The Qur‘ān as Scripture
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as
Scripture

Arthur Jeffery

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ISLAM

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THE QUR'AN AS SCRIPTURE

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PREFACE

The remarkable advances made in recent years in the comparative
study of religion have had as one result a sharp concentration of interest
on the problem of Scripture. There are religions which have no sacred
writings and which seem to function very well without them. There are
some religions which are in possession of religious writings which in a
sense can be called sacred, but which have never been officially gathered
into an authoritative "canonized" body of Scripture. There are other
religions in which a canonical Scripture plays a very important role. Islam
belongs to this latter class. It is sometimes said that Christianity could
come without the New Testament, but Islam certainly could not exist
without the Qur’ān. Of the four "roots" (ajālat) of Islam the Qur’ān is
the first and by far the most important. Yet while the Qur’ān has certain
obvious resemblances to the Scriptures of other religions, it has even
more striking differences. To the Muslim these are among the indications
of its uniqueness. To the student of comparative religion they present
a problem. The Qur’ān is Muhammad’s book. The impress of his per-
sonality is on it from the first word to the last. If read chronologically
(roughly in the order in which the Sūras are arranged in Rodwell’s trans-
lation), it allows us to see something of the developing religion of Mu-
hammad as he pushed on with his mission and the building up of his
religious community. Sections one to four in this little book, however,
are interested in the more fundamental problem of how Muhammad
came by his notion of Scripture and how he interpreted it in terms of his
mission. Since every Scripture sooner or later comes to have a written
form, and the story of how the present-day lithographs of the Qur’ān
derived from the earliest texts is a little known one, section five reproduces
a lecture in which an attempt was made to tell that story as simply as
possible.

All citations are from the standard text of 1344 A.H. (=1925 A.D.),
but where the verse numbering of Flügel’s text, which is used in almost
all Western translations and writings on the Qur’ān, differs from this it
is given also. Thus III,16/14 means Sūra III verse 16 but verse 14 in
Flügel’s text.
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In the old-fashioned classification of religions familiar to our forebears Islam fell among the Scriptural religions as contrasted with those religions which possessed no Holy Book revered by the people as the depository of their religious traditions, and the source to which they turned both for the prescriptions to regulate the daily practice of their religion and the material on which to feed their devotional life. The Qur'ān as the Holy Book of Islam thus belonged to the category of Scripture and took its place among the Sacred Books of the East.

This characterization is still valid. The Qur'ān is the Scripture of Islam. It is the Holy Book which Muslims revere in precisely the same way as other communities have revered and do revere their Holy Books. It is the source from which the Muslim community draws the primary prescriptions for the regulation of daily living, and to which its people turn to find nourishment for their devotional life. That they turn also to Tradition (ḥadīth) as a supplementary source both for the regulation of life and for devotion no more lessens the unique authority of the Qur'ān as a Scripture than does the fact that both Jews and Christians also use supplementary sources for the same purpose lessen the Scriptural authority for them of the Old and New Testaments.

Like other Scriptures the Qur'ān passed through various stages of textual history till there emerged a standard text which came to be regarded as sacrosanct. As a sacrosanct text it came in time to function in certain circles as an instrument of magic, in precisely the same way as other sacrosanct texts have done. Like other Scriptures it ere long needed explanation so that it became the subject of Commentaries, at first simple and then elaborate, and the work of the exegetes in Islam has followed very much the same lines of development as we find in the history of the exegesis of other Holy Books. There have been exegetes interested in linguistic and philosophical problems, others interested in theological and juristic problems, others in a mystical exegesis, and others in using the text for homiletic and devotional purposes. All these are quite legitimate types of exegesis and have been, within their limits, quite as fruitful in the case of the Qur'ān as they have been in the service of other Scriptures. Like other Scriptures the Qur'ān was used liturgically in services of worship, so that, as has happened with other Holy Books, there grew up traditional systems of cantillation of its text for liturgical purposes.

Every Sacred Book, just because it is sacred, is certain to make a deep impression on the cultural life of the community which re-
verses it, yet in some ways the Qur'an has entered even more deeply into the life of the Muslim community than any other Scripture has done in the older religious groups. To Christians Jesus Himself was the Word of God, so that in the life of the Church He, rather than the written documents, was the Gospel, the "good news," making Scripture of less importance to the Church than the risen Lord ever present and active among them through the Spirit. So we find in the Coptic Manichean texts that Mani himself is "the Illuminator," the "Master of the Writings," whose person was for the Manichaean community, as that of the Buddha for the various Buddhist communities, far more important than any Scripture. But in Islam Muhammad is only the mouthpiece of revelation. The Qur'an is the word of Allah. Later Muslim piety, it is true, has made much of the person of the founder, but it was the Book, the Qur'an, not the person Muhammad, which was the significant factor in forming the mould in which the Islamic system took shape.

Arabic philology grew out of the study of the Qur'an, so that Arabic grammar, to an even greater extent than Hebrew grammar, has been accommodated to the language of the Scripture. Muslim law, which is often regarded as the greatest achievement of the early Muslim community, was given its framework by the *ahâbâm*, the commands, prohibitions and judgments found in the Qur'an. Islamic theology would naturally turn to the Qur'an for the basic material on which to develop its doctrine of God, doctrine of Man, doctrine of the Last Things, etc., just as the theologians of other religions have turned to their Scriptures for this purpose. Yet if Islamic theology is, as is so often charged, unique in its barrenness, that barrenness is almost wholly due to the fact that the early rise of a dogma as to the impeccability of the Qur'an as the word of God effectually barred any freedom of theological development. In areas where there was no conflict with the statements of the Qur'an, Muslim theologians often show a remarkable subtlety of mind and capacity for closely reasoned argument, so that had they had freedom the product of their labours might have been very different from what we have from their pens. No one who reads Dr. Elder's recent translation of the Commentary of at-Tafsîrî on the creedal statement of al-Nasâî can fail to be struck by the frequency with which the Mu'tazilites opened up promising avenues of theological speculation only to have them closed off by appeal to the consensus of the community that the statements of the Qur'an must be accepted in simple faith, while any questioning as to how or why was unbelief.

Even in the realm of literary criticism the Qur'an was a limiting factor. It may be doubted whether there could have appeared in any other religious community such a work as al-Bâqillâni's *Ittâ al-Qurân*, in which masterpieces of the Arabic literature whose use of words, elegance of diction, variety of expression, stylistic artifice, literary artistry, are to the Western student vastly superior to the uncouthness and dreary monotony of the Qur'an, are compared in detail with the Qur'an to their detriment, since *ex hypothesi* the Qur'an as the word of God must be perfect in style and diction and all that deviates therefrom must be shown to be imperfect.

Thus one can hardly exaggerate the importance of the role that the Qur'an as the Scripture of Islam has played in moulding the Islamic system as it has developed from century to century. The Scripture of no other community, not even the Old Testament among the Jews, has had quite the same influence on the life of the community as the Qur'an has had in Islam. One naturally asks why, and the answer is to be found in the Islamic doctrine of Scripture.

This brings us face to face with an important question, that of the nature of Scripture. In most cases a body of writing that has come to be the Scripture of a community has been given the sacred character which makes it a Holy Book, distinct from other writings which are not holy, by the action of the community. It was the Christian community which selected four Gospels out of many, gathered a corpus of twenty-one Epistles, and combined these with the Acts and the Apocalypse to form the New Testament. It was the Zoroastrian community which drew together the Yasa and the Yashtu, the Vendidad and the Visparad to form the older Avesta. These separate writings were not originally written with the idea that they were to enter into the composition of a Holy Book to be called the New Testament or the Avesta, any more than the writings gathered into the Taoist Canon or the various Buddhist Canons were written for the purpose of being included in those Canons of Scripture. The separate writings were the work of individuals, but the forming of them into a Scripture was the work of the community. The writers of the Vedas and the Puranas were no more conscious than the Prophet Amos or the Apostle Paul that they were writing material that would one day form part of a Holy Book and would serve as the Scripture of a religious community. It was the community which decided this matter of what was and what was not Scripture. It was the community which selected and gathered together for its own use those writings in which it felt that it heard the authentic voice of religious authority valid for its peculiar religious experience.

Sometimes the collection of material for such a Scripture and its authorization for use as such were conscious and deliberate. The fixing of the Jewish Canon of Scripture at the Council of Jamnia
c.90 A.D., where certain writings were accepted as authoritative and others excluded as unauthoritative, was a conscious and deliberate action of the community working through its leaders. The reconstruction of the Taoist Canon in the X1th century was likewise a community undertaking, and such “Scripture lists” as that, for example, in the famous 6th century Canon of Laodicea (c.689 A.D.) are but registers of the judgment of the community as to what was and what was not to be considered Scripture. In other cases the process was unconscious. No one can say just when and where the Homeric poems came to be in such a curious way the “Bible of the Greeks.” In ancient Mesopotamia and in ancient Egypt there were religious texts which continued to be copied by generation after generation of scribes, which seem to have been used liturgically in the temples as in some sense authoritative religious writings, and which certainly were used to feed the devotional life of their communities, yet apparently had come to be accepted in the community without any official authorization.

In all these ancient Scriptures the writings included were of varied authorship, generally anonymous, and coming from different periods in the life of the community whose Holy Book they formed. The nature of the writings accepted into the collection depended to some extent on the culture of the community concerned. Thus a Zoroastrian Parsee feels some astonishment at what the Taoists have included in their Canon, and to us it sometimes seems strange to find, even in deliberately canonized Scriptures, writings of a type that we should never dream of accepting as of religious authority. In each case it was the community feeling, in terms of its own culture, which decided what was to be included and what excluded.

The case of the Qur’an is obviously very different from this. It is from beginning to end the product of one man and from one period. It was the community which did the formal gathering together of the material after the founder’s death and prepared it for use by the community, but its content had been given to them as Scripture before his death. It was not the product of the community in the sense that they decided that this was the collection of writings which had grown up in the community and in which they heard the authentic voice of religious authority, but it was formed by one man and given to the community on his authority as a collection of “revelations” which was to be regulative for their religious life as a community. Thus it resembles the Scripture which Mani set himself to provide as the sacred writings for his community, or such modern pseudo-Scriptures as the Book of Mormon, or Qashpa, or the writings of Bahá’ulláh, each of which was the work of one man, and consciously produced for the purpose of being used by a community as a Holy Book. It also has in common with these the fact that it is conscious of the existence of earlier Scriptures, which were authoritative for religious communities, and was produced in deliberate imitation of them.

This fact is of the first importance when we are seeking to understand the Muslim doctrine of Scripture. The writers of the New Testament were aware of and quote from the Old Testament as Scripture. Similarly the compilers of the Khorda Avesta were aware of the older Avesta. In neither case, however, were the authors of the various writings consciously intending to produce documents which would take their place beside the older Scriptures as themselves of Scriptural rank. They were raised to Scriptural rank because the community heard in them the same authentic voice of religious authority it had been accustomed to hear in the older Scriptures. The Qur’an, on the contrary, was given to the community on the authority of Muhammad, and the community was bidden to accept it as authoritative in the same way as the Jews and Christians accepted their Scriptures.

What then did Muhammad conceive the nature of Scripture to be? Unfortunately we can never fully know what Muhammad himself thought of when he used such words as Kitāb, wahi, Qur’ān, āya, hikma, ‘ilm, etc., for we have only part of the evidence before us, and no assurance that at this distance we always understand aright all the evidence we have. We have, however, all that the early Muslim community had, and we have fair assurance that what that early community was able to preserve of the pronouncements of its founder has been on the whole faithfully transmitted to us, even though in a fragmentary and curiously jumbled condition. Neither the Sirr nor Tradition is of much help to us in this matter, and though the exegetes have preserved in their work good evidence of what was thought in their day to be the meaning of words and phrases in the Qur’an, the bewildering array of variant opinions they record on almost every crucial point of interpretation, makes it quite clear than even the very early circle of exegetes was as much in doubt as we are as to the exact meaning of many of the terms that interest us most. Modern scholars, however, have the advantage of a knowledge of the environment of sixth century Arabia, particularly its cultural and religious environment, and the use of tools of comparative linguistics and comparative religion, which were not available to earlier generations. So even though we may never be able to answer fully this question of what Muhammad’s conception of Scripture was, we can perhaps approach very close to an understanding of those elements in his thought which were basic to the doctrine of Scripture in Islam.

