

# MHMT/MHMD AND A SEED OF THE KORAN

*A Historical Context in the Jerusalem Talmud?*

*A. J. Deus*

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[amod.jason.deus@ajdeus.org](mailto:amod.jason.deus@ajdeus.org)

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## ***Introduction***

The terms MHMT and MHMD first appear in the historical record after the traditional death of Muhammad. While it seems apparent that MHMD refers to the Prophet, no satisfactory solution has been proposed to the earlier designation of MHMT. They are assumed to bear identical meaning. In the paper *Muhammad and the Umayyad Dynasty's Conversion to Islam*<sup>1</sup> it was proposed that the two terms may have originally referred to an institution and a title, similar to the title of a pope.

This working paper is a spin-off from an investigation into the post-temple organization in the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds. Even though these works and the Koran are vastly dissimilar, the shared religious root merits an examination of the parallels in their organizational structures. It may reveal a better understanding of the foundations of the Muhammadian religion. This working paper intentionally leaves many details unaddressed and exclusively focuses on chronology.

The Jerusalem Talmud is believed to be based on second century notes on the Mishna and to having been completed in the fourth and fifth centuries. This detaches it by wide margins from any connection with the rise of Islam and the Koran.

The Mishna had been completed by Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi before 217 AD. The Jerusalem Talmud is placed somewhat thereafter and is believed to having come to a sudden end around 425 AD. The closure of the Babylonian work is placed somewhat after this. Many researchers suspect later dates, at least for some additions. Proving the doubts is a different matter.

The Palestinian Patriarch for the Rabbinic Jews<sup>2</sup> — the *Nasi* — was deposed by the emperors of the Western<sup>3</sup> and the Eastern<sup>4</sup> Roman Empire at the beginning of the fifth century. The official endpoint in the evolution of the Jerusalem Talmud is when the Jewish Patriarchate was terminated a few years later. As Ronald L. Eisenberg puts it:

A decree of the Roman emperors Honorius and Theodosius II in 415, which stripped Gamaliel VI of all power and removed him from office, charged that he had disregarded the special laws against the Jews, had built new synagogues, and had judged disputes between Jews and Christians. The death in 426 of Gamaliel VI, who left no heirs, marked the end of the 400-year dynasty of the house of Hillel.<sup>5</sup>

However, the logic of the Sadducee (Levite-Korahite) stance is to insist on Oral Law only. They accepted and/or composed the book of Isiah and the Mishnah as scripture, but putting down Oral Law had been fiercely rejected. Thus, researchers would have to come up with some kind of a solution why Jerusalem might have changed its mind and started to put Oral Law into writing. In other words, the Jerusalem Talmud should not have existed at the time of the Nasi's departure. Only under the protection of the Babylonians would such a fundamental shift be imaginable. As a 'law' of the religious mechanism, this would have created at least one sectarian middle position.

<sup>1</sup> A.J. Deus, *Umayyad Dynasty's Conversion to Islam, Putting Muslim Traditions into the Historical Context* (April 15, 2015), [https://www.academia.edu/11958043/Muhammad\\_and\\_the\\_Umayyad\\_Conversion\\_to\\_Islam](https://www.academia.edu/11958043/Muhammad_and_the_Umayyad_Conversion_to_Islam).

<sup>2</sup> Rabbi Gamaliel VI was the last Nasi heading the Palestinian Patriarchate 400-415 AD.

<sup>3</sup> Honorius (Flavius Honorius Augustus) was Western Roman Emperor 395-423 AD.

<sup>4</sup> Theodosius II (Flavius Theodosius Junior Augustus) was Eastern Roman Emperor 408-450 AD.

<sup>5</sup> Ronald L. Eisenberg, *Essential Figures in the Talmud* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2012) 72.

The ‘official’ sequence may rest in the fact that the Jerusalem Talmud rarely refers to Babylon while the latter is engaged throughout with both opinions. To push these works to overlap with the Koran or even to have any connection at all would be a stretch unless one would like to manipulate a little from both ends: Could it be that the Koran was written earlier (in parts) than generally assumed and the Talmuds (in parts) later? This notion was recently celebrated after the Birmingham Fragments were carbon dated.

To ask such questions in respect to the Talmuds will trigger outright rejection.

To stoke curiosity, the following is a summarizing ‘table of content’ of this working paper in the chronological order of the Berakhoth in the Jerusalem Talmud (JT-Berakhoth):

The keys to Paradise  
 A Synod of the Great Assembly  
 An Inter-Sectarian Alliance with Ishmael  
 Incursion from the North  
 Conquering the Promised Land  
 The Wars of Gog and Magog  
 The Son of God is Born  
 The Djin in a renewed Schism  
 MHMT/MHMD on the Temple Mount  
 Rededication of the Temple  
 Territorial Expansion  
 Against Intercessors  
 The Birth of Islam?  
 Jihad against Babylon?  
 The Night Journey

Could it be that the Talmudists and the writers of the Koran were somehow more closely connected than is generally assumed?

The Talmuds were composed to be understood by the top layer of Rabbinic leadership alone, only the ‘learned’ and ‘mature.’ Few individual passages clearly manifest their intent. However, this working paper follows the order of the JT-Berakhoth meticulously, and it guides the reader through selected text passages, step-by-step. With a few exceptions, the text itself is less relevant than the order of events. With every further section, the probability of a chance interpretation drops until the point is reached where the complex work turns into irrefutable primary evidence for the beginnings of the Koran. Because of that, it all of a sudden becomes obvious that the reader faces a historic chronology of paradigm changing nature, so much so that names of Jewish leaders can potentially be identified with those of the Muslims.

Although numerous Talmudic references are well attested in the Koran, the sentiment is that these are random encounters because the JT-Berakhoth has nothing to do with the Koran. The authors of the Islamic text were illiterate. However, without the Jerusalem Talmud, the seed of Islam cannot be recognized. Without fully embracing the seed, the Koran cannot be understood.

While this working paper does not include a systematic analysis of details, it incorporates a number of significant parallels. The approach is simple: follow the JT-Berakhoth in the order it is laid out.

It needs to be stressed: the chronology is more important than what the text itself may or may not express.

### *The Chronological Order of the Jerusalem Talmud*

#### **The Keys to Paradise**

In its distinct language of concealment, a short passage in the first chapter of the JT-Berakhoth reveals the Messianic hope of Prophet Elias (Elijah) to return,<sup>6</sup> thus announcing the arrival of the Savior. Since this hope is a central tenet of all Judaic religions, there is nothing unusual other than that the Jerusalem Talmud puts the decision of the timing off, while Babylon is concerned with these details countless times (thus, suggesting a post Jerusalem work). For example, Jerusalem did not make a decision when exactly night falls. Dawn is likewise associated with the arrival of the Messiah but more concretely interpreted as the salvation of Israel.<sup>7</sup>

Readers should be familiar with the seventy ‘sevens’ in the Book of Daniel.<sup>8</sup> This prophesy was re-interpreted many times in history for various religious purposes. From the perspective of the seventh century, it was meant to be the beginning of the end times and the arrival of a messiah. The prediction was believed to come true 490 years after the First Jewish-Roman War that ended in 70 AD. This translates to 560 AD for the ‘beginning of the end’ and to 622 AD for the Savior to come. It is also the first year of the Islamic calendar.

The JT-Berakhoth sets the time slightly different to 500 years, i.e. 570/632 AD,<sup>9</sup> which happens to fall together with the traditional death of Prophet Muhammad. The symbolic significance of the

<sup>6</sup> Moise Schwab, *The Talmud of Jerusalem*, Vol. I. Berakhoth (Williams and Norgate, 1886) Ch. I., p. 5: What is the material indication of the hour at which the priests eat Troomâ [BT: Terumah; perhaps a symbol of the tenth that is due to the religious elite]? The appearance of the stars. Nothing proves this in an irrefutable manner [...] when the Prophet Elias shall return to this world, and will explain to us what this twilight means, not one will contest him.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7: R. Hiya Rabba (the great) [Rabbi Hiyya, a descendant from Jesse, ca. mid third century BT - Kethuboth, 62b] and R. Simon ben Halaphta [Halaphta] were one morning walking in the valley of Arbel, and they noticed the dawn darting its rays of light; R. Hiya said to his companion: Master, this represents to me the salvation of Israel; at first it is slightly perceptible, but it increases as it advances.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel 9:20 – 9:27 (extract): “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy [the beginning of the end time and the arrival of the forerunner]. Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One [Christ], the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens’ [7\*70 + 62\*1=552 years]. It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

<sup>9</sup> Moise Schwab, *The Talmud of Jerusalem*, Vol. I. Berakhoth (Williams and Norgate, 1886) Ch. I., p. 7: It has been taught: The tree of life was of such a length that it would have taken five hundred years to go over it [...]

number ‘seven’ is perhaps clear to all Biblical scholars, but in the Jerusalem Talmud, the number ‘five’ becomes more prominent, including the discussion of five prayers, a Muslim mainstay.

In order to understand the implication of this marginal shift of a decade, the order of the text is abandoned for a moment. Toward the end of the JT-Berakhoth, the reader is again reminded of the long time that had passed from the destruction of the Temple:

[...] although the Lord seems far, there is nothing nearer than He. R. Levi reminds us on this subject that from earth to heaven is a journey of 500 years [...] the angels have also a journey of 515 miles in size.<sup>10</sup>

Apparently, the authors put stress on the number 515. As the translator of the Talmud speculated, the numerical value of ‘500 years’ resulted also in 515. Thus, if the translator’s assumptions were correct, then the relevant years would be 585/647 AD, calculated from the Jewish disaster in 70 AD (should this indeed be the base year). Alternatively, the intention might lie in the numerical *difference* of 15. Perhaps, it relates to a period of 15 years between two points of significance.

