāt") – advanced by Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) and Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373) was popularized by the Egyptian scholar-activists Muḥammad ʿAbduh (d. 1905), Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1940), and their students, and it has become widespread due to the broad appeal of Salafism in modern Islamic society. The critique of foreign influences in Islam has become transparently political, with the vehement rejection of *Isrāʾīliyyāt* and the obsession with purging all traces of Jewish influence from the scholarly tradition taking on a specifically anti-Zionist and increasingly antisemitic guise.

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Michael E. Pregill

VII. Other Religions

For hundreds, if not thousands of years, both India and China have been home to several small Jewish communities. Many of these communities are of significant antiquity; however, their origin stories, which nearly always link them to ancient Israel, are likely exaggerations (Katz: 121–70; Xun: 7–10). Beyond a few records of land-grants and some other ambiguous tales, the larger Asian cultures within which these communities existed paid scant attention to them. However, with the penetration of Christian missionaries into Asia, there is a rising awareness on the part of select Indian and Chinese intellectuals of what it means to be a Jew as a matter of biblical identity, and these notions gain further definition throughout Asia with the rise of 19th-century European antisemitism.

That the image of Jewishness in India was filtered through the perspective of Christian missionaries can be seen in the generally pejorative views expressed by Indians conversant with Judaism. Thus, one Jewish traveler in India records that a conversation with a local ruler led to the question of why the Jews had rejected Christ (Egorova: 12); similarly, the writings of Rammohun Roy, an early Bengali Renaissance figure who had extensive contact with Christian missionaries, depict the Jews of antiquity as having instigated Christ's death, describing them as "inveterate enemies of Christianity" (Roy: 825–6, 903). However, the unfavorable representation of the Jews spread by Christian missionaries was also used by native Indian thinkers to attack Christianity. Thus, a famed Hindu theologian, Arumuku Pillai (1822–1879), used the missionary discomfort with the ritual elements of the HB to argue that Hindu rituals, which he observed showed great similarities in ritual structure to the biblical practices of the Jews, were far more in line with the actual religion of Jesus (that, is Judaism) than the Christianity presented by the missionaries (Sugirtharajah: 165).

The notion of Jewish identity vis-à-vis biblical representation occurs in a quite different context in the writings of M. K. Gandhi. In 1938, as antisemitism peaked in Europe, and Jews were moved *en masse* into German "labor" camps, Gandhi wrote that his "sympathies are all with the Jews" (Gandhi: 317). Yet, in the same essay, Gandhi dismissed the Jewish appeal for the establishment of a homeland in Palestine, which he recognized as being based on the biblical notion of a Jewish claim to Israel. His reasoning here is oft-quoted: "Why should they not make that country their home where they are born and where they earn their livelihood?" (Gandhi: 318). Although Gandhi's remarks almost certainly reflect his own struggle to establish and maintain an Indian identity while living under the cultural and political hegemony of British rulers, rather than enmity to the Jews, nonetheless, they were strongly condemned by a number of world figures, most notably, Martin Buber. By contrast, Rabindranath Tagore, India's first Nobel Laureate in Literature and Gandhi's contemporary, supported the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, hoping – not unlike others at the time – that it would become a place where the Jews and the Palestinians would dwell peacefully together within a single, assimilationist society (Tagore: 940).

Much as was the case in India, despite the long history of a Jewish presence, the Chinese recognition of the Jews vis-à-vis their biblical identity occurred only with the arrival of Christian missionaries. Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci is credited with introducing the Chinese in 1605 to the notion of Judea as the homeland of the Jews, and the locus of God's primeval creation. However, the supposition that followed from this, namely, that all human beings were descended from a single primeval couple living in ancient Judea – and hence barbarians from the Chinese point of view – met with strong opposition (Xun: 11). The arrival in the 19th century of Protestant missionaries in China brought with it the representation of the Jews as a people who not only failed to accept Christ, but whose actions led to the crucifixion. Added to this negative stereotype was the missionaries' representation of the Jews as arrogant and exclusive, an image that combined biblical references with contemporary European perceptions (Xun: 18). Although the lasting effects of these representations is difficult to gauge, by the late 19th century, Chinese intellectuals did not hesitate to draw broadly upon stock European antisemitic motifs, such as that of the existence of a Jewish "race," which was evidenced in terms of the physical features of the Jews as well as by the presence of certain cultural proclivities (Xun: 47). However, it has been argued somewhat disingenuously that these stereotypes were not intended to depict the Jews pejoratively, but rather employ characteristics much admired by the Chinese – among them, a strong financial sense, racial homogeneity, and a sense of cultural superiority (Ehrlich: 17).

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