Our starting point must be the recognition that the Qur’an is
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trace to some extent the development of Muhammad's conception of his mission, and the measures he took to bring about the religious reformation with which that mission was primarily concerned. The task imposed on him by his acceptance of that mission was a many-sided one, as indeed is the task of every religious reformer. All the varied activities of his ministry, however, arose from his conviction that he was called to bring to the Arabs, who had had no prophet sent them, the same religion which the prophets had brought to those other religious communities whom he referred to as the People of the Book (Ahl al-Kītāb). Since they had a Scripture his people must have in Arabic a Scripture. But what did he have in mind when he spoke of Qur'an and Scripture?

The common word for Scripture is Kītāb. This literally means "a writing," then "a written document." The special meaning "book" seems to have developed in Arabic under the influence of Aramaic, but was in use in Arabic in this sense long before the time of Muhammad. Kītāb is used in the secular sense of "letter" in the story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba in Sūrah XXVII.28-29, and of a document of manumission in XXIV.33. The verb is used in I.III.283 with reference to writing contracts, but with these exceptions the word is used in the Qur'an only in connection with Allah's concerns with His creatures.4

The idea that written documents entered into the relations between the divine and the human is to be found very early in the religious history of the Near East. One inheritance from the early Sumerian culture was the feeling that matters of importance must be written, and that there is a certain finality about things when once they are written, "it is written." So in heaven things were written, as things are on earth, and among the things so written in heaven was the will of the gods concerning the world of men. Perhaps the most solemn day in the annual Mesopotamian celebration of the New Year Festival was the day when all the gods gathered in the "Assembly Room" and went into council to fix the fates and arrange for what was to happen among men during the coming year, while Nabi, the divine scribe, wrote down the decrees as they were fixed.5

Since these written decrees affected men in a particular way we often read of men being shown them. Sirach speaks of God showing men His decrees (Eccles. XIX.1). In Jubilees XXXII.21 we read of Jacob being shown seven of the tablets in which were contained

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4 Possibly a secular sense is intended in XXI.104, which describes how on the Last Day Allah will roll up the heavens like a scroll for writings, (ṣūqil il'īṣāf), otherwise the word used for secular books is af'āf, (pl. af'āf in LXX.I), which is cognate with the Heb. af'āf, Aram. af'āf. The Heb. form is used for "scribes" in LXX.I.

records of all the things that were to happen to him and his de-
sendants throughout the ages. The angel said to Enoch: "Observe,
Enoch, these heavenly tablets, and read what is written thereon,
and mark each fact. And I observed the heavenly tablets, and read
everything thereon written, and understood all. And I read the
book of all the actions of man." (Ekh. Enoch LXXXI.1-2; cf.
XCIII.1-3; CIII.2,3; CVI.19; CVII.1: CVIII.7-10). In the Prayer of
Joseph preserved in Philocalia XXIII.15, the patriarch says: "For
I have read in the tablets of heaven all that shall befall you, and
your sons." The angelic figure says to Daniel: "I will tell thee what
is inscribed in the writing of truth" (Dan.X.21).

Allah's book of decrees is mentioned several times in the Qur'an.
In it is written whether a man's life is to be long or short (XXXV-
11/12), so that one seen down to die cannot escape (III.154/148),
nor can anyone die without a written and dated permission from
Allah (III.145/136). The punishments to be visited on earthly
cities are written there (XV.4; XVII.58/60), and those to be meted
out to individuals (XV.79; cf Jer.XXII.50). No misfortune can
happen which was not previously written there (LVII.21: IX.5),
because for every term there is a Kitâb (i.e., decree, XIII.58),
which is the Book which uttereth truth so that no one will be
wronged (XXXIII.62/64; XLV.29/28), which contains men's names till
the Day of Resurrection (XXX.56), and is apparently the Book in
which Allah has written these things that He will surely accomplish
(LVIII.21).

Since things are thus recorded as decreed, the word kitâb
may be used to mean not only the Book of Decrees but Allah's decree itself,
that which has been written for men and must therefore needs come
to pass. "Had it not been for a decree (kitâb) from Allah which
preceded" (VIII.68/69), such and such would have happened. So
the prescriptions which Allah has laid down to be observed by men
are kitâb, something which as decreed may not be set aside (II.266;
IV.105/104). Ketuba, "it has been written," is used in connection
with the law regarding retaliation (II.178/173), testamentary de-
claration (II.209/210), fasting (II.185/179), holy war (II.216/212).
Not only are Allah's laws for the Muslim community thus prescribed
(II.187/183; IV.77/79; 127/126), but so were His laws for the Jewish
community (II.46/47; V.52/54; VIII.156/155), and those for
the Christians (LVII.27), while VI.12 and 54 speaks of what
Allah has prescribed as incumbent on Himself, by which, as written,
He himself is bound. A specimen of these things decreed is given in
XXII.4, where, concerning Satan, whom ignorant men perversely

* Cf Ps. CXLIX.6; XL.7; Ekh. Enoch XCI.14; Slav. Enoch LIII.5, and note the
assumption underlying such New Testament passages as Luke XXII.37; John
XV.45.

follow, we read: "Concerning whom it is written: 'Whoso takes him
as patron will be assuredly lead astray.'"

Another "Book" with Allah, possibly part of this same Book of
Decrees, but more likely an independent Book, is the Inventory
Book in which everything great and small in His universe is recorded
(X.61/66; XI.66/8; VI.59; XXII.76/69; XXVII.75/77; XXXIV.5). It
was doubtless in this book of Inventory that Allah had with Him
the account of former generations (XX.52/53; cf. Ekh. Enoch
LXXXI.4), for He has neglected nothing in it (VI.58). It would
also doubtless be in this Book that such matters as the number of the
months was fixed at creation (IX.56), and may be it is the record book
referred to in L.4. Seven times this Inventory is called the 'clear
book,' or the "book that makes clear" (kitâb mubin). This immedi-
ately refers us back to ancient Mesopotamia where there were elabor-
ate inventories of every kind in order that everything might be
kept clear. God's book of inventory is referred to by the Psalmist
when he mentions the book in which all his members were written
(Ps.LXXXIX.16). The heavenly books into which Enoch looked
had an inventory of all things that had been and were yet to be,
and the heavenly tablets of the Testaments of the XII Patriarchs
seem to be of this nature, though at times it is difficult to distinguish
between the inventory and the Book of Decrees.

Another heavenly Book often mentioned in the literature of the
ancient religions is the Record Book or register of the good and
evil deeds of men. The Zoroastrian Yasna X.XXI.14 states that all
men's works are duly recorded, and in XLIX.10 and XXXIV.2 we
read that this record is preserved in the House of Ahura Mazda.
Religious texts from Babylonia speak of the Tablets on which sins
are recorded and which supplicants pray to have broken, as well as
tuppâ damiâti on which good works are written. In the Old Testa-
ment Malachi refers to the book of remembrance that is written
before Jehovah (XII.6), and in the Talmud, Pirque Aboth, II.1 it
reads: 'Know what is above thee—a seeing eye and a hearing ear,
that all thy deeds are written in a book.' Slav. Enoch XIX.5 men-
tions the angels set over the souls of men "who write down all their
deeds and lives before the Lord," while Ekh. Enoch XXVIII.7 tells
how every sin is every day recorded in heaven in the presence of the
Most High.

The Qur'an knows of this heavenly Record Book in which all
that men are saying and doing is being written down (IX.121/121-
121/121; LVIII.19; XLII.12/12), nothing, whether great or small,
being omitted (XVII.49/47; LVIII.19). This record is being kept

3 Zimmer in Schrader's Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament, pp. 496:
455; Meisser, Babyloniens und Assyriens, II.125; Martini, Texte religieux babyloni-
tena, p. 258.
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that Allah may recompense (IX.121/122; cf. Euth. Enoch LXXII.4.), and on the Last Day it will be brought forth that men may face their record (XVI.13/14, 15/17/73; XVIII.49/47; XXXIX.65; LXXVIII.29) reminding us of familiar passages about the Books being opened for judgment in Dan. VII.10; Rev. XX.11/13; Euth. Enoch XCVII.6; XC.60. Some passages speak of Allah Himself doing the writing (III.18/177; IV.81/83; XIX.19/9; XXI.4/5; XXXVI.12/11 XLV.29/28) but others speak of heavenly scribes occupying themselves with this recording of men's deeds (X.21/22; XLIII.5/5o; L.17/16; LXXII.11). The verses LXXXIII.17/18 suggest that there were two books, one for the record of the wicked and one for the record of the virtuous, or if we are to think of individual tablets for individual persons as in Babylonian thought, then that the records of wickedness were kept in one place and those of virtue in another. Certainly they were individual records which on the Day of Judgment, it was thought, each person would receive in his own hand (XVII.71/73; LXIX.19/25; LXXIV.7/10). This Record Book of the deeds of men is likewise referred to as a kitab mutbin (XXXVI.10/11), a "book which makes clear."

In all this it is clear that we are dealing with religious concepts which had been circulating from very early times throughout the Near East, and which had doubtless been part of the background of religious thought for most of the audiences that Muhammad addressed during the course of his ministry. The fact that in his preaching he is able to assume that he is talking about matters with which his audience is already familiar is proof of this. Moreover, the verses that have been preserved as coming from the old Arab poets show that there was even literary use of these concepts contemporary with, even if not earlier than Muhammad's ministry. He could therefore assume some familiarity on the part of his audience with the idea of such heavenly writings as the Record Book of human deeds, the celestial Book of Inventory, and the great Book of Decrees.

Since LXXII.4 speaks of Allah inscribing faith on the hearts of Believers the question arises as to how literally this writing of Allah is to be taken. Perhaps it was thought of both literally and figuratively. Jeremiah speaks of God writing His covenant on the hearts of His people (Jer. XXXII.35 quoted in Heb. VIII.10; X.6f. cf. Job XIII.36 and Ps. LXXXVII.6), while the tablets of the Law were "written by the finger of God" (Ex. XXXI.18; Deut. IX.10). Both in ancient Egypt and in ancient Mesopotamia we find the picture of a deity who wrote, so there was a long-existent tradition in this area for the notion of a God who literally writes, and we imagine that no one would have found anything strange in the fact that Sura III.55/56 (cf. V.69/70) represents the disciples of Jesus asking Allah to write them down as those who bear witness.

In the older religions we find that it was generally angels who did this recording. See Talmud 11 a; Lev. Rabba, xxii; T. Abrah. xi; Sanh. Enoch xix; Apoc. Pseudo, 10, and for the Zoroastrian tradition Daudistan-i-Dinab, xiv.83.
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At a very early period in ancient Mesopotamia it was believed that the gods might make known their will to mankind. This they might do through omens or signs or presages which skilled priests could interpret. Or they might make it known through dreams, as they did to that mighty king Gudea, or through the oracle. Shamaah was "the Lord of the oracle." There were oracle priests trained to consult and interpret the oracle, and we have an abundance of oracle texts surviving from relatively early periods. In a prayer to Shamaah we read:

"To him who cannot see Thou providest light. 
Thou readest the hidden tablet that is not revealed. 
On the innards of sheep Thou dost write the omen 
And dost provide a decision."

If we interpret this aright it means that there were things written on the heavenly tablets to which man had no access but which it was important for men to know, and Shamaah could and would enlighten men.\footnote{The text is in Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts, VI, 85. On Shamaah as sun god and Lord of the oracle see Contenu, La Divination chez les babyloniens, pp. 28 ff.} Revelations of this kind, however, were necessarily limited in scope. Often a fuller and more detailed expression of the will of the gods as regards men was desirable and was possible. One way of securing this desirable expression of their mind and will was by embodying their injunctions in a Code of Law, whose prescriptions would provide a practical rule of life whereby man could know how to live on earth the kind of life that would be most pleasing to the gods and most profitable to themselves. How early such Codes began to appear we cannot tell, but c.2500 B.C. we find Urukagina at Larsa\footnote{On Urukagina see Patrick Carleton, Buried Empires, pp. 115-116.} executing extensive reforms, removing abuses, issuing decrees "to restore the Law of God." The Code of laws was the writing of king Urukagina himself, but it was done, he tells us, under the inspiration of his god Ningirsu, so that the Code was ultimately a revelation of the prescriptions of God for the direction of men. Hammurabi also, it will be remembered, later set forth his more famous Code under the name and authority of Shamaah.