However, given the nature of prophecies, the era of 570 to 647 AD (in the broadest interpretation) appears to be the one of higher significance than Daniel. But why? It is needless to say that the Jerusalem Talmud overlaps in its prophetic abilities with the interests of modern researchers that are trying to understand the beginnings of Islam. This is particularly intriguing since the only time a reconstruction of the Temple has actually occurred was exactly in this time frame. What did the Talmudists know hundreds of years earlier to provide for such a prediction?

In order to grasp the significance of this, the key point in Jewish history of the Temple loss needs to be revisited.

Since the First Jewish-Roman War, the Sadducees were persecuted by Romans and Pharisees alike. The latter were eager to step into the spiritual power vacuum. As explained by Rabbi Yaakov Kleinman:

[The Levite] Kohanim faithfully performed their Service in the Temple until the day of its destruction. That day, the Ninth of Av, 70 C.E., the Kohanim continued to serve even as the flames consumed the buildings around them. At the destruction, Kohanim took the keys to the Temple and hurled them skyward saying, “Here are Your keys back which You have entrusted to us for we have not been faithful custodians to carry out the duties set by the King and we are no longer worthy to eat from the King’s table” (Avot d’Rebbi Natan 4:5). Destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by the Romans was executed with a vengeance. The inhabitants who were not killed were sold as slaves or fled, leaving the Jewish nation in a desperate condition.<sup>11</sup>

The kingdom of heaven is in the temple for the Judaic God and the keys are to its gates. Having hurled them to heaven is symbolic, and the keys would return when the Temple would be re-erected. In Biblical lingo, the Temple would descend from heaven in three days. Thus, the Jerusalem Talmud potentially suggests that the Temple *has* descended from heaven 500 years after its destruction.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., ch. IX., p. 152.

<sup>11</sup> Rabbi Yaakov Kleinman, *DNA & Tradition, The Genetic Link to the Ancient Hebrews* (Devora, 2004) 114.

In my earlier works, I had dismissed the timing of the *Doctrina Jacobi* and placed it into the eighth century or later. Now that we have a context from both Talmuds, it is clear that the writer had his mind on the prophetic and Talmudic details.

So I, Abraham, inquired and heard from those who had met him that there was no truth to be found in the so-called prophet, only the shedding of men's blood. He says also that he has the keys of paradise, which is incredible.<sup>12</sup>

The Jews of Antioch had killed the Christian Patriarch and the Jews in Yemen had terminated the Christian clergy around 609 AD. The passage to the 'keys to Paradise' refers with such pinpoint precision to the arrival of the keys in heaven that the *Doctrina Jacobi* must have originated close to this time, perhaps even before the Temple was rebuilt, i.e. somewhere in between 609-614 AD. Why else would *Jacobi* have thought that the possession of the keys was incredible?

Indeed, it is well attested that the son of the Jewish Exilarch, Nehemiah ben Hushiel attempted to rededicate the Temple Mount around 614 AD. Nehemiah fits the classic profile of a redeemer – a *khristos/messiah* – or an apostle of God. Since he failed in the mission, he would undoubtedly have become a false messiah. It may be noted that he first had to clean the Temple Mount from centuries old debris before starting his building project. After the Bar Kokhba Revolt, there was no project on the Mount that achieved anything.

*Jacobi* was not the only one thinking that holding the keys of Paradise was incredible. The Babylonian Talmud says the same and rejects the idea vehemently, while it is also in agreement with the 500 year prediction.<sup>13</sup>

Yet, even though Daniel, two Talmuds, *Jacobi*, and historic action experience a close encounter, for now, the questions in regards to the shifted timing in the Jerusalem Talmud need to be left unanswered. With nothing in hand but suspicion, we thus return to the order of its text.

### A Synod of the Great Assembly

Intriguingly, the Jerusalem Talmud sets out to deliberately differentiate itself – but from what? If it is placed before Babylon, what is the rationale to introduce ritual differences?<sup>14</sup> Usually the one who breaks off needs to make a statement. The doctors, or perhaps better the judges, need only to adhere to the Torah's prohibitions. However, permissions can be further regulated by them.<sup>15</sup> It otherwise continues

<sup>12</sup> Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It* (Darwin, 1998) *Doctrina Jacobi* V.16, 209. p. 57.

<sup>13</sup> Talmud - Mas. Chagigah 13a: It is taught: R. Johanan b. Zakkai said: What answer did the Bath Kol give to that wicked one, when he said: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High? A Bath Kol went forth and said to him: O wicked man, son of a wicked man, grandson of Nimrod [a prominent figure in the Koran], the wicked, who stirred the whole world to rebellion against Me by his rule. How many are the years of man? Seventy, for it is said: The days of our years are threescore years and ten, or even by reason of strength fourscore years. But the distance from the earth to the firmament is a journey of five hundred years, and the thickness of the firmament is a journey of five hundred years, and likewise [the distance] between one firmament and the other. [...] Above them is the throne of glory; the feet of the throne of glory are equal to all of them; the throne of glory is equal to all of them. The King, the Living and Eternal God, High and Exalted, dwelleth above them. Yet thou didst say, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High! Nay, thou shalt be brought down to the nether-world, to the uttermost parts of the pit. [See also Talmud – Mas. Pesachim 94b. The Jerusalem Talmud places no significance to 515 years.]

<sup>14</sup> Moise Schwab, *The Talmud of Jerusalem*, Vol. I. Berakhoth (Williams and Norgate, 1886) Ch. I., p. 18: We are acting like the man who, being complimented on his long beard, replied that he grew it in opposition to those who shave themselves; in the same manner, I who was lying down rose up to say the Shema' [Shammai], and thou who was standing up didst bow thyself down [Hillel]. [...] I acted thus so that the disciples should not think, by my example, to follow and make a rule of Shammai's opinion.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19: If R. Tarphon had not read the Shema', he would only have transgressed an affirmative prescription, punishable by a slight penalty; whilst in reading it as he did, contrary to Hillel's judgment, he rendered himself liable to be punished by death, in virtue of the verse, "He who breaketh a hedge (the Law), a serpent shall bite him" (Eccles. X. 8). R. Ismael teaches that: The orders of the Pentateuch contain either prohibitions or permissions, the first are of importance (solemn), the latter are not; but the words of the Doctors are always so.

to embrace the Sadducee (Levite-Korahite) position of rejecting the recording of the Oral Law and to include the Torah, the book of Isaiah, and the Mishnah. The Jerusalem Talmud perhaps does not engage with the Babylonians precisely because it rejects the additional written laws of Babylon (which is involved with the Jerusalem doctrines). Thus, Jerusalem only needs to deal with what it had accepted all along. In other words, it can sit anywhere on the timeline after the Mishnah when the need would arise to create a new scripture, and this can only happen under Sadducee (Levite-Korahite) leadership, from their point of view.

This is complicated by the nature of the Jerusalem Talmud, being a record of sort, not a scripture. Why does this Talmud even exist? What does this text provide other than violating its own stance against the recording of the Oral Law? Is it perhaps not meant to be a work of 'law' but something else? Then what?

Also not unusual in a context of messianic expectations, they were waiting for the Hand of God:

Also is it said with regard to the Prophets: "And he giveth thee a sign or a wonder" (Deut. Xiii. 2); whilst on the other hand it is written: "According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee" (this is their superiority), "thou shalt do" (Deut. Xvii. 11). This however is not decided until after a bath-kol [the Voice of God/a synod] has been held; before that, if any one wishes to act severely, and to adopt as rules the solemn opinions of Shammai [Babylonian] and Hillel [Jerusalem], he merits to have applied to him the verse, "The fool walketh in darkness" (Eccles. Ii. 14). It would be impious, on the other hand, to adopt the opinions of one or the other, choosing those which are the easiest. It would have been right to follow sometimes the easiest, and sometimes the most difficult decisions of one or the other school. This applies only in so far as the bath-kol had not spoken; but since it has declared for Hillel, the decisions of Hillel are law, and the transgressor of them merits death.

It has been reported that the bath-kol has said: The decisions of all of them are the words of the living God; but Hillel's opinion predominates. Where has this been revealed? At Yabne [the Council of Jamnia], as says R. Bivi, on the authority of R. Yohanan.<sup>16</sup>

Taking the text for an earthly mechanism indicates a highest authority, a supreme individual or an assembly, not unlike the synods in Christianity that attempted (but failed) to keep the sectarians in line. It seems to have been accepted by Jerusalem and Babylon. Here the Council of Jamnia is given as an example for a decision, not to establish timing of the authoritarian claims. Logically, the Jerusalem Talmud would seek this authority for its own priesthood.<sup>17</sup>

### **An Inter-Sectarian Alliance with Ishmael**

Now that the mechanism for ritual and doctrinal changes is clear, it is important to realize that the Sadducees (Levite-Korahites) were able to (gradually) shift their doctrines through the decisions of the bath-kol, the Hand of God, or the council of the Great Assembly.

Since the Jerusalem Talmud does not specifically embrace the Resurrection<sup>18</sup> but the Messianic book of Isaiah (which contains the Resurrection), this endeavor is a little more complex. In order to be at

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 19-20.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 27: It has been asked of R. Aha bar R. Zeira: How his father did? Did he act up to the opinion of the Rabbis of Palestine, or those of Babylon? R. Ezechias says: He followed the opinion of those of Jerusalem, and R. Yose followed that of the Rabbis of Palestine. R. Hanina says: This last opinion seems to be the right one; for R. Zeira acted with great severity, as also did those Rabbis (of Babylon); it proves that he was of their opinion.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 23: The following is the formula [one of many proposals without the Resurrection]: We acknowledge ourselves (humbly) before Thee, Master of all creatures, God worthy of praise, Rock of the world, living Being of the universe, Author of creation, Thou who raiseth the dead to life, that Thou

the helm of an entirely new religion, when would such changes of heart have occurred, if at all, and why? Did its members all follow the new decisions or fragment into two or more Sadducee sects?

But then the JT-Berakhoth says something truly out of the ordinary:

Four persons have received their names before their birth, viz.: Isaac, Ismael, Josias, and Salomon.<sup>19</sup>

Abraham's son Isaac is the father of Jacob (Israel) who established the linages of the Levites through Leah and also of Joseph through Rachel. Ishmael is at the head of his lineage, and Josias represents the House of David. He is believed to having been responsible for the creation of the Hebrew Bible, and he is in the linages of Jesus Christ. Salomon was a son of David and the builder of the First Temple in Jerusalem. While this sounds rather welcoming at first, these seem to be viewed as 'godly people' while all others were 'the wicked.'<sup>20</sup> The implication is deeper than that, and we will come back to this in a moment. There is another, much more prominent than Josiah, one whose name was revealed in the Annunciation before his birth: Jesus. Is it possible that the Jerusalem Talmud means to include Jesus rather than Josiah? This is yet another question left unanswered for now, but if it were so, they all had embraced Jesus.

While the two linages of David trigger again suspicion, the inclusion of Ishmael is mind boggling. Why does he appear so early in the JT-Berakhoth, just as the story is about to unfold? There is no record of an alliance between Ishmael and the other three – except in the seventh century.

### **Incursion from the North**

The narrative takes a turn to the even less expected as it comes to return to the Promised Land by the Israelites.

Ben Zoma says: In the future, it will not be necessary for Israel to recall the departure from Egypt. Why? Because it is said: Therefore, behold the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say: The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but they will say: The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the North Country. The Doctors answered: That does not mean that the fact of leaving Egypt will be set at nought; but it will be secondary with regard to future events.

It is said (Isa. Xliii. 18): "Remember ye not the former things," that is to say, of the Egyptians; "neither consider the things of old," that is to say, the (inimical) kingdoms. It is also said: "Thou shalt not be called Jacob, but they name shall be Israel." The Doctors observed: That does not mean that the name of Jacob will be annihilated, but it will be added to that of Israel, which will be the principal, whereas that of Jacob will only be accessory. The following verse: "I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth" (Isa. Xliii. 19), alludes to the war of Gog. To explain the subject better, it is given as a fable. What is it like? To a person who meets a wolf on his way; he escapes, and begins a tale about a wolf. Then he meets a lion, from which he escapes, whereupon he forgets the tale about the wolf, to relate his adventures with the lion. Finally he meets a serpent, and escapes; he then forgets the first two adventures to tell a tale about the serpent. It is thus for Israel; the two last misfortunes have caused the first to be forgotten.<sup>21</sup>

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wouldst preserve the life Thou hast given us, that Thou wouldst pardon us our sins, support us, and permit unto us to render thanks to Thy name; be praised, O God, worthy of praise.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

This is an illuminating ending of the first chapter, and it puts the reader in the midst of an assault from the ‘North Country,’ which parallels the incursion by the Saracens from the north, the only such event known in post-Temple history that implicates the Israelites.

The difference is that we now appear to have the names of an alliance in which two houses of David, the Ishmaelites, and the Sadducee House of Isaac (Levite-Korahites and Joseph) worked together. Not necessarily in chronological order, the parable refers to three temple losses. The text means to say that the Sadducees no longer need to be blamed for the loss of the Temple in Jerusalem (also found in the Babylon version).<sup>22</sup> Now, they took care of the future of a new Israel.

Tradition suggests that the al-Mahdi (the Redeemer) would come embedded with troops from the direction of Khorosan, carrying black ensigns.<sup>23</sup> Fredegar alleged that the circumcised Saracens originated from a country of *Ercolia* beyond the Caucasus Mountains, at the Caspian Sea.<sup>24</sup> Identified as descendants from Hagar, they were led by two leaders, whose names he did not reveal.<sup>25</sup>

### Conquering the Promised Land

There are little hints here and there that provide clues that the JT-Berakhoth is indeed talking about seventh century events. Again, since caution needs to be applied in respect to possible sectarian fragmentations of the Sadducees (Levite-Korahites), it is not straight forward. As an example, the act of submission to God (!) is manifested in the Jerusalem Talmud by putting both hands on the face.<sup>26</sup> Today, this is a recognizable ritual act of Muslims. Instead, Jews put their right hand over the eye because the left hand is inappropriate. Because the individual that performs the act matters in the Talmuds, we will return to this ritual briefly toward the end of this working paper.

However, after an apparent formation of an alliance, all of a sudden, the second chapter begins with trouble:

It has been taught: He who interrupts himself to ask after the health of his master, or of any one who is

<sup>22</sup> The Babylonian translations are based on Eliyahu Gurevich, first edition, 2010, toseftaonline.org. Babylonian Talmud – Mas. Ta’anith 9a: Three good leaders had arisen for Israel, namely, Moses, Aaron and Miriam, and for their sake three good things were conferred [upon Israel], namely, the Well [the Foundation Stone/Miriam], the Pillar of Cloud [the Herodian Temple/Aaron] and the Manna [?/Moses]; [...] Therefore it is written, And all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead. With reference to which R. Abahu [Abahoo in JT] said: Do not read, ‘they saw’ [wayir-u] but ‘they were seen’ [wayyero-u]. This is also in accordance with the view of Resh Lakish [Lakish in JT] who said: [The word] ki [Greek for the letter X] may be used in four different senses, namely, ‘if’ ‘perhaps’. ‘but’, ‘because’. The two [the Well and the Cloud] returned because of the merit of Moses, but when Moses died all of them disappeared, as it is said, And I cut off the three shepherds in one month [the failed rededication of the Temple in 614/17 AD]. Did they then all [three] die in one month? Did not Miriam die in Nisan, Aaron in Ab and Moses in Adar? This therefore is meant to teach you that the three good gifts which were given because of their merit were nullified and they all disappeared in one month. Thus we find that sustenance may be granted for the sake of one individual! — The case of Moses is exceptional; as he prayed on behalf of the many, he himself is regarded as a multitude.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Patrick Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam* (Allen, 1885) 305:

“The world will not come to an end until a man of my tribe and of my name shall be master of Arabia.”

“When you see black ensigns coming from the direction of Khorosan, then join them, for the Imam of God will be with the standards, whose name is al-Mahdi.”

<sup>24</sup> J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegars, with its continuations* (Nelson, 1960) 66, p. 55: The race of Hagar, who are also called Saracens as the book of Orosius attests – a circumcised people who of old had lived beneath the Caucasus on the shores of the Caspian [Sea] in a country known as Ercolia – this race had grown so numerous that at last they took up arms and threw themselves upon the provinces of the Emperor Heraclius, who despatched an army to hold them. [Wallace thinks that Ercolia might be Colchis, at the Black Sea. However, Fredegar clearly puts the “country” to the shores of the *Caspian Sea* (Mare Caspium), *beyond* the Caucasus (ultra montem Caucasi)].

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55-56: He raised a great force throughout the imperial provinces and sent representatives to the Caspian Gates, which the Macedonian Alexander the Great had built of brass above the Caspian Sea and had shut to check invasion by the untamed barbarians living beyond the Caucasus. Heraclius ordered these gates to be opened, and through them poured 150,000 mercenary warriors to fight the Saracens. The latter, under two commanders, were approximately 200,000 strong.

<sup>26</sup> Moise Schwab, *The Talmud of Jerusalem, Vol. I. Berakhoth* (Williams and Norgate, 1886) ch. II, p. 30: Rab asked R. Hiya the Great: How is it that I do not see Rabbi assume upon himself the celestial sovereignty? He answered. When thou shalt see him put his hands on his face, he will be accomplishing this act of submission to God.

more learned than himself, may act as he pleases. That proves that one must render homage to those who are superior in science. [...] What do you call “at once”? The time necessary to say a word. But what is its duration? R. Simon, in the name of R. Joshua ben Levi, says: It is the time that elapses when you present (short) salutations to your neighbor. Abba bar-bar-Hana says, in the name of R. Yohanan: It is the time that a disciple would take to present his salutations to his master, saying (in three words), “I bow, to thee, my master.” R. Yohanan leant on Jacob bar-Idi whilst they were walking; as soon as R. Elizer saw them, he hid himself. There are two offences, said R. Yohanan, on the part of this Babylonian: first, he does not bow to me; and then he cites one of my opinions without naming me.<sup>27</sup>

The text continuous with other methods not to greet the superior. Since the issue goes both ways and Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus had been among the contributors to the Mishnah, the names and time are of no consequence (at least for now). The issue in the chronology was that the subordinate was expected to show his respect, but not everyone seems to have been in line. Of course, this is the Jerusalem Talmud, which is why the side-kick was handed to Babylon. On the other hand, Joseph appears to have been in particularly good standing with the Jerusalemites.<sup>28</sup> While this also reflects the good reputation of Joseph in the Koran, it is only a pretext to the further evolution: the pursuit of re-conquering of the Promised Land.