Law in this sense is both prescription and instruction, in other words what the Jews meant by Torah. Now the Jews came to believe that the Torah was in written form with God long before the creation of the world, that its prescriptions were in part made known to and observed by Adam and the Patriarchs before it was revealed in its fullness by being brought down to Moses, and that it will be revealed anew when the Messiah comes.\footnote{"The text was used in the earliest manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible and is also found in the Targum of Nehemiah, where it is translated as "the Law of Moses."} Elchasi, we know,\footnote{The word used here is zubur, but the use of this word zubur both for the record books of men's deeds (LXX53), and for the books with which Allah's messengers were sent (HII44/48; XVI44/46; XXXV25/28), makes it possible to suppose that there was some kind of such a book of records which was passed from generation to generation.} appeared in close association with the Jewish and Judaeo-Christian Ebionite communities of the Transjordan area, so that there can be little doubt that he, or whoever circulated the story about his "book" received from heaven, had learned from them the idea that a Holy Book is something that was in heaven before it was sent down to be a Scripture for a community on earth. Are we then, to think that Muhammad also had learned, directly or indirectly, from the Jewish communities of Arabia, to think of a heavenly Book of Scripture, a celestial archetype from which the various individual Books of Scripture among men derived?

Certain passages in the Qur'Än certainly suggest this. Sura XLI,149 tells objects that Allah can delete or confirm what He wills since He has there with Him the "Mother of the Book" (Umm al-kitab). This by itself might not mean more than that since Allah is the author of each special decree, He can confirm it or abrogate it as He sees fit. In XLIII,4/5, however, after a statement that this has been made an Arabic Qur'Än so that the Arabs may understand, we read: "And, behold! it is in the Mother of the Book in Our presence," a passage which it is difficult to understand otherwise than as a reference to a celestial archetype of the Qur'Än. Again in XVI,177/178, it is said to be "a noble Qur'Än in a treasured Book," and in XLI,14 the "Reminder" is said to be a "Book sublime" to which no falsehood comes either from before or behind, in both of which passages, though the reference could possibly be to Scripture as a whole of which the message of Muhammad forms a part, it is generally taken to refer to the archetype. Finally in LXXVII,11,12 we read of "a glorious Qur'Än in a preserved tablet," which is the verse from which is derived the later legend of the Tablet on which the Divine Pen wrote when Time had just begun. The fact that "Qur'Än" in the above passages may mean "Scripture lesson" and not refer at all to the book we now have in front of us as a book, does not affect this question of the archetype from which Scripture is drawn.

If these passages mean that Muhammad thought of such a heavenly original Scripture, a written word of God which was the origin of all Scripture, it would explain very neatly his insistence that the content of his own message was in Scriptures of former peoples (XXVI,196),\footnote{The word used here is zubur, but the use of this word zubur both for the record books of men's deeds (LXX53), and for the books with which Allah's messengers were sent (HII44/48; XVI44/46; XXXV25/28), makes it possible to suppose that there was some kind of such a book of records which was passed from generation to generation.} that his Qur'Än is both a confirmation of and a safe-
guard for previous Scripture (I:141/98, 91/85, 97/91; III:3/2 and V:48/58), so that those who accept previously revealed Scripture ought to accept his Qurʾān also (I:121/115; V:68/72). Thus it is easy to see why Muhammad’s followers are told that they are to believe in “the entire Book” (III:119/115), both what came to them through Muhammad, and what had come through previous “messengers” (V:84/64, cf. XLI:15/14), and why the Scriptures brought by previous “messengers” are only a portion of the Book (II:23/22; IV:44/47, 51/54); just as what has come to Muhammad is only a part of what is in the Book (XXIX:45/44; XXXV:91/2, and cf. II:21; XVIII:27/26).

This concept appears relatively late in Muhammad’s ministry. In particular the passages which may refer to an archetype seem all to be Madinan, coming from a period when he had been for some time in fairly close contact with the Jewish communities. If this is so it makes significant a number of small details we find in connection with his words about Scripture.

(a) As we have already noticed, the revelation given to Moses is said in LI:36/37; LXXXVII:19 to have been on yahid, “sheets,” “scrolls.” So in Canticles Rabba V:14 we read that though the Tablets of the Law were made of hardest stone they could nevertheless be rolled up like a scroll.

(b) The word used in LXX:22 for the “tablet” of the celestial archetype is laub, the very word which is used in Hebrew and Aramaic for the tablets which Moses received at Sinai. Indeed it is the word used in the Qurʾān in Sūra VII:145/145 ff., in the story of Moses receiving the Law.

(c) Muhammad seems to have thought of Moses receiving the whole of the Torah at Sinai. The Biblical accounts in Exod.XXXI:18 ff.; Deut.X:15, apparently mean us to think of the two tablets written by the finger of God as containing nothing more than the Decalogue, which would about fill two tablets written on both sides. Later Jewish accounts, however, spoke of the whole of the Torah being given there.

(d) Sūra XVII:95/95 speaks of an ascension to heaven in connection with Muhammad’s claim to have revelation material. Jewish legend told of Moses’ ascent to heavenly places where he studied the Torah which he was to receive and deliver to the people.

There can be little doubt, therefore, that when Muhammad came forward in response to his “call” he came to preach to audiences which not only had a knowledge of Scriptures being used as Holy Books by religious communities, but which, in some cases at clear that it was used interchangeably with kitab. In LIV:49, indeed, kitab seems to mean “Scripture” in general.

Here then is the first fixed point in our discussion of the Qurʾān as Scripture. Kitāb as heavenly book was a concept that had had a long history in the religious thought of the Near East. Kitāb as Scripture had had a special development in Jewish thought and had given rise to a theory, current not only among Jews but also among other religious communities, as to the nature of Scripture. This theory is evidently basic to Muhammad’s teaching about Scripture in his Madinan period if not earlier, and would seem to have been taken over by him from the religious thought of his environment. The fact that it is an erroneous theory is for the moment irrelevant. The important thing is that it involved the idea of a progressive revela-
THE QUR'ĀN AS SCRIPTURE, II

In the religious thought of the ancient Near East it was well understood that a man might be the recipient of a revelation from the gods and thereby be called upon to make known to others what he had learned of the divine will. The Louvre tablets make it quite evident that at least as early as the already mentioned Urukagina, King of Lagash, we are in contact with a man who claims to have heard the voice of his god Ningishzidda bidding him undertake to restore the “way of the gods.” After a period of political and social upheaval Urukagina came to the throne to find the situation in his realm well nigh out of hand, and organized religion not only incapable of dealing with the troubles, but itself involved in the corruption. Officials had misappropriated estates. Judges had been imposing a tax for their personal benefit on cases coming before them. Men in positions of power were enslaving the poor. Lay officials were plundering temple revenues. Even the Chief Minister was demanding his percentage on everything that passed through his hands, while in the temples, where one might have expected better things, the oracle-priests and the sacrificial priests, in spite of the fact that they were on the temple budget, were demanding private fees, and for their own benefit were deliberately encouraging senseless extravagance in the funeral ceremonies. Such things ought not to be, and at the call of his god Ningishzidda king Urukagina girds himself to a mission of reform to restore the ancient ways, the “ways of the gods.”

In early seventh century Mecca affairs were sadly out of joint. Outside pressure from three great powers, Byzantine in the north and west, Sassanian in the east, and Abyssinian in the south, was forcing the Arabs in on themselves, and there was no unity among the tribes to present an effective resistance. At home the wealthy merchants were growing ever wealthier and the poor folk ever poorer. There was injustice, oppression, exploitation, and the official religion of Mecca, though its shrine was in some sense the pantheon of all Arabia, was powerless to deal with the urgencies of the situation. Then there appeared a man Muhammad, just an ordinary man, one from among themselves, who had shared as they had in the caravan trade so important for their economy, but who claimed to have heard the voice of Allah calling to him to a mission to restore a “way of God” which had been forgotten. As in the case of Urukagina his reform included large measures of social and political reform, but his reforms were based on religion. In essentials his mission was an attempt to bring the life of the community in which he lived once again under divine direction as it had been in olden time.

The Qur'ān makes it clear that in undertaking his mission Muhammad thought of himself as standing in the succession of that great company of men to whom God had spoken, and who, because they had received a revelation of the mind and will of God, or what they conceived to be such, felt themselves called of God to announce that revelation to men and thereby undertake the task of reform within their communities. In his preaching he often referred to the stories of his predecessors in this succession. It seems evident that he knew that he could assume in his audiences some familiarity with a number of these stories, and indeed we have a certain amount of evidence that some of these stories of men of God who had preached to their communities were known to the pre-Islamic poets. What Muhammad has to say about them in the Qur'ān is interesting to us for two reasons, (1) because even a cursory examination shows that for him their stories follow a clearly defined pattern which obviously gives us his theory of the “messenger and his mission”; (2) because they provide another clue to what Muhammad meant when he spoke of his Qur'ān as Scripture.

The two words that Muhammad used for such a messenger are rasīl and nabi. Sometimes the messenger is called a mursal, but that is from the same root as rasīl and in the Qur'ān means the same thing. Arwala is “to send,” so a mursal is “one who is sent,” and rasīl, “a messenger,” is equally one who has been sent.

In the case of rasīl we are dealing with a normal Arabic word which has been given a special religious meaning. Human messengers may bear the name rasīl, as e.g., the messenger whom the king of Egypt sent to Joseph in the prison (XII,50), while the related word mursal is used of the envoys from the Queen of Sheba (XXVII,55). The celestial messengers sent to Lot have the name mursal (XV,57,61), Gabriel tells the Virgin Mary that he is a rasīl from Allah (XIX,19; cf. LXXI,19), and the angels who come to take the soul at death are Allah's messengers (VI,51; VII,57,98). The parallel here with the development of meaning in the case of the Greek ἀναθήματος and of the Jewish words šâlîmah, and of the Hebrew words šâhâlah, is striking.

Shēlīmā is the termus technicus in the Syriac-speaking Church.

1 The relevant passages are assembled by J. Horovitz in his Kasarische Unter- suchungen, Berlin, 1915.
2 See Rengstorff in Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, I, 406-414. From Epicurus Diss. III, 22 we see that anaphorēta was used in this sense as early as the Cynics, for they considered themselves to be "sent" to be the "messengers, intelligence officers and heralds of the gods."
for “messenger,” “legate,” and in the religious sense “Apostle.” That this root RSL from which are derived both nostril and nabī was the normal South Semitic equivalent for the North Semitic root ʿSLH, would seem clear from the fact that it is used in Sabean inscriptions for “legate” (Consi Rossini, Glossarium, p. 248).

The development of the religious use of such a word is fairly obvious. Kings and potentates sent messengers to carry word from their presence to those whom they desired that word to reach. Such messengers heard the word from their mighty overlords, in their turn they spoke the word with authority and with expectation that it would be received and obeyed. Often they carried with them credentials to prove that they were accredited messengers, and not uncommonly they were empowered to speak warnings or utter threats of what might be the consequences if their message were disregarded. Now God was King of Kings and Lord of Lords, so at any time He might send messengers to bear His word to men. Such a messenger would necessarily have what to all intents and purposes was an audience, in which he was told the content of the message he would have to deliver and given instructions as to the people to whom it was to be delivered. In the accomplishment of his mission he would have to speak in the name of God who sent him, might prove his accreditation by showing his credentials, and might have occasion to point out the kind of vengeance God would take on such as disregarded the message sent by his mouth.

It is obvious that such a conception might have arisen independently at a number of different points in time and space, but as we study Muhammad’s statements in the Qur’ān with regard to the messengers and to his own place in the succession of these messengers, it becomes clear that he is following very closely a pattern of thought already well established in the religious tradition around him in the area of his mission.

The other word nabī “prophet” was not originally an Arabic word. There is a genuine Arabic verb naba’a cognate with the Akkadian nādī “to summon, call,” but the word nabī in the meaning of “prophet” is a borrowing into Arabic from the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

In the Old Testament a nābī is not necessarily a messenger. The Cannaite Baals and Ashers had their “prophets” (II Ki.XVIII.19-40: II Ki.X.19). Abraham was a prophet though he was the bearer of no message (Gen.XX.7), and indeed all the Patriarchs were Prophets (Ps.CV.15). Miriam, the sister of Moses, was a prophetess (Ex.XV.20), and when the Spirit of God happened to fall on

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Footnotes:
1 See my Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān, p. 776.
2 As Jepson, Nabi, soziale und religionsgeschichtliche Studien, pp. 195 ff.
3 Michah, it will be remembered, claimed (I I.11) of the prophets who so lowered themselves as to divine for money: cf. Jer.XIV.14; XXIX.8: Mic.III.6.
4 Jepson, op. cit. p. 10; Towsn in DDC. LXXV.992.
5 Good illustrations of this are given in Guillemain’s Prophecy and Divination among the Hebrews and other Semites, London, 1916.
under the Midianites, or to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha king of Israel (I Ki.XVI.1-5,18). In later times the word "prophecy" came to be narrowed to this specific form of response by delivering a message. Still later attention was concentrated on the threats and promises contained in the message, so that prophecy tended to mean no longer the whole message of the prophet but the predictions of what doom would fall on the disobedient and what joys would triumph would be the lot of the obedient.

Muhammad as he took up his mission claimed to be both a rasūl and a nabi, representing Allah as addressing him "O thou Apostle" (ṣa ʿayyuhā r-Rasūlī; V.41/45.67/71), and "O thou Prophet" (ṣa ʿayyuhā n-Nabi; VIII.64/65.65/66). He assumes that the audiences know what these words mean, for more than once he gives expression to his distress that they think it amusing that he should consider himself in the succession of the ancient messengers (XXV.41/45; X.2). What then would the nabi as messenger have meant to the people of Scripture from whom his contemporaries had learned the word? A number of points immediately suggest themselves as important for our consideration.

1. He was a source of guidance.

When there was a prophet among the people they would turn to him in moments when more than human guidance was needed with expectation that he could make contact with God and bring them a message containing such guidance.

"But Jehoshaphat said: Is there not here a prophet of the Lord that we may enquire of the Lord by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said: Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat ... and Jehoshaphat said: The word of the Lord is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him." (II Ki.III.11.13).

In the First Book of Maccabees we see the other side of the picture, namely the makeshift arrangements that must of necessity suffice when there is no prophet among the people to whom they may turn for needed guidance.10

2. He would be a man subject to peculiar experiences.

The contact with God through which the message was received was commonly, if not always, a psychically disturbing experience for the prophet.11

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* A suggestion that fulfillment of prediction was the mark of a true prophet is already given in Jer. XXVIII.9.
* See also I Ki.XXII.5-28; I Sam.IX.9.
10I Mac.IV.46; IX.47; XIV.41; cf.Ps.LXXIV.9; I Sam.III.1; Iam.II.9.
11At times the bystanders also were affected by the psychical disturbance, though unaware just what it was that the prophet was experiencing. In the story of Daniel we read: "I Daniel alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me saw not the vision, but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves" (Dan.X.2). This reminds us of the experience of Saul of Tarsus on the way to Damascus, where his companions stood speechless with amazement at the psychical manifestation, though they knew nothing of the "call" it gave to him (Acts IX.7).

The mitzak inscription, (Ludzbarski, Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik, III/II). In I Sam.XXXIV.11 the prophet Gad is called David's Seer; cf. II Ki.XVII.15; IIam.II.
from the Lord (Lam.II.9), for people in distress turn expectantly to their prophet for a vision (Ezek.VII.16).

(c) It might include dreams.° In Num.B.XII.6 we read how God said, "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known to him in a vision, and will speak to him in a dream." So some of the messages reported to have been given to Daniel were in dreams (Dan.VII.1). Enoch saw dreams (Eth.Enoch LXXXV.1), as did Ezra (IV Ezra XI.1). Jeremiah reports how the prophets of his day used to come forward with their message saying, "I have dreamed, I have dreamed" (Jer. XXXIII.29, and cf. verses 28,32). Just as it was the descent of the spirit of God which caused the prophetic ecstasy, it was a similar descent of the spirit which caused such dreams, as the Chronicle of Jerahmeel XI.II.8 tells us in connection with the dream of Miriam the sister of Moses.

(3) He would be a preacher.

The message had to be delivered. When it was a simple message as a word of God about some specific matter it might be delivered in a sentence or a few sentences. The message of God to David in I Sam.XXII.5 was in three brief commands. The message of the prophet to Ahab concerning the army of the Syrian Benhadad was in three sentences (I K.I.X.XIII.14). Michaiah, however, preached a little sermonette to the monarchs and their court when he was sent with his message (I K.I.XXIII.19 ff.). Jonah was sent to preach (Jonah III.2). Amos preached his message to "all the house of Israel," and the "burdens" of Habakkuk and Nahum as well as the messages of the Second Isaiah and Jeremiah were sermons in the true sense. It was thus natural that at a later time the office of prophet should be thought of as in a special sense that of a preacher, "And Thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of Thee at Jerusalem" (Neh.VI.17). So we find that Noah is described as a "preacher of righteousness" (II Pet.II.5, cf. Josephus Ant.II.i, 1), Solomon was the preacher who was king over all Israel (Ecc. I.12), and in the Apocalypse of Abraham we find the Patriarch delivering a sermonette to his father Terah, much as Enoch is represented as preaching to his children (Slav.Enoch LVII ff.). In the Apoc. of Baruch the elders are specially assembled that Baruch may preach to them, and Moses, the Rabbis say, preached and expounded the Torah in seventy languages (Ginzberg, Legends of the Jews, III.439).

° Best.XIII.1 ff. does not necessarily mean that the dreamer of dreams is to be distinguished from the true prophet, though it is clear from as far back as Early Sumeria that it was thought that revelations by way of dreams might come to others than prophets.

Since the message was from God the prophets preached what they claimed was a word from God (Jer.XXXIII.16; XXVIII.18; XVIII.12; XXXIV.8; Ezek.XXIII.1; Hos.IV.1; Dan.IX.5: Hag.II.1; Zeph.I.1; Amos.VII.16; Apoc.Baruch XIII.8). Jeremiah in telling of his call says that the Lord put the words into his mouth (Jer.IIg. XV.19 and cf. XXXIV.8). Ezekiel contrasts his message as the word of the Lord with that of many contemporary prophets who but prophesied out of their own hearts (Ezek.XIII.5). The common complaint against the false prophets was that they prophesied although the Lord had not spoken to them (Jer.XXXIII.21; Ezek. XIII.6,9), therefore their prophesying is called prophesying lies (Jer.XIV.14; XXIII.25; XXVII.9; Ezek.XI.18), so that they are "prophets of deceit" (Jer.XXXII.16; Lam.II.4; Zeph.III.4), who lead the people astray instead of guarding them (Micah III.5). Since the message is the word of God the true prophet is under a sense of compulsion to speak the word that has been given him. This appears quite clearly in Jer.I.1-10, and was given its classical expression by Paul in I Cor.IX.15, "for necessity is laid on me; yea, woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

(4) He might be a quite unexpected person.

Though in ancient times the prophets were generally attached to the shrines, and there was even a sort of "order of prophets" among whom men would naturally expect the gift of facility in making contact with the divine and bringing the message, yet the "spirit of God" might fall on any ordinary man at any time and cause him to prophesy. The story of Saul tells how at one time the spirit of God came upon him so that he prophesied among the prophets (I Sam.X.19-13. cf. I Sam.XIX.20-24). Amos told Amaziah the priest that he had been no member of any order of prophets, nor the son of a prophet, but a simple herdsman when God called him, taking hold of him and saying: "Go, prophesy to My people." (Amos VII.14,15). The most unexpected person, the most unlikely person,° might at any time anywhere be "taken hold of" by God to serve as His messenger to preach His word.

(5) He might be expected to record his message.

Though the earlier prophets seem to have written nothing the later prophets were writing prophets who set down their message in a more permanent form. Habakkuk was expressly commanded to write his message (Hab.II.2), as were Jeremiah (XXX.4; XXXI.5) and Isaiah (VIII.1). Since Daniel is told to seal up the scroll

° E.g., the messengers from Saul in the story in I Sam.XIX.20 were as unlikely persons as one could imagine, yet on their mission to apprehend David, when they came upon Samuel and the prophets prophesying the spirit suddenly seized them also so that they prophesied.
with the picture we have in Qur’an and Tradition of Muhammad as prophet. He claimed to come with “guidance” (XXVII.94/96; V.15/16; XXVI.3), and expects the people to turn to him for the solution of their perplexities (II.189/183; 214; 217; V.4/6; LXXIV.14; XVII.85/87 and cf. IV.55/6); XXIV.4/47). The accounts of his ministry all mention the strange physical and psychological disturbances to which he was subject and which he associated with his reception of messages from Allah. Tradition says that his revelations began with veracious dreams, and there are Traditions regarding his statement that certain classes of dreams belong to prophecy. Sūra LIII.118 is an account of one of his visions, and the famous Mīrāj story recounts his vision of heaven and hell. Over and over again he announces that he has been sent to preach both good tidings and warnings (XII.1:9/12; VII.118. II.119/113. XXXIV.28/27; XXXV.24/22). What he has to preach is Allah’s word (Kalīma, XLI.2/3; XI.119/120; VI.115; XVIII.109), and so he is under constraint to deliver the message (X.16/17). That was an unexpected phenomenon when he appeared as a messenger is clear both from the attitude of his contemporaries towards him (XLII.10/9; X.5; LXXIII.4/5; XXV.4/14), and from his own statement that he was only a messenger from among themselves (III.164/158; IX.118/129; XXII.4). That his preaching was highly unpopular with the power and authority in his community hardly needs illustration. Finally there is his insistence that he has a Book from Allah (XLI.17/16; VI.114; III.3/2; IV.105/106).

To every prophet a Book, therefore Muhammad must have a Book. Here again it is clear that he has taken over from the religious tradition in his environment not only a theory as to the nature of Scripture but also a theory of the prophetic office in connection with which Scripture comes to men. Let us look therefore a little more closely into what the Qur’an reveals of his own thinking about that prophetic office to which his experience had led him to feel that he had been called.

Apparently he made no special distinction between the two names rasūl and nabi. The later theologians made a definite distinction between them, taking nabi to be a word of wider significance than rasūl. They spoke of a very great number of prophets, perhaps as many as 250,000, who while they exercised the prophetic office had no particular message, whereas the messengers were a smaller number, each of whom was given a special visāla. Thus for

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*(Bokhari, Sahih, I.4, 389/447: Abu Dawūd, Sunan, I.359.)*

*(Ibn Hishām, Sirā, p. 151: Munam Ahmad, VI.153: Bokhari, Sahih, III.580, 381.)*

*(Bokhari, Sahih, IV.256, 590: Munam Ahmad, III.151.)*
them every rasûl would be a nabi but not every nabi a rasûl. The Qur’ân does not support such a distinction. If anything the Quranic evidence would seem to point the other way and suggest that the nabi was the narrower term, the prophet being a special class among the messengers. In this Muhammad would be following the older usage in the Old Testament the prophet appears as a messenger of a particular kind.

He speaks of himself as both a rasûl (II.101/95) and a nabi (VII.158). Like those of old he was “sent” (III.144/138) in order to announce (nabha’a, XIX.49) and to preach (basihara, XXXIII.47/46), so that he is both a bearer of good tidings (basîr, XL.2) to those who heed the message, and a warner (nadhîr, XVII.105/106) to those to disregard it. Thus he stands in the succession both of the ancient warners (LII.56/57; XXVII.64/65), and of the previous messengers (II.255/255 f.), and feels himself to declare to his contemporaries, “I am Allah’s messenger to you all” (VII.158/157). His message is in his Qur’ân. It is the Qur’ân he is to preach as his good tidings (XIX.97), and it is by the Qur’ân that he is to warn (VI.92; XIX.97; XCVI.1; XXXII.9/2; XL.7/5) and to remind (L.45). He thus expects his Qur’ân to be taken as Scripture in the same sense as the messages of earlier prophets and messengers had come to be regarded by other communities as Scripture.