R. Hiya Raba said to him [R. Yonathan]: The dead [the Babylonians] must say to each other that tomorrow those men will be with us, and yet, to-day they inflict suffering upon us. But, answered he, have these dead any understanding? Thou knowest how to read the Bible, was the answer, but not to interpret it. “For the living know that they shall die” (says the same verse). The wise, even after their death, are still considered as living; and “the dead that know not anything,” are the wicked, who during life are already considered as dead. How is that known? By this verse (Ezek. xviii. 32): “For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth.” Can one say that he who is dead dies again? No, it refers to the wicked, who during life are called dead. And how is it known that the just are called living, even when they are dead? By this text (Deut. i. 6, 8): “The Lord our God spake: Go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” saying. Why add: ‘saying’? Because God ordered him to go and “say” to the Patriarchs (in Paradise): “All the conditions I have made with you, I will fulfil them after you, towards your sons.”<sup>29</sup>

The question of the Resurrection appears to crystalize as one of subtlety. For the Jerusalemites, it concerns the leadership only, while for others, it is to the benefit of all. The reconquest of the Promised Land is a standing mandate and does not provide clues as to the current mindset. Yet, it provides for the parallel in Sebeos where the Ishmaelites were handed the right to the Promised Land.

Twelve peoples [representing] all the tribes of the Jews assembled at the city of Edessa. [...] Heraclius, emperor of the Byzantines, gave the order to besiege it. [...] So they [the Jews] departed [...] to Tachkastan [the land of the Tayyi], to the sons of Ishmael. [The Jews] called [the Ishmaelites] to their aid and familiarized them with the relationship they had through the books of the [Old] Testament. [...] In that period a certain one of them, a man of the sons of Ishmael named Mahmet [MHMT], a merchant [t’angar or t’ankangar], became prominent. A sermon about the Way of Truth, supposedly at God’s command, was revealed to them, and taught them to recognize the God of Abraham, especially since he was informed and knowledgeable about Mosaic history. [...] He said: “God promised that country

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 36: Two holy arcs accompanied Israel in the Desert; that of the Lord and that of the remains of Joseph. The nations of the world were astonished and said: Is it possible that the ark of a deceased mortal should be carried along with the ark of the Eternal Being? It is because, answered Israel, the one obeyed the precepts of the other. [...] Joseph, said he, only became a king because he observed the divine precepts, and we only obtained this honour (that conferred by the Law of Moses) because we followed the precepts of God; and you would neglect his commandments!

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 39.

[Canaan, Israel] to Abraham and to his son after him, for eternity. [...] Now, however, you are the sons of Abraham, and God shall fulfill the promise made to Abraham and his son on you. [...] go and take the country which God gave to your father, Abraham.”<sup>30</sup>

Sebeos wrote about a confusing hybrid where *MHMT* should have been a personal name rather than a historic group. The passage “*in this period*” provides for some leeway in the span of Muhammad’s first appearance, but the writer seems to mean ‘*in this period since the Jews had assembled at Edessa,*’ which happens to also be located ‘in the north.’

### **The Wars of Gog and Magog**

The arrival of the Messiah is preceded by the wars of Gog and Magog.

[...] “When Israel came out of Egypt” (Ps. cxiv.), refers to the past; and “It is not in our favour, O Lord!” (Ps. cxv.) is applicable to the present generation; and “I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice” (Ps. cxvi.), refers to the time of the Messiah. The verse: “Bring forth the victim crowned with myrtle” (Ps. cxvi. 27), refers to the wars of Gog and Magog (commotions which were to precede the coming of the Messiah); and the following; “Thou art my God, and I will offer Thee thanksgiving,” bears reference to the future.<sup>31</sup>

With what had been learned from the first chapter, placing Egypt into the past indicates again that the writers have a perspective from after the fifth century. However, it appears that the wars of Gog and Magog must have been contemporary battles to the writers of the JT-Berakhoth.

### **The Son of God is Born**

The wars of Gog and Magog are followed by an invitation to come together under one religious leadership:

The hundred and twenty members of which the Grand Assembly was formed, comprising more than eighty prophets, have arranged that prayer and put it in order. Why has the prayer “Most Holy God” been compared to that which contains the prayer for wisdom? Because after the verse (Isa. xxix. 23), “They shall sanctify the holy One of Jacob,” it is said, “They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding” (Isa. xxix. 23). Wisdom is followed by repentance: “Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes,” &c., as far as the words: “understand with their heart, and repent.” Repentance is followed by pardon: “Let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isa. lv. 7). The Pardon follows the Redemption (Ps. ciii. 3, 4): “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction;” and he will say first: “He healeth the sick.”<sup>32</sup>

Thus, the Grand Assembly, a modified form of the Sanhedrin, was reborn under the leadership of either a Sadducee (Levite-Korahite) or one from the tribe of Joseph. Since the number 120 is a multiple of twelve, it appears that all tribes of Israel were meant to participate.

For years, I have advocated that the Koran was attempting an ecumenical approach. Some scholars have raised a similar prospect.<sup>33</sup> Emran El-Badawi is on the right track with his proposals of fragments of an ecumenical council in the Koran. However, with the evolution of the Jerusalem Talmud

<sup>30</sup> Sebeos, 30.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>33</sup> Emran El-Badawi, When Jews and Christians Believed in the Qur’an (Mizanproject.org, retrieved November 12, 2015).

at hand, the inclusion of ‘Christianity’ appears out of place. Perhaps, the term ‘nasara’ in the Koran needs revisiting as proposed in the paper *The Nasara in The Koran*.<sup>34</sup> We will return to this paper in a moment.

R. Levi, on the authority of R. Aha bar-Hanina, says: Why, after this last benediction, does follow that which concerns the reunion of the dispersion of the children of Israel? Because of this verse (Ezek. Xxxvi. 8): “And ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel.” Why? “Because they are at hand to come;” that is to say: When the captives will be united, then the proud shall be humbled, and the righteous shall be happy. On this subject it has been said: The heterodox and the irreligious are included in the prayer, that the proud may be humbled; the proselytes and the elders in the one demanding protection for the righteous; and prayers are offered for David’s family in that which refers to the building of Jerusalem (Hosea iii. 5): “Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, David their king.”

The Rabbis say: As for the King Messiah, whether he be among the living or the dead, He shall be called David (meaning whether he exist or no, he will be of a royal stock). According to R. Tanhooma, the reason would be this (Ps. xviii. 50): “Great deliverance giveth He to His king, to David His anointed.” R. Joshua ben Levi says: His name shall be Tsemah; and according to R. Judan, son of R. Aibo: It shall be Menahem (comforter). R. Hanina, son of Abahoo, says: You must not conclude that these two opinions contradict each other, for in fact these two names are the same.<sup>35</sup>

The text talks about a *reunion* of the dispersed children of Israel. This is an unusual idea since there was no such reunion at any time during the first six centuries of the Christian era. One could perhaps count the move from Tiberias to Babylon in the fifth century as such were it not for the fact that we are merely at the beginning chapters of the Jerusalem Talmud. There is no record of such a reunion during the first four hundred years. Yet, it seems that Abahoo was leading a reconciliation between the two opinions of Jerusalem and Babylon, and according to the latter, he must have achieved great standing, even with emperors.<sup>36</sup>

Religio-economic history is marked by sectarian decisions that were based on scripture, thus creating self-fulfilling prophesies. However, Menahem is an unlikely Biblical figure to end up as the Messiah in the Jerusalem Talmud. From all we know from the book of Kings, he had been a general in the Israelite army and usurped the throne of Shallum in Samaria, himself an usurper.

Thus, we need to search for a real Menahem, and he is found in the Temple of Jerusalem *AFTER* the Persians had been defeated in the Holy City. As already pointed out, before that, the son of the Jewish Exilarch, Nehemiah ben Hushiel, had cleaned the Temple Mount. He had started out in alliance with Xosrov and Benjamin of Tiberias (and perhaps Elijah bar Kabsha as well as the Academy of Caesarea) to provide twenty thousand soldiers for the Persian army under Shahrbaraz in order to invade the Byzantine province of Palestina Prima. There is no evidence for this treaty, but the context provides for credibility to this scenario that has been widely believed at the time.<sup>37</sup> The conquest of Jerusalem can be dated to 614 AD. By all means, if the scenario is correct, then the Babylon and Jerusalem (Tiberias/Caesarea) Talmudists had been working together, just as the Talmud suggests. According to

<sup>34</sup> A.J. Deus, *The Nasara in The Koran, Eliminating the Nasara as a Late Fabrication?* December 14, 2015.

<sup>35</sup> Moise Schwab, *The Talmud of Jerusalem, Vol. II. Berakhoth* (Williams and Norgate, 1886) p. 44.

<sup>36</sup> Talmud – Mas. Sanhedrin 14a: When R. Abbahu arrived at the Emperor's Court from College [the Academy of Caesarea], the ladies of the court went out to receive him and sang to him: Great man of thy people, leader of thy nation, lantern of light, thy coming be blessed with peace.

<sup>37</sup> Meir Loewenberg, *The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem*, Jewishmag.com, January 2012.

Meir Loewenberg, “Tiberian Jews, together with others from Nazareth and the mountain cities of Galilee, joined the Persian divisions commanded by Shahrbaraz on the march to Jerusalem. The united forces took Jerusalem by storm after a 21 day siege.”<sup>38</sup> Nehemiah ben Hushiel was now governor of Jerusalem and went to task to reestablish the sacrificial rituals and to appoint a High Priest. In order to do so, the lineages of the priests needed to be sorted out. The working of this mechanism will also be shown later.