What then did he know of these earlier messengers and their Books? Over and over again he reminds the Arabs that they had hitherto had no such messenger sent to them. “Nay it (i.e. the Qur’ân) is the truth from thy Lord, that thou mayest warn a people to whom no warner has come before thee” (XXXII.9/2 and cs. XXVIII.6; XXXIV.44/43). For this reason he can claim that he is teaching them what neither they nor their fathers had known (VI.91), since they had so far received no book of Scripture (XXXIV.44/43; XXXIV.40/49; LXXVIII.47). He challenges them to produce Scriptural evidence in support of their religious practices if they think that they are in “the way of God” (XXXVII.157; XLVI.4/3 and cs. XVIII.5/4). He even represents them as complaining that had Allah sent them a messenger and a Scripture they might have been in the true path (XX.134; XXXVII.168/169; VI.157/158; XXXVIII.47).

The point he is making in all this is that without Scripture there can be no true religion. For true religion men need accurate knowledge of God and guidance from God as to the “way of God.” Such knowledge and guidance can come only by way of revelation. While it is true that the Divine Being does in a measure reveal Himself in His works (L.6-11), and to some extent in history (XLVII.10/11), yet His more complete and purposeful revelation of Himself has ever been through the messages He has given to those men whom He has chosen (XXI.7/35). Foolish, therefore, is it for one to venture to dispute about Allah with ignorant or enlightening Book (XXII.8). Indeed, it is precisely because revelation is essential to true religion that Satan is ever interested in interfering in this matter (XXIII.5/51).

Since revelation is of such importance it is obvious that Allah would have revealed Himself in this special way very early in the history of mankind. In the text books of Muslim theology we find that the sending of messengers is thought to have begun with Adam, who was the first of the series of prophets which extended in continuous succession up to Muhammad. In the Qur’ân itself Adam is never called either a nabi or a rasûl, but we read how Allah taught him (II.41/9 to 47/55), guided him (II.48/48; XX.112/110 and cs. 123/121), and particularly how Allah chose him (XX.112/110; III.39/39), all three of which are terms which have a special use in connection with Allah’s calling of messengers. The passage III.38/39 is particularly interesting for it mentions how Allah chose above all human beings Adam, Noah, Abraham’s family and the family of ‘Imran, thus placing Adam at the beginning of that series of three groups which elsewhere in the Qur’ân are specially marked as those chosen for the task of bearing Allah’s revelation to mankind (XXXVII.1; LIX.167; XXIX.27/26; LIX.84/8; XIX.85/9).

This setting of Adam at the beginning of the prophetic line is possibly a later development of thought, for there are other passages in which Noah appears to be the starter of the line of messengers. Sûra LIX.27/28 speaks of the sending of Noah and Abraham and the appointing of the prophetic office and Scripture to Adam. 8

8 There is teaching (tâbla) in the phenomena of cattle (XVI.66/68; XXII.1), in the succession of day and night (XXIV.46), in the histories of the messengers (XII.11), in the stories of the dire punishment visited by Allah on various peoples (LXXIX.46), and even in the events of the battle of Badr (III.13/14).


10 The fact that in XIX.58/59 the prophets are said to have been of the posterity of Adam is not significant in this connection, for it need mean nothing more than that as humans they were naturally children of Adam.

11 The Exegesis make v. 25 also refer to Noah, for the "balance" mentioned in that verse they regard as our well known instrument for weighing but which was unknown to mankind till Gabriel instructed Noah in its use and Noah instructed his progeny.
be among their posterity, so that in their footsteps the messengers followed one another, and finally Jesus also. Again both IV.166; 161; and X.24/75 suggest that it was only after Noah that messengers began to come in regular succession, while in XXXIII.7 we find him as the first in the list of those predecessors of Muhammad with whom Allah made strict covenant. It would be natural, of course, for a new start to be made after the flood, so that this does not necessarily mean more than that with Noah the succession was taken up again.

In any case Adam's progeny were promised that messengers would come to them (VII.53/58), and that Muhammad thought of a succession of them according to some divine plan appears clearly. "Then sent We our messengers, one after the other. Every time its messenger came to a community they treated him as a liar, so We caused them to follow in succession on another" (XXIII.44/46 and cf. X.74/75 ft.). One such messenger has been sent to every nation (XVI.83/83; X.47/48; XXXVII.23/23), and even to the Jinn (VI.130), for it was not consistent with the justice of Allah to visit with punishment any community till a messenger had been sent to warn it (XXVIII.59; XVII.13/16), and after one has been sent men have no plea against Allah (IV.165/165). For this reason the messengers are normally chosen from the members of the community itself (XIV.4), so that their message may be plain.

In His choice of messengers Allah exercises His divine prerogative and chooses whom He will (III.179/179). Some of them were more highly endowed than others, and some He raised to higher rank than others (II.153/153; XVII.57/57), but they are all His servants (XXVIII.171; XVI.4; XIV.11/15; XI.3). His sending them is an act of mercy (rabana) on His part (XI.4/4), and He desires that men make no distinctions among them (I.136/136; II.285; III.84/78; IV.64/64), and they are always humans (XXI.7; XVIII.34/34; XVII.8/8; XVIII.45/45; XIV.4/4; XIV.5/5; XII.109), performing nor-

mal human actions such as eating and going about the market places (XXV.20/20), and having wives and children (XIII.36). This apparently excited comment from Muhammad's contemporaries, for there seems to have been some idea abroad that this bringing of a divine message ought to have been the task of angels rather than men (XXV.42/42; XV.7; XVII.82/94; XII.12/15; VI.89, 91.111). Muhammad apparently felt the pressure of this objection so much that he represents the same objection having been raised against Noah by his contemporaries (XXIII.4; XI.51/51), and by the peoples of 'Ad and Thamud against their messengers (XII.14/14). Since the messengers, however, are but humans, they are not to be taken as Lords (III.80/80), yet are to be obeyed (IV.64/64) as those to whom Allah has given authority over what He wills (IX.6).

Having chosen His messengers Allah enters into a covenant with them (XXXIII.7; III.81/81). On His part He gives them a revelation of Himself which makes clear to them His uniqueness (XXI.8), promises them His aid (XI.51/51; X.103/104) and His guidance (VI.99; X.58/58), and of course gives to them the message, His "word" which they are to deliver (XXVII.171). They on their part undertake the task of delivering the message (V.71; VII.69/69; XVI.68/68; XXVII.77/77) firmly enduring in spite of all opposition (XVI.53/53; VI.54), bearing witness (LXXII.13), setting forth Allah's signs (XX.154), and asking no recompense from men since their reward is from Allah (XXXVI.21/21). They are to expect opposition to their mission (XXV.31/31; VII.112), and to be made mock of (XLIII.7/7), but on the great Judgment Day all men will have to face questioning on how they responded to the messengers sent them (XXVII.65; VII.62/62), and it will then become apparent that Allah and His messengers finally prevail (LVIII.21; XXXV.94).

In connection with this idea of a "covenant" with the prophets Muhammad uses a number of technical terms.

(1) There are first of all the two words he uses for the covenant itself, viz. mitthaq and 'ish, both of which were in secular use but which lent themselves to use in a technical religious sense.

(2) Embarrassment is laid on the fact that Allah always makes good His promises to His messengers (XXI.4; XIV.47/47), and on how when they are in distress and despair He comes to their aid (XII.140).

(3) There is a curious suggestion in LXXII.47/47 that when Allah has revealed the message to a messenger He sets angelic guards to see that the message is delivered.

(4) There is a suggestion that a special time is assigned to the Messengers on the Day, when they will be called to a reckoning and have to give an account of their mission (LXXVII.11; XVI.89/89; XXXIX.69/69 and cf. V.109/109).
(a) *mithāq* is related to the verb *waṭthaqa* "to put trust in anyone," which is used in the III Form to mean "to enter into a compact or treaty with anyone." So *mithāq* is a "covenant" or "treaty" entered into in such a way. It is used in the Qur'an in its secular sense with reference to compacts between humans (IV.21; 25, 90/92; 92/94; VIII.71/75). In its technical sense, however, it is used only in connection with messengers and their communities. Most often the *mithāq* is that between Allah and the Children of Israel (II.88/77; 84/78; 89/97; V.12/15; 70/74; VIII.160/68), but Allah also had one with the Christians (V.14/17), and indeed with all the people of Scripture (III.187/184). It was because of the covenant that messengers came to the Children of Israel (V.70/74), and part of the covenant was that they should believe in the messengers and help them (IV.12/15), but they broke the covenant and killed the prophets (IV.15/135 ff.). The communities, however, come into the covenant relationship only because of their prophets, for Allah's strict *mithāq* is really with those whom He sends (XXXIII.7). But when they have come into this covenant relation and have received Scripture through their prophet, they, like their prophets, are under covenant obligation to spread the message and labor to establish the "way of God" (III.187/184; XIII.20/25; II.17/23; V.11/15). Since Muhammad claims to have a place in the prophetic succession, he also is under the *mithāq* (XXXIII.7), and so consequently is his community (L.VII.8).

(b) *ahd* is related to the verb *ahda* "to enjoin," "to stipulate," which in the III Form is used to mean "to make a covenant with." It is used in the Qur'an of covenants among men (III.177/172; III.76/70; XXIII.8; XIII.20; XVII.34/36; LXX.32), of Muhammad's compacts with his contemporaries (XXXIII.15/23; II.100/94; IX.12), and of covenants men might make with Allah (XIX.78/81, 87/90). In this last case the word has already begun to take on a religious rather than a secular sense (d.XLVIII.10; IX.73/76). It is more generally used in the Qur'an, precisely as *mithāq* is used, for the covenant relation entered into by communities with Allah through the messages sent to them by the messengers.22 It is in this sense that

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22 Some details are given of the content of the covenant with the Children of Israel (II.88/77 ff.; IV.154/155; V.11/15 ff.) which make it clear that Muhammad has in mind the Mosaic Law. This Jewish covenant is associated with revelation in II.65/60, 69/71; V.70/74.

23 This explains why in III.8/33 he insists that part of the covenant with the prophets was that when he appeared to preach his mission their communities should recognize him to be in the succession and should aid him.

24 Covenant with the Children of Israel is particularly mentioned in II.40/48, 68/74, and with the Ahl al-Kūth in general in III.76/70 ff.

25 These three terms occur together again in XIX.6/15, where all three are said to have been bestowed on the Children of Israel, and in III.79/73, where it is said that it is unseemly for a man on whom Allah has bestowed *kitāb* and *hukm* and *nubūtwa* to claim that men should worship (or serve) him instead of Allah.

26 And compare III.184/181; XVI.43/45 ff.; II.136/136.
are told that no man may have part in Allah's judgment (XXVIII. 16/26). It may even refer to a human decision, as e.g., that of David and Solomon (XXI.78), or that of the Times of Ignorance (V. 50/55). In this sense the Torah contains the hukm of Allah (V. 43/47), and the Qur'an is said to be sent down as an Arabic hukm (XIII.37). Since the root HUK also develops the meaning of "wisdom," some have thought that in these latter cases we are to understand the word in this sense, that the Torah and the Qur'an contain the "wisdom" of Allah, that when Abraham prays for hukm to be bestowed on him he is praying for divine wisdom, and that when Allah bestows hukm on Joseph (XXI.24), on Lot (XXI.74), on Moses (XXVI.21/20; XXVIII.14/19), on David and Solomon (XXI.79), on John Baptist (XIX.12/13) and on Jesus (III.79/78), it was a bestowal of His wisdom. This may be so. Its use along with kitāb and naba'wān in the three passages already mentioned, however, makes it more likely that when used in connection with the messengers whom Allah sent it refers to the prophetic jurisdiction.

In the ultimate sense final jurisdiction, of course, is with Allah alone (VI.57/6a; XII.40/67; XXVIII.70; XL.12), so that when men differ about a matter the decision goes to Him (XLI.10/8; cf. XXVII.78/80). Yet Allah gives delegated authority to His messengers (LIX.6). They come with the truth (VII.43/44; 55/51), at their coming to a community judgment is given with justice (X.47/48), and Allah expects that His messengers will be obeyed (IV.63/67). Their jurisdiction is associated with Scripture, for we read that the prophets among the Children of Israel gave judgment according to the Torah (V.44/48).

(c) naba'wān is the prophetic office. Those called of Allah are "sent" (XLI.6/5; XXIII.44/46; XLIV.5/4 and frequently). Their mission is twofold, they are to be announcers of good tidings and they are to be warners (II.213/209; VI.48; XVIII.56/54), the former to those who received the message, the latter to those who reject it. They are not responsible for the outcome of their mission, but only for fulfilling it (XXIII.99) and clearly proclaiming their message (XXVII.17/16; V.55; XXIV.54/53; XXIX.18/17). Allah knows best where to place His messengers (V.124), and it is for Allah to make a way for the message in the hearts of sinners (XV.18; XXVI.100, and cf. XLI.7). The message will differ.

This may be the meaning of the statement that Allah never sends a prophet to a people but He afflicts that people (VII.52/52; VI.49). Two different verbs are used asalā and ba'abah, but apparently they are used interchangeably. Thus asalā is used of the sending of Moses in XL.59/99, but ba'abah in VII.109/101.

For their accreditation they bring from Allah clear evidentiary proofs (bayyināt). A bayyinā may mean nothing more than something which makes clear. Allah's judgments on former peoples are a bayyinā (XXIX.35/34). False gods have no Scripture which contains a bayyinā (XXV.40/98). What was revealed in previous Scriptures was a bayyinā for men (XX.43), and so Muhammad's own message is referred to as a bayyinā (II.209/209; VI.17/158; XXIX.49/49). The word, however, is also used for a miracle. Moses' nine miracles are called bayyināt (VII.101/103), and Sālih's miraculously produced she-camel is a bayyinā (VII.73/71). So when the messengers are said to have come with bayyināt as well as Scripture (III.184/181; XXXV.25/25), and Allah declares that He has sent as messengers none but inspired men with their bayyināt (IV.44/46), we are justified in deciding that the bayyināt with which the several messengers are said to have come (VII.101/99; IX.70/71; X.13/47; 75; XIV.9/10; XXX.9/8; XXXV.25/25; XL.21/23) were the miracles they performed in justification of their mission. As such these miracles are also called āyāt "signs" (XL.28; XXI.5; VI.109/24; XVII.59/61). The messenger does not himself choose the type of miracle he will produce, but Allah bestows the power of producing them when and how He sees fit (XIV.11/13).
for such things of wonder are in the power of Allah alone (XXIX. 50/49; VI.109) and may be wrought only by His express permission. The fulling of the mission was no easy task. No messenger was ever sent but he was mocked at by his contemporaries (XV.11; XLIII.7;6; XXXVI.30/29). Men scoffed at them (XXI.41/42; XI. 38/40; XII.32), treated them as impostors (LVII.12, 13 ff.; XV. 80; X.99/90; XXXVIII.14/15; XXIII.14/6), argued with them to refute their message (XL.5; XVIII.91/94), thought their pretensions an example of insolence (LIV.29), taunted them that they were only human (XXXVI.15/14; XXIII.35/34 ff.; 47/49; XXI.8), said they were possessed (LIV.5), and not content with opposing them (LV.8), tried to lay violent hands on them (L.5; III. 108/80). The Jews in particular were upbraided for having killed the prophets unjustly (II.61/62/65; III.11/30;115/108;181/177; IV.155/154). The miracles they produced as evidentiary signs were considered as impostures (LIV.44; XVII.59/61), or as the products of magic (LIV.2). The Satans endeavored to lead them astray from their mission (XXI.52/51), and we read that Allah appointed a special enemy to every prophet (XXV.31/32; VI.118).

We thus have a fairly clear picture of Muhammad's conception of the prophetic office of those messengers into whose fellowship he felt that he had been brought by his "call." But who were the prophets in whose succession he made claim to stand?

Nowhere in the Qur'an do we find any statement of the number and order of the prophet succession from Adam to Muhammad himself. Muhammad thought of them as a numerous body. Sūra XLIII.6/5 reflects on how many a prophet Allah had sent to those of old, and Moses is represented as bidding the Children of Israel remember Allah's goodness in appointing prophets to be among them (V.60/61; cf. 52/56), a statement which assumes that there were a number anterior to Moses.4 That others were raised up later than Moses is clear from (IL6/81), and it was in the footsteps of these that Jesus walked (V.60/61). The Aḥl al-Kitāb, i.e., the Jews and the Christians, know about these messengers (XXI.7; XVI.48/45), and think that the succession has already reached its end (V.19/22). Muhammad knows that though he has learned

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4 In my Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an, p. 57. I was inclined to favor the view that there was in this use of "the Tribes" a confusion between the twelve tribes and the "Twelve" as a name for the Minor Prophets, among whom was the Jonah who is mentioned in the Qur'an. It seems more likely, however, that it means "the Patriarchs," the twelve sons of Jacob, who in later Jewish thought were included among the prophets, and who even had a "Book," the well known Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs.

5 By the well known confusion of Miriam the sister of Moses and Aaron with Miriam (= Mary) the mother of Jesus, the latter comes to belong to the family of 'Imrān.
of Midian, and that is the complete list of the messengers mentioned by name in the Qur'ān.\(^4\)

The most obvious thing about the personalities in these lists is that they are almost all Biblical characters. Many Western scholars, indeed, have endeavored to make all of them Biblical characters. Idrīs is generally identified with Enoch, though Torrey would make him Edras = Ezra. Dhlîl-Kîlî has been thought to be Ezekiel or Obadiah. This name, which occurs in XXI.85 and XXXVIII.58, means “he of the portion,” and may be but another name for Elijah, just as Jonah, who is usually called Yûnûs, in XXI.87 is called Dhlîn-Nûn, “he of the fish.” Shu‘ailîb has often been equated with Jethro in view of his association with Midian, and with less likelihood Hûd with Eber and Sâlîh with Salah the father of Eber. In any case Muhammad’s tradition about the succession of messengers would, as far as the lists go, quite clearly derive from the Jewish and Christian groups of his day. What is more striking, however, is that when we examine in detail the pattern of his teaching about these messengers and their mission we are at every point taken back to these same groups.

1. The Patriarchs as Prophets.

To us it seems a little strange to consider Adam as a prophet, but Clement of Alexandria commenced the prophetic line with the father of mankind, regarding him as a prophet “who spoke prophetically with regard to the woman and in the giving of names to creatures” (Strom. I.21). This was a notion he derived from Jewish

\(^4\) Two other lists should be mentioned which, though they are not strictly lists of messengers, are connected therewith for they are lists of ancient peoples who rejected their messengers. One such list is an interpolation in Sûra L, where it now forms verses 12-14/15, and the other is in I X.39/71. The former lists the people of Noah, the men of ar-Rass, Thamûd, ‘Ad, Pharaoh, the brothers of Lot, the men of the Grove, and the people of Tubba’. The latter enumerates the people of Noah, ‘Ad, Thamûd, the people of Abraham, those of Midian and of the overthrown cities. The “overthrown cities” are Sodom and Gomorrah, in all probability, and so their prophet would be Lot. The “men of the Grove” are the Midiansites of the Shu‘ailîb story. Pharaoh’s people, of course, had the message from Moses and Aaron. The men of ar-Rass are mentioned again in XXV.85/49, along with ‘Ad and Thamûd, as people of ancient times, but we have no idea who they were, nor who was the prophet Hanâzâla who later tradition says was sent to them. The people of Tubba’ are the Himyazîtes of South Arabia, who are mentioned again in XLIV.57/56, but nothing is said as to their prophet, who some think is meant by the name Tubba’, the people being so called because they were the people to whom he was sent. Ezra is mentioned in IX.30 and would be classed by us among the prophets, but the Muslim Commentators are doubtful whether he belongs to the prophet succession, as they are about the LugÛmîn who appears in Sûra XXXX, and the Dhlîl-Qurazîn of Sûra XVII.
THE QUR’ĀN AS SCRIPTURE

III.81/75. There we read of a particular occasion on which Allah laid on the prophets as a whole the covenant obligation that in return for His giving them Scripture (Kitāb) and wisdom (hikmah) they would promise that when a messenger came confirming what they had from Him they would believe in him and aid him. That was the condition on which they were to take up their task, and when they assented Allah promised that He would be with them. Obviously Muhammad is here referring to his own claim to be in the prophetic succession. He is the one who comes “confirming” what was sent to the earlier messengers, and verse 83/79 expressly links this passage with his religion of Islam. On the surface it would seem absurd that the prophets, who were all dead long before Muhammad was born, should be called on to make a promise that when he appeared they would believe on him and aid him, so the Commentators have had to work out ingenious theories to explain that covenants with prophets included their followers, or that “prophets” in this passage does not mean the actual prophets but the descendants of the prophets, or that here it means the Jews, since they claimed that the gift of prophecy was found only among them. The fact, however, is that in this verse we have a reflection of the popular Jewish legend that all the Patriarchs and the prophets were assembled at Sinai, both those who had been and those who were to come to witness the giving of the Torah to Moses, since the Torah was the great covenant of God with His people, and there Moses is told that the perfect successor he desires will not come till the end of time when he will come as Messiah.

Now Sūra II.119/123 speaks of Abraham praying that Allah would raise up among the Arabs a prophet who would receive to him his sign, teach him the Scriptures (Kitāb) and wisdom (hikmah) and purify them. Muhammad’s claim is that he is the answer to this prayer, since he is the Arab prophet sent with an Arabic Scripture to warn Mecca and the places thereafter (XLII.7/8). Consequently he claims that his coming was foretold in previous Scriptures (VII.157/156; LXI.6), that he is in a particular sense in the Abrahamic succession (III.68/60), so that he is the one who has the Kitāb and the hikmah (IV.118), who has come to purify them (LXI.1; II.111/114; III.64/158). This is conclusive evidence that he has heard of this Messianic expectation among the People of the Book, and been convinced by his own experience of a call that he is to bring to his people the religion of the Aḥl al-Kitāb, he identified himself with this expected figure, and so included himself in XXXIII.7 among those under the prophetic covenant.

3. The Prophetic Succession.

That God, before sending chastisement upon the nations, gives them due warning by the mouth of His messengers, is clear enough from the messages of the Old Testament prophets. That there was a planned succession of such messengers was a later idea. The basis for it is in the Old Testament. There we find that such a prophetic order was not confined to the Children of Israel. God raised up prophets to bear His message also among the Gentile peoples. The most famous of these in the eyes of the later Rabbis were Balaam and John,14 and his friends. Nor was the mission of the Jewish prophets confined to their own communities for Jonah was sent to Nineveh, Obadiah to Edom, and the messages of the greater prophets were often enough addressed to the surrounding nations. Later Jewish piety was anxious to confine the prophetic gift to its

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*II.101/95; XXXVII.37/36; cf. X.37/38; V.32; XXXV.31/32; III.3/2; V.49/52, and notice in this connection X.34/35; XLII.7.

*See the Commentaries of Tāhirī, Qurtubī and Baidawī ad loc., and the discussion in al-Sāliḥ’s Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī, III.18 ff.

*It is so called in Dīn. IX.s 11.

*A simple statement of this legend may be read in Ginther’s Legends of the Jews, III.199.

*This is the famous Paraclete passage where the promise of the Paraclete in Jn.16.7 ff. is taken to be a prediction of the coming of Muham-
own people, so that on the one hand we find attempts to show that the Gentile prophets were somehow connected with the Israelite community, and on the other a theory worked out to show how the gift was withdrawn from the Gentiles and after the death of Moses was confined exclusively to Israel. Nevertheless God’s message through His prophets was intended for the seventy Gentile nations also, so the Torah was written out in their seventy different languages, was interpreted by Moses in seventy tongues, while the prophets preached their messages in seventy languages. There was also an idea of some plan of a succession among the prophets, for the Rabbis told how Adam was shown the series of prophets who should come each in his generation.

The universal outreach of the messengers appeared again in Christianity, for Jesus in the Gospels sends out the Seventy to preach his message (Lk.10.1-15). Early Christian legend delighted to elaborate on the missionary activity of the Seventy as they moved out into the various lands allotted to them as the scene of their labors. In consideration of the gift of tongues at Pentecost it was taken for granted that they would be able to preach in the various tongues of the peoples to whom they were sent. These apocryphal Acts of the Apostles were widely read among the adherents of the Eastern Churches, so that Wensinck, The Muslim Creed, p. 203, has suggested that it was from them that Muhammad learned the idea of a messenger being sent to each people. A much closer parallel with the Quranic teaching on this matter is that of Mani, who not only sent his apostles as messengers to the peoples of the surrounding countries, but himself in his address to the Sassanian monarch

* Niwm.Rabba,XX,1; Tamhumaz.ed.Buber,IV,151; Baba bathra,2,5 a–15 b; Melilah.ed. Lauterb.,p.4. Muhammad found the Jews of Arabia claiming this exclusive possession of revelation and for that reason rejecting his claims (I.49/52; III.79/80, and cf. II.155/156).