The paytanim Rabbi Eleazar ben Qalir from the town of Kirjath-sepher,<sup>39</sup> wrote a poem in one of his piyutim:

When Assyria came to the city and pitched his tents there  
 the holy people were a bit relieved  
 because he permitted the reestablishment of the Temple  
 and they built there the holy altar  
 and offered upon it holy sacrifices  
 but they did not manage to build the Temple  
 because the Messiah had not yet come.<sup>40</sup>

This poet is placed on the timeline somewhere between the second to the eleventh century, providing for an indication just how much in need of clarification the Judaic history is. However, modern research tends to place him here, contemporary to Anan ben David, the personality that is credited with being the founder of Karaism. Nevertheless, the establishment of the sacrificial rituals on the Temple Mount at that time is well documented.

Indeed, the excitement was short lived, and Eliezer ben Qalir also wrote that the building project came to an abrupt end. According to Sebeos, the Christians killed Nehemiah and his ‘Council of the Righteous.’<sup>41</sup> After only three years, Xosrov put an end to the Jewish aspirations of independence and (re)declared Jerusalem the forbidden city for them. The Persian Emperor had changed his mind and reversed his policy. The flame of Jerusalem was extinguished. This turnaround can be documented with numismatics. In 629 AD, the Persian occupation of the Holy City was terminated by Emperor Heraclius. The Christians’ revenge was merciless. However, we do not know what happened between 617 and 629 AD. Is this the story that emerges from the Jerusalem Talmud?

Although it is not historic, an apocalypse, *Sefer Zerubbabel*, sheds some light into the social network around Nehemiah and Menahem:

The rod which the Lord will give to Hephzibah, the mother of Menahem [ben] ‘Amiel, is made of almond-wood; it is hidden in Raqqat, a city in (the territory of) Naphtali. It is the same rod which the Lord previously gave to Adam, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and King David. It is the same rod which sprouted buds and flowered in the Tent [of Meeting] for the sake of Aaron. Elijah ben Eleazar concealed it in Raqqat, a city of Naphtali, which is Tiberias. Concealed there as well is a man whose name is Nehemiah ben Hushiel ben Ephraim ben Joseph.’ Zerubbabel spoke up and said to Metatron and to Michael (sic) the prince: ‘My lord, I want you to tell me when the Messiah of the Lord will come and what will happen after all this!’ He said to me, ‘The Lord’s Messiah—Nehemiah ben Hushiel—will come five years after Hephzibah. He will collect all Israel together as one entity and they will remain for

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Rosh. Brochos, ch. 5, siman 21.

<sup>40</sup> Rabbi Eleazar ben Qalir (aka. Eleazar ben Killir, Eleazar Kalir, Eleazar Qalir, El'azar HaKalir (c. 570 – c. 640 AD), piyutim, in Ezra Fleischer, *L'pitaron sh'elat z'mano u'makom p'uloto shel R' Elazar Biribi Kilir*, Tarbiz 54, 5745/1985, p. 401.

<sup>41</sup> Sebeos, *History*, Chapter 24.

<four> years in Jerusalem, (where) the children of Israel will offer sacrifice, and it will be pleasing to the Lord. He will inscribe Israel in the genealogical lists according to their families. But in the fifth year of Nehemiah and the gathering together of the 'holy ones,' Šērōy the king of Persia [Xosrov] will attack Nehemiah ben Hushiel and Israel, and there will be great suffering in Israel. Hephshibah—the wife of Nathan the prophet [and] mother of Menahem ben 'Amiel—will go out with the rod which the Lord God of Israel will give to her, and the Lord will place "a spirit of dizziness" upon them [the Persians], and they will kill one another, each his companion or his countryman. There the wicked one [Xosrov] will die.' [...]

Menahem b. 'Amiel will say to the elders and the sages: "I am the Lord's Messiah: the Lord has sent me to encourage you and to deliver you from the power of these adversaries!" The elders will scrutinize him and will despise him, for they will see that despicable man garbed in rags, and they will despise him just as you previously did. But then his anger will burn within him, "and he will don garments of vengeance (as his) clothing and will put on a cloak of zealously" (Isa 59:17b), and he will journey to the gates of Jerusalem. Hephshibah, the mother of the Messiah, will come and give him the rod by which the signs were performed. All the elders and children of Israel will come and see that Nehemiah (b. Hushiel) is alive and standing unassisted, (and) immediately they will believe in the Messiah.' [...]

In the second month; i.e., Iyyar, the congregation of **Qorah** will reemerge upon the plains of Jericho near the Wadi Shittim. They will come to Moses (!), and the cohort of the **Qorahites** will assemble. [...]

[...] for three battles will take place in the land of Israel. One will be waged by Hephshibah with Šērōy the king of Persia, one will be fought by the Lord God of Israel and Menahem b. 'Amiel with Armilos, the ten kings who are with him, and Gog and Magog, and the third will be at Zela' ha-Elef, where Nehemiah b. Hushiel and Zerubbabel will see action. The third battle will take place in the month of Av.

After all this (has taken place), Menahem b. 'Amiel will come, accompanied by Nehemiah b. Hushiel and all Israel. All of the dead will resurrect, and Elijah the prophet will be with them. They will come up to Jerusalem. In the month of Av, during which they formerly mourned for Nehemiah (and) for the destruction of Jerusalem, Israel will hold a great celebration and bring an offering to the Lord, which the Lord will accept on their behalf. [...] Then the Lord will lower the celestial Temple which had been previously built to earth, and a column of fire and a cloud of smoke will rise to heaven. The Messiah and all of Israel will follow them to the gates of Jerusalem. [...]

Again I started to question Metatron, leader of the host of the Lord: 'Sir, show me how far and how wide Jerusalem will extend, along with its architecture.' He showed me the walls which surrounded Jerusalem—walls of fire—extending from the Great Desert unto the Mediterranean Sea and unto the Euphrates River. [...]<sup>42</sup>

While the first occupation of the Temple Mount is fairly clear, the dating of the Menahem in the Jerusalem Talmud cannot be placed earlier than 614-617 AD, after the death of Nehemiah and perhaps after Xosrov's reversal.

The Jerusalem Talmud also reveals lineage and origin of the Menahem: his father was Ezechias from the royal town of Bethlehem in Judea,<sup>43</sup> an allusion to the book of Mark.<sup>44</sup> Yet, it seems that Menahem was still very young. The parable seems to align his birth with the failed attempt of the rededication of the Temple Mount by Nehemiah. Menahem was from the lineage of Jesse, King David's

<sup>42</sup> Sefer Zerubbabel, translated by John C. Reeves, based on Israel Lévi, L'apocalypse de Zorobabel et le roi de Perse Siroès (REJ 68, 1914) 131-44.

<sup>43</sup> Moise Schwab, The Talmud of Jerusalem, Vol. II. Berakhoth (Williams and Norgate, 1886) p. 44-45 (from a parable): Son of Juda, said the Arab [traveler], son of Juda! Take back thy cow and thy plough, for the King, the Messiah, has just been born. What is his name? Menahem. And what is his father's name? Ezechias. And from whence does he come? From the royal town of Bethlem in Judea.

<sup>44</sup> Mark 2:7-2:19.

father and ancestor of Jesus Christ.<sup>45</sup> The *'birth'* can have various meanings, the *'appearance'* of a person on the stage, for example. It could also mean to convey that the Christ (the Holy Spirit) has passed from Nehemiah to Menahem upon the former's death. From the Sadducee authors' point of view, and this seems to be the intention of the JT-Berakhoth, the Messiah was born – the Son of God.

Of course, the notion of the Son of God is Muslim anathema. However, this problem does not need to be resolved here. It falls in place on its own.

The birth of the Messiah has deep implications. For those that understand Jesus as the Son of God, it would perhaps be natural to view the new messiah also as the Son of God, should they have accepted the newcomer.<sup>46</sup> Under the impression of the unfolding miracles on the Temple Mount, most that had *expected* its arrival but *rejected* Jesus would perhaps also be in agreement.

Thus, in addressing the paradox of a proposal that the Nasara in the Koran were Judeo-Christians, to say that no other personality other than Jesus has ever been called the Son of God, from the perspective of the seventh century's religious upheaval, this is like saying Islam does not exist because no one had ever mentioned it before. Such a conclusion can only be made with the prejudice of a Christian point of view. Once such an opinion reaches consensus, it is almost impossible to break. The Nasara may have viewed the *current* messiah as the Son of God.

From a Jewish perspective, the birth of the Messiah should have unifying powers. However, given the circumstance, reading the Koran has just become more complex. When the new scripture addresses Trinitarian questions, does it refer to Jesus or to Menahem?

Likewise, the notion that the Nasara typically appear together with *Jems* (Yahûd) makes little sense in a Jewish context. It is more likely that the proper term would be *Judab*, which bears a significantly different meaning.

### The Djin in a renewed Schism

With the embarrassing quick loss of the Temple Mount after Xosrov's policy reversal, all attempts to an alliance must have been strained. Likewise, the JT-Berakhoth stressed the divisions with the Babylonians again.<sup>47</sup> Yet, the leadership seems to have found shelter in Babylon,<sup>48</sup> perhaps because of their prohibition to set foot to Jerusalem. After a bloody loss, one of the leaders, Rabbi Zeira, who will be

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 45 (in continuance of the parable): Mother of Menahem [Palestine], come and buy clothes for thy child. Oh, said she, I should like to see the enemies of Israel strangled, for on the day of the infant's birth, the Temple of Jerusalem is destroyed. We are certain, answered the [Arab] traveler, that if, because of his advent, the Temple is destroyed, it will also be rebuilt by him. [...] [A few days later, the Arab traveler returned] "What hast thou done with thy child? he asked of the woman. I know not, answered she; since thou wast here there has been storm and tempest [the reversal of Xosrov's permission], and my child has been taken from me."

R. Aboon says: Why all that from a tale concerning the Arab? A verse in the Bible sanctions it (Isa. x. 33): "Behold the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, shall lop the bough with terror;" and the following: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse."

<sup>46</sup> It can be inferred from the Babylond Talmud that at least some would insist to reject the new messiah, but Joseph consistently supports the idea in both Talmuds:

Talmud - Mas. Sanhedrin 99a: R. Hillel said: There shall be no Messiah for Israel, because they have already enjoyed him in the days of Hezekiah. R. Joseph said: May God forgive him [for saying so]. Now, when did Hezekiah flourish? During the first Temple. Yet Zechariah, prophesying in the days of the second, proclaimed, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold, thy king cometh unto thee! he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

<sup>47</sup> Moise Schwab, The Talmud of Jerusalem, Vol. II. Berakhoth (Williams and Norgate, 1886) p. 48: Who are the Rabbis who have been consulted? Are they of this place [Jerusalem/Tiberias], or of the south [Babylon]? If they are of this place, it is easy to understand that they have been consulted; but if they are of the south, how is it to be understood that having great men here, their inferiors should have been consulted? And also, if they are of the south, how can we explain the difference of their opinions?

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 52: If a man is despised by his mother [Palestine], but honoured and cared for by another wife of his father [Babylon], ought he to go to the later? Yes, answered R. Yohanan; and Cahana returned to Babylon.

introduced later, had arrived in Palestine wounded. The academies of Babylon, Tiberias, and Caesarea seem to have differed in opinions.<sup>49</sup> The Jerusalem Talmud suggests that the curse, which had bound the Sadducees since the loss of the Temple in the first century, was lifted due to the renewed loss by the Babylonians (only now vs. earlier).<sup>50</sup> However, Nehemiah seems to have been of the Levitic house of Joseph (he may have been the one leading the ecumenical alliance). In the obvious chaos, their leadership was challenged again. All chips were on the table.

The four lineages of the godly people need to be remembered: Isaac (Levites and Joseph), Ishmael, as well as Josias and Salomon (two Davids).<sup>51</sup> Of course, Ishmael had never been viewed as godly by the others, and the House of David had degraded (parts of) the Levites' House of Isaac to outcasts. But perhaps because of the renewed loss of the Temple in 617 AD, at a synod of the Beyth Diyn, the Levites, Josephites, and Ishmaelites were refused participation in the leadership of the Great Assembly of Babylon:

But when the Beth-Dine saw that drunkenness [transgressions] increased more and more, it forbade the three additional glasses [Levi, Joseph, and Ishmael], and maintained only the old custom [of the ten tribes under the rod of David].<sup>52</sup>

It is perhaps the number one lesson in history that exclusion leads to opposition and secession. The *Dijn* of the Talmud does not need to be transliterated into the *Djin* of the Koran. Researchers in the field need no further explanation to the relationship of the two terms. If they are connected, it unravels a chain reaction to a better understanding of the Muslim scripture.

The meaning of the *Djin* is laid out in the paper *The Koran As Primary Evidence*.<sup>53</sup> In summary, the balance of *Sidjin* and *Illiyoun* in sura 83 suggests two scriptural foundations, two 'registers' of Oral Law. The authors of the Koran were true to the *Illiyoun*, the Jerusalem Talmud, and at least some of their opponents to the *Sidjin* of the Babylonians. The *Djin* refers to the Beyth Diyn in Babylon.

The Jerusalem Talmud started to find its own way. All of a sudden, there were only three prayers.

They have learnt them [the three prayers] from the patriarchs: that of the morning, from Abraham: "Abraham got up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord" (Gen. Xix. 27); now the expression *he stood* ('Amad) signifies he prayed, as it is written: Then stood up (vayaamad) Phinehas, &c. (Ps. cvi. 30). The afternoon prayer comes to us from Isaac: "And Isaac went out to mediate (pray) in the field at the eventide" (Gen. XXiv. 63); this word, *Iasouah*, means to pray. So we read (Ps. cii. 1): "A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord." As for the evening prayer, we have it from Jacob: "And he lighted (vayifga) on a certain place, and tarried there

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., ch. III, p. 57: On Saturday eve the chairs are stood up, and on Saturday evening again overturned [the rededication of the Temple]. We have taught: The Sophas (or camp bedsteads) may be left upright and not overturned. R. Simon, son of Eleazar, says that it suffices untie the cords, because then they are not so comfortable, and the sign of mourning is established. [...] R. Jacob, son of R. Aba, on the authority of R. Jose, says: For a bedstead fitted with long stems, it is enough to take them out (because then one is on the bare boards). These two sorts of bedsteads are slightly different [Tiberias and Babylon]. R. Jeremiah thus explains them: That which has the leather bands tied from above [by God] is called a *mitta* [Palestine]; whilst the *dargash* [Babylon] has its thongs attached underneath (at the bottom). Have we not learnt that the *mitta* and the 'arsé (another sort of bedstead) are liable to become unclean when they are polished with fish-skin [Messiahism] (to soften them)? If these bedsteads have leather bands underneath, why polish them? If R. Eleazar replies that the Mishna speaks of Caesarean bedsteads, which must be polished, as they have holes [they have not yet joined].

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 57: Why are the chairs overturned? R. Krispa explains it, on the authority of R. Yohanan, by recalling a verse of Job (ii. 13): "So they sat down with him 'upon' the ground," and not 'on' the ground, which proves that the chairs were overturned. Bar-Kapara gives another explanation: God, said he, has given you a form to His own likeness, now overthrown in punishment of your sins [the renewed loss of the Temple]; let your couch also be overthrown [thus, you have lost your authority].

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>53</sup> A.J. Deus, *The Koran as Primary Evidence, Sidjin and Djin*, December 16, 2015.

all night.” The word *vayifga*’ signifies to pray, as it is said: “Let them therefore pray (*yifgu’oo*) the Lord God of Sabaoth” (Jer. Xxviii. 28), and again: “Therefore pray not thou,” &c. (*veal tifga’ bi*) (Jer. Vii. 17). the Rabbis maintain that the prayers were instituted as parallels to the daily sacrifices, the morning prayer conformably to the morning sacrifice: “The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning” (Num. Xxviii. 4), and the same for the afternoon (Num. Xxviii. 4). As regards the evening prayer they did not know with what to combine it, so they prescribed it without giving the motive; for which reason, we find in the Mishna that the evening prayer has no fixed hour.<sup>54</sup>

The Jerusalem Talmud now appears to resurrect some of the old Sadducee concepts and to establish its separate foundation. The prayers are intended to show the Sadducee lineage of the Levite-Korahite leadership from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob (Israel) to Phinehas, who is the grandson of Aaron through Eleazar. Now that they rejected the curse, they turned around and returned the favor:

The prophet thus called the place Babel, because it is the place on the earth which lies the lowest. According to R. Yohanan, the name of *tzoula* (depth or abyss) was given to Babel because it was there that the victims of the Deluge were swallowed up (Exod. xv. 10), conformably to this verse: “As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth” (Jer. li. 49).<sup>55</sup>

Babel had come to Biblical fame because of a project to erect a brick tower so tall that its top would be in the heavens.<sup>56</sup> The city had been called so because there, God confused their language and scattered its people around the earth.<sup>57</sup> Since the ‘*slain of Israel to fall*’ refers again to the loss of the Temple by the Babylonians (perhaps under Joseph’s middle position), the idea is contemporary to the seventh century. Obviously, they were blaming each other.

### HHMT/MHMD on the Temple Mount

However, now, the threat of death – a war cry – was uttered against them by ‘the prophet,’ a new, but yet undefined feature that parallels the idea in the Koran. A prophet has arrived – and he has a name:

The Caesarean Rabbis say that there is a difference of opinion on this subject between Rab and R. Yohanan [in regards to the timing of prayers]. According to the former, it is at the moment of the shutting of the gates of Heaven (at night); and according to the latter, at the closing of the gates of the Sanctuary. As R. Juda Antordia remarks, the following Mishna supports the latter opinion: Thrice during the year, it says, the priests give the benediction four times a day, viz. on the fasting days, on the day of the changing of the *Maamad*, and on the great fast; once in the morning, again at the additional prayer or *Mussaph*, at the *Minha* prayer, and fourthly, at the closing prayer or *Neila*.<sup>58</sup>

The interest in the ‘*closing of the gates of the Sanctuary*’ is an indication that the temple was back in operation in one form or another. Perhaps, Nehemiah’s structures were still standing. The concept of the *Ma’amad* is immediately apparent to scholars of the Middle East or of religious studies, and it seems a tremendous and objectionable stretch to put it into the seventh century. However, it is not this author’s fault that the *Ma’amad* appears in both Talmuds in this chronological order. With the linguistic and conceptual relation of these terms, no evolutionary step is necessary from *Ma’amad* to *Muhammad*.

Supposedly established before the Temple in Jerusalem was razed in the first century, the high number of priests and priestly families (*battei avot*) made it impossible to officiate at the same time. They

<sup>54</sup> Moise Schwab, *The Talmud of Jerusalem*, Vol. II. *Berakhoth* (Williams and Norgate, 1886) ch. IV, p. 75.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>56</sup> Genesis 11:4.

<sup>57</sup> Genesis 11:8-11:9.