* From a calculation of the progeny of Noah as detailed in Gen.X it was held that there were seventy-two (or seventy) different nations and consequently seventy-two (or seventy) languages. That the Torah was in them all appears from the statement of Sota VII, 17.

* See Ginsberg, Legends of the Jews, III,430.

* Aggadath Bereishith, XIV (ed.Buber,p.90).

* Seder Olam Rabba, XXX (ed.Rainer,p.151).

* The material has been conveniently assembled by Lipsius, Die apocryphen Apostelgeschichten, 1814. A convenient tabulation of the various areas of their missionary activity is given by Solomon of Barra in chapter XLVIII of his Book of the Bee, the Syriac text of which was edited by E. A. Wallis Budge in 1886 for the Aeneodo Oxoniensi.

* A characteristic sample of these legends is that in the Ethiopic Gadla Ennourt (Contendings of the Apostles), edited by E. A. Wallis Budge in 1898, a cheap edition of the English translation of which is published by the Oxford University Press (London, 1955).

Shapur I in his Shahnameh, as quoted by Biruni (Chronologie, ed.Sachau,p.207), said—

“Wisdom and mighty deeds have always been brought to mankind by messengers coming from time to time from God. So in one age they were brought to India by the messenger named Buddha, in another by Zarathushtra to Persia, in another by Jesus to the West. So now this revelation has come down, this prophecy in this last age, through me, Mani, the messenger of the God of truth to Babylonia.”

4. The humanness of the Messengers.

It is curious how often the Qur’an mentions men’s expectation that a messenger from God ought to have been an angel (XVII.92/94/95/96; XV.8/9; XXIII.4/4, against which expectation Muhammad feels the necessity of as constantly asserting that they are always humans (XXI.7/8; XXV.20/21; VII.95/95-95/97; XVII.11/13; XII.109; XVII.35/38), though of course Allah can choose His messengers from among angels or men (XXII.75/74), and angels do mediate revelation (XVI.7). This expectation of angels as messengers may have something to do with the fact that Heb.mal‘ak and Aram. mālakah, like the Gk. ἄγγελος, are both “messenger” and “angel.” Yet there is also the fact that angels as God’s messengers to bring messages and revelations are well known in both the Old and the New Testaments. It was an angel who came to the wife of Manoah (Judg.XIII.18 ff.), angels came to Lot (Gen.XIX), one came to Gideon at Ophrah (Judg.VI.11 ff.), and it was Gabriel who appeared both to Daniel (Dan.IX.XII) and to the Virgin Mary (Lk.I.26 ff.).

The prophets of the Old Testament, however, were men with human imperfections and limitations. They were sent (Jer.XIV. 15; XXIII.21/24;XXV.19; Ezek. II.5; Isa.VI.8; Jonah III.9; Chron.XXXVI.15), just as Muhammad insists that prophets are sent (XLIII.26/5; XXIII.39/39 etc.). Also as Muhammad insists they are in the Bible always servants (Jer.XXII.9; II Ki. IX.7; X.13/13; XXI.10; XXIV.2; Ezra IX.11; Amos III.7; Dan. IX.6; Ezek.XXVII/17; Jer.VII.25; XV.14; XXXV.13), in whose mouths God has put His word (Jer.1.9; XXXIII.16; Zech.VIII.1), that may warn (Jer.VI.10; XLIV.4/4; Ezek.II.17; III.8/15; XXXIV.XXXV; Acts XX.31), and give good tidings (Isa.XL; XL. 27; LV; LX.LXII; Nah.1.15). They even reveal where necessary

* That prophets should be joyful persons was a theory of the Rabbis who held that the spirit of prophecy would come upon a man only when he was in a state of joyfulness. See on this Ginsberg,Legenda,III,1/6.
God’s secret knowledge (Amos III.7). Their utterances, because they are human and deal with human situations, commonly make use of parables (Ex. XXIV.5; XVII.2; XX.19 [in the Heb.XXI.3]; Lk. V.38; Mk. IV.13), where the Heb. word māshāl and the Aramaic word underlying the Gk. ἀμάθητος, are precisely the mathal used in the Qur'ān for the similitudes employed by Allah’s messengers. Indeed we learn from Hosea XII.10 (11) that similitudes were to be expected from prophets, who are always sent in the language of their own people (Ex. III.5, 6).

5. The Accreditation of the Messengers.

We have already noticed that some of Muhammad’s audience averred that they could credit no messengers who did not cause fire to descend from heaven on a sacrifice (II.185/179). The reference is usually taken to be the Elijah story of 1K.18:21, though the same idea is present in the Gideon story in Judges VI.17-24. In any case it is sure evidence of the presence in that audience of conceptions derived from the Old Testament, and since the Maccabees seem to be well aware that all the messengers of old produced signs (2 Mace. VI.124), it would seem that the Ahl al-kitāb of Muhammad’s day had made so much of the miraculous in association with the messengers that when folk heard Muhammad claiming a place in the prophetic succession they immediately demanded a miracle as his credential (XX.133; XXI.5; XVII.92/91 ff.; X.20/21; VI.37/39). To this his answer is that when such signs were granted to the peoples of old they did not believe in them (XVII.59/61; cf. VI.109). This demand was no new thing. When Jesus was preaching his Gospel he was asked: “What sign shewest thou, that we may see and believe thee? What worketh thou?” (Jno. VI.30, cf. Matt. XIX.38; XVI.1; Lk. XI.16). Such a request was not unnatural in that audience. They had read of how Moses was given his rod for the special purpose of working with it signs in accreditation of his mission (Exod. IV.7), being told when it was given him that if the Egyptians did not believe at the first sign maybe they would at the second (Exod. IV.8). Aaron also, they would remember, had performed signs (Exod. IV.30; VII.9), and the man out of Judah in the story in 1 K. XII.3 produced a sign in attestation of his mission. That signs and wonders could be expected of prophets whether true or false was the common belief (Deut. XIII.13). Jesus warned that the false prophets who should come would show great signs such as might deceive even the elect (Matt.XXIV.24), and the Rabbis used to say that when a prophet came and began to prophesy, if he produced a sign or wonder men would hear him, but if he did not men would not hear him (Sifre Deut.XVIII.19, § 177). The apocryphal Acts of the Apostles are full of stories of the miracles which the disciples of Jesus performed in attestation of their mission in the various lands to which they were sent. Muhammad’s usual word for such an evidentiary sign is dā‘a, which is the Arabic equivalent of the Heb. ṭif and the Aram. ṭifḥ used in the signs which in a special way were associated with God’s messengers and His revelation to them.67 His other common word bāyinā‘ is formed from the verbal stem bāyana, “to make clear,” “to cause to understand,” the Hebrew equivalent of which is the Hiphil form hēbān, used in the Old Testament in precisely the same sense, and in particular in connection with God’s making clear His mind and purpose to men.68

6. The Reckoning with the Messengers.

It was doubtless a natural thing in the Courts of human kings that those who had been entrusted with a mission should be called on to render an account of their performance of that mission, which would suggest that the King of Kings would demand a reckoning both from His messengers and from those communities to whom they had been sent. There are two parables of Jesus (Lk.XVI.1-12 and XIX.12-24) which picture the master demanding an accounting from his stewards to whom he has committed his wealth, and in both there is an obvious reference to a coming accounting with God. The Grand Assizes at the Last Day is an appropriate place for this, so that such Quranic references as V.109/108; VII.6/5 to an accounting of this kind on the Day of Judgment might be part of any picture of the final Assizes. When we consider other passages, however, such as LXXVII.11; XVII.92/91; XXXIX.69 ff., which suggest that the accounting on the Day begins with the summoning of the prophets to bear witness,69 the parallels with aboda zar a 2 a b are so striking that we can hardly avoid Tor Andræ’s conclusion70 that both are the product of the same conception of the meaning of revelation from God and the responsibility on man’s part to respond to its message when it is brought to him.

We thus come at the conclusion of our second study on the

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68 P. C. X. IV.57,58; PSI.135, 63; 2 Mace. XXIV.16. Dtr. VIII.16.
69 Pseudo-Chamæliad-Durra al-Abhira, pp. 37, 51, etc. makes much of the scene of the prophets being called up and having to confront their respective communities. Cf. also All-Shawari, Tadţib, p. 51.
70 Tor Andræ, In the Testaments of the XII Patriarchs we have the idea that the ancient worthies Enoch, Shem, Noah, Abraham, etc. rise first at the general resurrection for some sort of confrontation of their communities.
Qur'an as Scripture to the same point we reached in the first. In carrying through the mission to which he felt he was called Muhammad knew that he must have a Scripture such as the Ahl al-Kitāb had, and from those Ahl al-Kitāb he took over a theory as to the nature of Scripture. Scripture, however, was mediated through human messengers sent from God, the prophets to whom God had given revelation. The Ahl al-Kitāb had a theory also about prophets and their mission, a sort of "Doctrine of Prophecy," and it is now clear why in such passages as XVI.33/45; XXI.7 he bids the Arabs ask the Ahl al-Kitāb about the prophets. They would obviously tell the same story as he has been telling for he has taken over their pattern in this matter as he has thought out his own justification of his mission to his people.

The Qur'an as Scripture III

Once a pattern of the nature of the prophetic mission had begun to form in Muhammad's mind, based on what he had learned from the People of the Book, it was but natural that he should develop his thought of his own mission in terms of this pattern of the prophetic succession. As they were warners, so is he a Warner (mandhir, LXXIX.35; XxIII.78; XXXVIII.4/5; nadhir, LI.50/51; LIII.56/57; VII.188). As they were preachers of good tidings, so is he a mubashshir (XXV.36/37; XVII.105/106; XXXIII.45/44) and a bashir (XL.3; V.39/40; VII.188). As they have the office of witness (shahid), so is he a witness from Allah (X.57/58; XXXIII.45/44).

As their coming was a mercy from Allah to mankind, so he is sent as a mercy (XXI.107). As they were sent in the language of the people to whom their mission was, so he is sent with a message in Arabic (XLIV.39; XVI.103/105). As they were told that their responsibility was to proclaim clearly their message, he is told the same thing (III.20/21; V.32/33; XIII.40; LXXXV.12). As they brought Allah's commands, so did he (LXXV.5). As they pointed to the dread of the coming Day of Judgment, so did he (XXXIX.71; V.130). As men made mock of them and called them impostors, so they made mock of him (XV.36; XXI.41/42; XXV.41/42; V.57/58), and treated him as an impostor (VI.147/148; III.183/184; XXII.42/43). As men disputed with them about their mission, so did they dispute with him (XXII.9, 58, 68/69; VI.25; VII.18), and as men sought to lay violent hands on them, just so did they seek to do to him (XXII.71/72).

What, however, is of more interest to our present study is that the stories of the previous prophets, in whose succession he claims to stand, come to be accommodated to that same pattern. Vague and indefinite figures in the early Meccan passages, their stories gradually take form, and as they appear in his later preaching, they tend more and more to fall into a stylized pattern, viz. the pattern which he has as the background of his thought of his own mission.

The Prophets are chosen (XXII.73/74; XVII.59/60), and so we read that Adam was chosen (XXI.122/123), also Noah (III.39/39), Abraham (XVI.121/122; II.130/124), Jacob (XXVIII.47), Joseph (XIL.6), Jonah (LXVIII.50) and Moses (XX.3), while in the passage V.84/85 Isaac, David, Solomon, Job, Aaron, Ishmael, Lot, Elijah, Elisha, Jesus, John Baptist and his father Zechariah are also enumerated as among those whom Allah chose.1 Muhammad is, of course, par excellence al-Mustafā.