<sup>58</sup> Moise Schwab, *The Talmud of Jerusalem*, Vol. I. *Berakhoth* (Williams and Norgate, 1886) ch. IV., p. 78.

were thus divided into families (or houses) to take turns, according to the Babylonian Talmud.<sup>59</sup> The Levites were divided into 24 *Mishmarot* for a weekly rotation. The group that was in active duty *in Jerusalem* was called *Ma'amad* or *Ammud* (or *Memuneh* in the Babylonian Talmud, a possible corruption of Menahem) and was headed by a *Rosh Ma'amad*, being terms that overarched the Judaic tribes and families.<sup>60</sup>

It seems that they came to bring their offerings to Jerusalem from Jericho and Palestine.<sup>61</sup> A special day of blessing was likewise called *Ma'amadoth*.<sup>62</sup> Since there is no evidence of such an organization in Jerusalem of the first century, and neither Josephus nor Qumran knew anything about the *Ma'amad*, it rather seems to constitute a post-apocalyptic invention that stepped in to represent the then absent temple rituals.<sup>63</sup> However, the prior existence of the name *Ma'amad* is irrelevant since it is here (re-)born with an apparent renewed attempt to activate the Temple in Jerusalem. While it is true that the care of the Temple had been exclusive domain of the Levites before, after the Babylonian loss, 'ordinary Israelites' would again be included in these duties. Yet, these rituals amount to nothing less than an everlasting mourning and cursing in the synagogues (a post destruction invention) for the loss of the temple,<sup>64</sup> in lieu of Jerusalem.<sup>65</sup>

In other words, the two concepts of the *Ma'amad* and *Ma'amadoth* render *MHMD* and *MHMT*. While *MHMD* was the leading priest (the high-priest), the *MHMT* that first showed up in the historical evidence was an institution.

<sup>59</sup> Talmud - Mas. Ta'anith 26a: The following are [the details concerning] the Ma'amadoth. Because it is said, command the children of Israel [and say unto them]: my food which is presented unto me. Now how can a man's offering be brought [on the altar] and he is not present? [Therefore] the earlier prophets instituted twenty-four Mishmaroth, and each Mishmar was represented [at the temple] in Jerusalem by its own Ma'amad of priests, Levites and Israelites. When the time came for the Mishmar to go up [to Jerusalem] the priests and Levites went up to Jerusalem and the Israelites of that Mishmar assembled in their cities and read [from the law] the story of Creation. The men of the [Israelite] Ma'amad fasted on four days of that week, from Monday to Thursday; they did not fast on Friday out of respect for the Sabbath nor on Sunday in order not to change over [without a break] from the rest and delight [of the Sabbath] to weariness and fasting and so [perhaps] die.

<sup>60</sup> Encyclopaedia Judaica, MISHMAROT AND MA'AMADOT, priestly and levitical divisions: The ma'amadot were considered to be of such importance that it was said that without them heaven and earth could not have survived. The institution of the ma'amadot, which dates back to the beginning of the Second Temple, seems to have formed the basis of what later became the synagogal system.

<sup>61</sup> Babylon Talmud - Mas. Ta'anith 27a: When the time came for the Mishmar to go up [to Jerusalem] one half of the Mishmar went up from [their homes] in Palestine to Jerusalem and the other half went up to Jericho in order to provide their brethren in Jerusalem with water and food.

<sup>62</sup> Babylon Talmud - Mas. Ta'anith 26b: 'on three occasions do the priests lift up their hands [to bless the people] at all services, and on one of these occasions, Fast-days, Ma'amadoth and the Day of Atonement'.

<sup>63</sup> Babylon Talmud - Mas. Ta'anith 27b: And the Israelites of the Mishmar assembled in their cities and read [from the law] the story of Creation. On what is this based? — R. Jacob b. Aha said in the name of R. Assi: Were it not for the Ma'amadoth heaven and earth could not endure, as it is said, And he said: O Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? Abraham said: Master of the Universe, should Israel sin before Thee wilt Thou do unto them [as Thou hast done] to the generation of the Flood and to the generation of the Dispersion? [God] replied to him: No. He then said to him: Master of the Universe, 'Let me know whereby I shall inherit it'. [God] answered: Take me a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old etc. Abraham then continued: Master of the Universe! **This holds good whilst the Temple remains in being, but when the Temple will no longer be what will become of them?** [God] replied: I have already long ago provided for them in the Torah the order of sacrifices and whenever they read it I will deem it as if they had offered them before me and I will grant them pardon for all their iniquities.

<sup>64</sup> Babylon Talmud - Mas. Ta'anith 27b: Our Rabbis have taught: The men of the Mishmar prayed over the sacrifice of their brethren that it may be favourably accepted, whilst the men of the Ma'amad assembled in their synagogues and observed four fasts, on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of that week. On Monday [they fasted] for those that go down to the sea; on Tuesday for those who travel in the deserts; on Wednesday that croup may not attack children; on Thursday for pregnant women and nursing mothers, that pregnant women should not suffer a miscarriage, and that nursing mothers may be able to nurse their infants; on Friday they did not fast out of respect for the Sabbath; and certainly not on the Sabbath. Why did they not fast on Sunday? — R. Johanan said: Because of the Nazareans [Nizirites whose name may have evolved; Sadducees, not Christians]. R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: Because it is the third day after the creation of Man. Resh Lakish said: Because of the additional soul. For Resh Lakish said: Man is given an additional soul on Friday, but at the termination of the Sabbath it is taken away from him, as it is said, He ceased from work and rested [shabat wa-yinafash] that is to say, Once the rest had ceased, woe! that soul is gone.

<sup>65</sup> Babylon Talmud - Mas. Megilah 31b: Sovereign of the Universe, This is very well for the time when the Temple will be standing, but in the time when there will be no Temple what will befall them? He replied to him: I have already fixed for them the order of the sacrifices. Whenever they will read the section dealing with them, I will reckon it as if they were bringing me an offering, and forgive all their iniquities.

The Ma'amad also happens to be the leadership of religious communities. After the collapse of the Jewish diaspora in Spain, the meaning of the Ma'amad would later morph into a self-constituting assembly of *judges*, elders of the communities.<sup>66</sup>

### Rededication of the Temple

The structure on the Temple Mount was now under Jerusalem/Tiberian control, and, logically, the Jerusalem Talmud is concerned with establishing the prayer rituals on the holy mountain. A number of concepts appear to now have become stronger: They were hoping for the event of the Savior to arrive soon; they believed in the Resurrection; stressing of modesty and humility (because of the previous loss of the Temple); not to lose the Temple, yet again (for not to become a mockery); the completion of the Temple project; and happiness in Paradise (a future life in Eden).<sup>67</sup> Interestingly, it seems that the renewed inclusion of the Israelites (perhaps as subjects) brought about doctrinal changes.

Thou wilt hold out Thy hand over the wicked, and all those who trust in Thee shall rejoice, when Thy town shall be rebuilt, and at the reopening of the Tabernacle and the return of the children of David, thy servant [...]<sup>68</sup>

The reopening of the Temple was near – until it was accomplished.

R. Hoona says [...] that he who does not enter the temple in this world will not enter it in heaven either. [...]

Seek ye the Lord while He may be found [Isaiah lv. 6]. Where is He to be found? In the temples and the school-houses [...]

On going to the temple, one should walk faster, because of this verse (Hoseah vi. 3): Then shall we know, we follow on to know the Lord. On coming away, one should walk slowly, according to these words (Job xiv. 16): Now Thou numberest my steps. R. Yohanan says: It is a positive fact that the man who studies the Talmud in the temple does not forget it easily.<sup>69</sup>

The rededication of the Temple was an extraordinary accomplishment that is reflected only in the seventh century (apparently multiple times).

### Territorial Expansion

From the success of possessing the Holy Mount appears to have stemmed the power to expand territorial claims over Caesarea and Antioch.

R. Yohanan was sitting down reading the Shema at the door of the Babylonian synagogue of Sippori; he did not arise before a magistrate who was passing. Seeing that, some people approached the Rabbi to

<sup>66</sup> Encyclopaedia Judaica: MA'AMAD or MAHAMAD, council of elders in a Sephardi community or congregation in the West after the expulsion from Spain, corresponding to the \*kahal (in the sense of the supreme community council) in Ashkenazi communities. Schooled by bitter memories of the crisis in Spain on the eve of the expulsion, the policy of the ma'amad tended to be conservative and authoritarian in the extreme. One of the characteristic features of ma'amad policy was that on completion of its term of office the ma'amad itself appointed its successors. A nominee was obliged to accept the assignment. Those who disobeyed the directives of the ma'amad were fined heavily, and in some cases were even excommunicated.

<sup>67</sup> Moise Schwab, *The Talmud of Jerusalem*, Vol. I. Berakhoth (Williams and Norgate, 1886) ch. IV., p. 83-84: "Praised be Thou, O God, Who givest back life to the dead; Lord, I have sinned against Thee. May it please Thee, Eternal, my God, to give me a pure heart, a happy life, good inclinations, a good friend, a good reputation, a bountiful eye, a good and modest soul, an humble spirit; that Thy name be not profaned amongst us, and that we may not become objects of mockery for the world; let not destruction await us, and let not our hope be eternal death; grant we may not be obliged to ask the help of men, and let not our food be dependent on their bounty, for their gifts are small, but the shame they inflict is great; let our life be devoted to the study of Thy law, and passed with those who accomplish Thy will; build up again Thy parvisty city and Thy tabernacle soon in our days." [...] may it therefore please Thee, Eternal God, God of our fathers, to cause love, good will, peace and friendship to reside amongst us; let our end be happy, let our hopes be realized, let the number of those who study Thy law be increased; grant we may enjoy happiness in Eden (future life); let us have a good heart and find a good companion; may we find every day when we arise what our heart desires, and may the desires of our souls be directed to Thee in all that is good."