1 Three different verbs are used for "to choose" in connection with Allah's messengers, viz. 'ishāra, 'ishāb and 'ishāf, but for the purposes of our discussion here they are synonymous and could each translate the Biblical bākhar. In the Qur'an Allah's choosing is not confined to choosing the prophetic suc-
In a very special sense the Prophets are guided (XXXVI.21/20), and so we read of how Adam was guided (XXI.122/120), as were Noah (VI.84), Abraham (XXVI.78; VIII.60), Moses (XI.53/56). Isaac and Jacob (V.84), and Jesus (V.60/50). To these the passage VI.84/86 adds Lot, David, Solomon, Job, Aaron, Ishmael, Jonab, Elijah, Elisha, John Baptist and his father Zechariah as those whom Allah guided to a straight path. Muhammad also has this special guidance (XXXIV.59/49; XIII.7).

As Allah’s messengers they were given, as a special grace from their Lord, bayyinat (evidentiary signs) (III.185/180), and so we read how Noah had a bayyina (XL.83/80), as did Shu‘aib (XL.85/90; VIII.83/85), and Hūd (IX.79/71), Šālīh (VII.73/71), Abraham and Lot (IX.79/71), Joseph (XL.34/30), Moses (XVII.105/105; II.92/86) and Jesus (II.87/81, 258/254). Muhammad likewise came with bayyinat (XL.6).

The Prophets were faithful, so we find this said of Noah (XXVI.107), of Hūd (VII.68/66; XXVI.125), of Abraham (LI.37/38), of Lot (XXVI.169), of Elija (XXXVI.132), of Šālīh (XXVI.133) and Shu‘aib (XXVI.178), of Joseph (XI.54/45) and of Moses (XLIV.181/177; XXVIII.48). In the Sūra we read how Muhammad was familiarly called by his fellow townsman al-‘Amīn, “the Faithful” (ṣīn Ḫishām, Sūra, p. 125).

In a peculiar sense the Prophets are the “righteous ones” (Šālīhān) (XXVII.19; XXXVI.100/98; XII.101/102), so this title is found in connection with the stories of Idrīs (XXXI.86), Noah (LXVI.10), Abraham (IL.133/124; XVII.123/123; Lot (II.175; LXVI.10), Ḳīṣā (XXVII.1/1), Ισχαι (XLI.86), Isaac (XXXVI.113), Joseph (ΧΙΙ.101/102), Jethro (XXVII.17), Elija (VII.85), Dāi’s Kīlī (XXXI.86), Jonab (LXVIII.50), Solomon (XXVII.19), Jesus (VIII.56; III.55/55; LXVI.113), John Baptist (III.59/54) and his father Zechariah (VI.85).

The messengers come bi’tlḥaqq, “with the truth,” or (II.213/209; VII.43/41), an expression which is often used of Allah’s revelationension. He chose Saul to be king over Israel (II.247/248), and the Virgin Mary was “chosen” (ΧΙΙ.43/43). This is consonant with Scriptural usage.

*This word, which Bell translates “upright,” is also used of the faithful followers of a Prophet. Since the sāliḥin of the Qur’ān obviously represent the sēlēsia of the Old Testament, the (Moses of the Greek Bible), perhaps we should include here the title sēlēsia given in the Qur’ān to Abraham (XIX.41/44), to Idrīs (XIX.56/57), to Joseph (XII.49), to the Virgin Mary (V.23/24), and used of certain faithful believers in XVI.7/7; LI.18/18. On the word see my Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān, pp. 105/105.

That Lot should be included among the righteous because Christian influence. It is only in very late Jewish documents that we find Lot included in such a fellowship, whereas as early as the Second Epistle of Peter (II.8) we find Lot referred to in Christian circles as a saint.

*So the angelic messengers came bi’tlḥaqq (VIII.56/56).

That Prophets were sent as “warners” to warn their contemporaries, we have already seen (XLVI.12/20; LIV.3; XXXVI.24/22). In particular this is said of Hūd (XXVI.136), of Šālīh (LIV.24/25), of Noah (I.24/24), of Lot (LIV.33), and of course of Muhammad (X.4; VI.51; LIXII.4). That they were bringers of good tidings is asserted in II.213/209; VI.48, and this is said in particular to have been the mission of Jesus (XL.6) and of Muhammad (XXVI.56/58; XLVIII.8).

As Allah’s messengers they can claim obedience, so we find Šālīh claiming such obedience (XXVI.144, 150), as do Hūd (XXVI.126, 131), Noah (XXVII.3; XXVII.116), Šu‘aib (XXVI.127), Lot (XXVI.169), Mas (LXII.63; IL.50/54) and the anonymous messenger of XXIII.54/56. Similarly Muhammad is to be obeyed (LXIV.12; VIII.1, 20, 46/48; XLVII.56/56; IL.37/37). But they are to ask no reward from men, an injunction that is laid on Šālīh (XXVI.46), Hūd (XLVII.53; XXVI.37), Noah (XLVIII.31; XXVI.190), Šu‘aib (XXVI.180) and Lot (XXVI.169), just as Muhammad is to ask no reward of men (XXVIII.56; XXIII.72/72; XLVII.56/56; XII.104; IL.21/22).

The Prophets were taunted with being merely men (XXVI.15/14; LXIV.6; IV.10/12), and this occurred to Šālīh (XXVI.15/14), to Hūd (VII.67/67), to Noah (I.27/27), to Šu‘aib (XXVI.160), to Moses and Aaron (XXII.47/48) and to the anonymous messenger in XXIII.53/53. 58/58. So this taunt was levelled against Muhammad (XXII.47). It is not surprising, therefore, that the common experience of the Prophets was to be rejected by their people. This was the experience of Noah (LIV.5); Šu‘aib (LXI.5), of Šālīh (ΧΙΙ.11), of Hūd (XI.53/53). Of Abraham (VI.86 f.), of Lot (LIII.35/36), of Moses (LXI.5), of the anonymous messenger (XXIII.54/54) and of Jesus (IL.54/54). That it was the experience of Muhammad when he preached at Mecca needs no elaboration.

The commonest charge against them was that they were impostors who must be given the lie (L.12, 13). This was the experience of Noah (LIV.3), of Hūd (XXVI.125, 130), of Šu‘aib (XXVII.37/36), of Abraham (ΧΙΙ.6/17) and Lot (XXVI.160), of Moses and Aaron (ΧΙΙ.36/36), of Elija (ΧΙΙΙ.172) and of the anonymous messenger (ΧΧΙΙ.38/38). It was what happened to Muhammad also

1 It is because each Prophet is chosen from among his own people that they are commonly referred to as “their brother.” This is said of Šālīh who was the “brother” of Thāmaṭ (ΧΧΙΙ.42/42), of Hūd who is the “brother” of Ad (XI.53/53), of Šu‘aib who is the “brother” of Midan (ΧΧΙΙ.36/36). So also Noah is the “brother” of his people (XXVI.109) and Lot of his (XXVI.161).
THE QUR’AN AS SCRIPTURE

(VII.147/148; III.181/181; XXII.42/43). Sometimes they were considered as men bewitched. This was what they said of Noah (LV.9; XXIII.25), of Sulaim (XXVI.153), of Shu’ab (XXVI.156), of Moses (XVII.101/103), and it was said of Muhammad (XVII.47/50; XCV.8/9). Sometimes they deemed them mad (LI.52), as they did Noah (LVI.9) Hûd (XL.54/57; VII.66/64) and Moses (LII.50), or accused them of sorcery (L.I.52), as they did both Moses (LII.59) and Jesus (V.110) and also Muhammad (XCVIII.4/5). Sometimes their people go even further and plot against them to their harm, (XL.5; III.183/180). This they did to Sulaim (XXVII.48/49 II.), to Abraham (XXIX.24/25), to Moses (XL.57/57) and to Jesus (LXI.47/47; IV.157/156; V.110). In like fashion they plotted against Muhammad (XXII.72/71). Yet Allah’s peace is with them, (XXXVII.181; XXVII.59/60). It was with Abraham (XXXVII.169), with Noah (XL.50; XXXVII.79/77), with Moses and Aaron (XXXVII.120), with Elijah (XXXVII.130), with Jesus (XIX.53/54) and with John Baptist (XIX.15). So the message of Muhammad guides to the way of peace (V.15/18).

Allah’s aid was ever available to assist His messengers. When they called on Him in their distress He answered them. He answered the call of Noah (XI.45/47; XXI.76), of Moses (XX.23/26), of Job (XXI.85; XXXVII.41/49), of Jonah (XXI.87; LVII.48), of Zebahir (IX.2; XXI.89), while Sirra XCIII recounts how Allah had come to the assistance of Muhammad also. It is Allah who grants them their gift of miracles when they are challenged to produce a sign in evidence of their calling. Sulaim was so challenged (XXVI.154), as were Hûd (LXI.50/50), Shu’ab (XXVI.187) and Moses (VII.106/103), while Muhammad was constantly so challenged (XXI.15; XX.153; XVII.90/90 II.). So Sulaim was given his miraculous she-camel (XXVI.39/61), Moses was given nine special signs (XXII.101/103) besides the signs of his rod and his hand (XXI.17/188), the fire became cool as so not to burn Abraham (XXI.65), for David iron became tractable (XXXIV.14), to Solomon the winds were subject (XXXVIII.36/35) and also the birds (XXVII.16). Jesus miraculously healed the born blind and the leper and even raised the dead (III.49/43; V.110). Muhammad’s miracle is his Scripture, the Qur’an.

It will already have been noticed that this pattern of the Lives of the Prophets draws its details almost as much from later legendary material as from the Scriptures of the People of the Book, though its general plan is Biblical. It is because Muhammad is in their succession that he is bidden recount their stories (XV.51; XIX.16, 41/42, 51/52, 54/55, 56/57; XXXVIII.17/16, 41/40, 45, 48; X.71/72), and his claim is that Allah Himself recited to him their stories (XX.XX.9; XI.120/121; XII.3; XXVIII.9/4; VII.101/99; III.58/51), for it was Allah who had

given the stories that were in the Scriptures of the Ahl al-Kitâb. That is, his Scripture was by revelation as earlier Scripture had been by revelation.

The outstanding feature in the mission of the Prophets, indeed, was that Allah had spoken to them by revelation. This is said of Adam (II.37/35), of Noah (XXII.27), of Abraham (XXI.51/52; IV.105/161), of Ishmael (II.136; 130; III.84/78; IV.163/161), of Isaac (XXI.73; IV.105/161), of Jacob (XXI.73; IV.163/161), of Job (IV.105/161), of Joseph (XII.15), of Moses (XII.13), of David (XXVIII.29/28), of Solomon (IV.163/161), of Jesus (IV.163/161) and of John Baptist (XIX.12/13). In precisely similar fashion He is represented as speaking by revelation to Muhammad (XXXVIII.70; XLIII.43/42; LXXXII.1; XXXV.45/46, 108; XVIII.94/91, 75/75, 80/80; XLI.7/76, 110; XII.102/109).

The two significant technical words in this connection are nazzala “to send down” (with its cognate انثل and its verbal noun انثل), and qabid “to reveal,” with the related noun qabidy “revelation.”

The nazzala series offers no problem. Since the gods inhabit the heavens above any message from them to creatures on earth has obviously to be “sent down.” So in ancient Mesopotamia a dream, an oracle or a command was “sent down” from gods to men.6 In the Old Testament prophetic inspiration is by a coming down of Yahweh or His Spirit. The Lord “came down” to the place where Moses was to meet with Him and receive divine in-

structions (Num.XI.17), but it was the spirit which “came upon” Balaam so that he prophesied (Num.XXIV.4), upon Eldad and Medad to cause them to prophesy in the camp (Num.XI.26-29), and upon Saul at his unexpected experience recorded in 1 Sam. X.6.10. The visions whereby Enoch had his revelations of the unseen “fell down” upon him (Eth.Enoch XIII.8). In the New Testament also it was the “descent of the Spirit” on the day of Pentecost which gave the apostles utterance (Acts L.1-4). Both Jewish and Christian literature of later times there is constant reference to this concept of “descent” in connection with revelation, but the notion was not confined to these two religions, for in Yama XI.1 we read the prayer of Zoroaster—

“so may the kindly Right his timely succour bring, and with heaven’s Good Thought to usher in his gracious power descend.”

When, therefore, we read in the Qur’an that the Meccans deny that anything has been “sent down” by Allah (VL.91), we may assume that they were familiar, from their contacts with the People

6 In Sumerian the compound verb אט...אט means both “to send” and “to command,” and the corresponding noun אט אט (“pdt”) means “a message.”