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., ch. 5, p. 98.

strike him. Let him alone, said the judge, he is studying the laws of his Creator. R. Hanina and R. Joshua b. Levi went one day to the proconsul of Cesarea. As soon as he saw them, he arose. What! Said those around him, you arise before these Jews? I see in them, answered he, the faces of angels. R. Yona and R. Yosse went to Ursicinus (governor of the town) of Antioch, who arose when they approached. Why, was it also asked of him, do you arise for these Jews? I have seen, said he, the faces of these people in the battle, and I was victorious. R. Abin, returning from an audience with the king, turned his back upon him. The courtiers wished to kill him; but as they saw that two bands of fire accompanied him, they let him go, according to the verse (Deut. Xxviii. 2): And all the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of thee. R. Simon ben-Yohai said this verse also referred to spirits and demons. R. Yanai and R. Jonathan were walking in the Strata. Someone saw them and saluted them, saying: "I bow to you, masters". They answered: "We do not even look like students to deserve such a salutation."<sup>70</sup>

The names can be ignored in favor of chronology. Sometimes, names merely signify genealogical or tribal associations, and we do not need to be distracted by these details that will be defined by researchers across the world in the coming years. While Babylon seems to have a special status, perhaps under a governor, it did not (voluntarily) submit to the Jerusalemites. But the latter now owned the entire Levant and the Strata.

A few decades earlier Procopius had explained what the Strata meant:

Now this country which at that time was claimed by both tribes of Saracens is called Strata, and extends to the south of the city of Palmyra.<sup>71</sup> Nowhere does it produce a single tree or any of the useful growth of corn-lands, for it is burned exceedingly dry by the sun, but from of old it has been devoted to the pasturage of some few flocks. Now Harith [the Ghassanid] maintained that the place belonged to the Romans, proving his assertion by the name which has long been applied to it by all – for Strata signifies "a paved road" in the Latin tongue – and he also adduced the testimonies of men of the oldest times. Mundhir [the Lakhmid], however, was by no means inclined to quarrel concerning the name, but he claimed that tribute had been given him from of old or the pasturage there by the owners of the flocks.<sup>72</sup>

Both royal houses of the northern Arab Peninsula, the Lakhmids and the Ghassanids, had laid claim on the Strata as of old. This assured never ending conflicts over the land and connects both tribes back to the Jewish acquisition of the desert by Herod the Great<sup>73</sup> at the end of the first century BC.<sup>74</sup>

### **Against Intercessors**

The following chapters of the JT-Berakhoth make it increasingly clear that the Temple Mount enjoyed a vibrant religious life. However, Babylon and Jerusalem would not get along. They had come to terms to hold different territories.

Possess thou [Jerusalem] the west and the south, that is to say that we [in Babylon] shall enjoy this life here below and the life to come.<sup>75</sup>

Jerusalem owned the Levant and the Strata; Babylon was on its own.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 99-100.

<sup>71</sup> Palmyra is located about 135 miles northeast of Damascus in central Syria.

<sup>72</sup> Procopius 2.1. (ca. 560 AD), from Robert G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs, From the Bronze Age to the coming of Islam* (Routledge, 2002) 81-82.

<sup>73</sup> Herod the Great was a Roman client king of Israel ca. 36-4 BC.

<sup>74</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities* (93 AD) XV:5.

<sup>75</sup> Moise Schwab, *The Talmud of Jerusalem*, Vol. I. Berakhoth (Williams and Norgate, 1886) ch. VII., p. 136.

Since they had apparently absorbed vast Christian territories, it appears that the Sadducees (Levite-Korahites) were overwhelmed by their own success. All of a sudden, they found themselves on the opposing end of the Jerusalem Talmud, outcast again as heretics.

Resh Lakish studied the law with so much zeal that one day by mistake he exceeded the limits of the Sabbath. [...]

R. Judan b. R. Ismael was so taken up with the study of the law that he neither saw his mantle fall, nor a serpent coming towards him. “Master”, said his disciples, “thou art losing thy mantle.” “Does not this serpent,” said he, “preserve it from thieves?”<sup>76</sup>

The serpent is an age-old symbol of the Sadducees (Levite-Korahites). Somebody must have usurped Jerusalem again. Since there are two houses of the Sadducees involved (Isaac and Joseph), it is not easy to tell them apart.<sup>77</sup> Logically, after a clarification of the dangers of the serpent, the text accuses the opponent of having stolen the leadership of the Nasi from them:

It can be compared to one who stole a doctor’s case of instruments (Narthecium) [a word play on the Nasri]: at the moment of his going out, his son wounds himself. He goes back to the doctor and says: My master, doctor, cure my son. I am willing to do so, answers he, but first give me back my case [authority], which contains my medicines, and I will cure thy son. In the same manner the Most Holy said to Elias: Go, and release thyself from the vow concerning the dew [Isaac’s truths, given from below<sup>78</sup>], for the dead live only on the dew, and I will make the son of Sarphith arise from the dead. [...]

R. Jacob, from the village of Hanan, gave this reason, on the authority of Resh Lakish: At the moment when the patriarch Abraham was accomplishing My wishes, I swore to him I would never deprive My children of the dew. [...]

When the Israelites do bad actions and transgress the Law, the rain does not fall [Jerusalem truth, given from above]. In this case, an old man, for instance R. Yosse the Galilean, intercedes from them before God [Jesus as intercessor], and the rain falls. However the dew does not fall from heaven because of the merits of a creature.<sup>79</sup>

The rejection of Jesus – or anybody else – as an *intercessor* with God is a prominent feature of the Koran.

“He who says, ‘We give thanks [to God], we give thanks [to the intercessor],’ is to be silenced.” It is, says R. Samuel b. R. Isaac, in virtue of the verse (Ps. Lxiii. 11): But the mouth of them that speak lies shall be closed.<sup>80</sup>

The Jerusalem Talmud thus rejects the dualism (!) of the Babylonians and perhaps of the House of Joseph. Then it introduces the familiar power sharing mechanism of modern theocracies, an officiating

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., ch. V., p. 100-101.

<sup>77</sup> A similar notion can be found in the Babylonian Talmud, making it clear that the House of Joseph was *not* the target: Talmud - Mas. Sanhedrin 110a: And Moses rose up and went in to Dathan and Abiram. Resh Lakish said: This teaches that one must not be obdurate in a quarrel; for Rab said: He who is unyielding in a dispute violates a negative command, as it is written, And let him not be as Korah [Sadducee/Levite-Korahite], and as his company. [...]

R. Joseph said: Whoever contends against the sovereignty of the House of David deserves to be bitten by a snake. Here it is written, And Adonijah [Oniad Sadducees] slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zohelath; whilst elsewhere it is written, with the poison of serpents [zohale] of the dust.

<sup>78</sup> Moise Schwab, The Talmud of Jerusalem, Vol. I. Berakhoth (Williams and Norgate, 1886) ch. IV., p 88: In the time of rainy weather, R. Hagai recommends the following words to be said: “Bless unto us the rain;” and at the fall of the dew, “Bless unto us the dew, for Thou bringest together those that are scattered and whose hope is Thy justice. Thou wilt hold out Thy hand over the wicked, and all those who trust in Thee shall rejoice, when Thy town shall be rebuilt, and at the reopening of the Tabernacle and the return of the children of David [...]

[It is the opposite in the Babylonian Talmud. There, that “God shall come to us like the rain” is considered inappropriate.]

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., ch. V., 101.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

minister as puppet of the supreme leader.<sup>81</sup> Thus, in studying the history of Islam, this double leadership might become a defining marker.

### **The Birth of Islam?**

In the second last chapter of the JT-Berakhoth, the authors renewed their attempts to find common ground with the Babylonian Talmudists. In its wake, they strengthened Joseph's middle position – a cross breed.

The following shows: R. Juda says that Hillel [Jerusalem] and Shammai [Babylon] do not disagree on the order of the blessings; they admit that the thanksgiving for the meal must come first, and the celebration of separation last. They differ only with regard to the order of prayers for the light and the spices. [...]

Levi proposes this order: wine, separation, light, sanctification. It seems that this last opinion is mostly accepted, for it conciliates the other opinions. [...]

How does one act when the case presents itself? As Rab did, he replied, because the accomplished facts are proofs in his favour. When R. Abahoo went to the south, he acted as did R. Hanina [in Babylon]; and when he went to Tiberiade, he acted like R. Yohanan did, so as not to vex the wise man there where he lived.<sup>82</sup>

Unlike the Babylonian Talmud, the Jerusalem work does not pretend that there are lively exchanges going on between the various schools. Instead, it tends to make a point and then enforce it. This mechanism makes the Jerusalem Talmud a better starting point for beginners who need to learn the specific 'language' of the Talmudists.

The fineries are in the details: the first two paragraphs come with a conciliar tone; the third essentially says that 'I have my religion and you have yours,' a doctrine that can otherwise only be found in the Koran. This is highly unusual since sectarians typically insist on their truth throughout all Judaic texts up to this very point in time. Having said that, on the surface, both Talmuds argue over such petty details that their very stubbornness must have been their demise. But if one starts to grasp the underlying intentions, then the question of power is almost always paramount – except here.

Then comes the break – Islam is being born:

When Aba b. Hana and R. Hoona were eating together, R. Zeira got up and served them, carrying the oil and the wine in the same hand. What have you got in the other hand, asked b. Hana? This remark irritated his father: Thou art not satisfied, said he, to be seated at your ease whilst being waited upon by a member of the family of priests, although Samuel has said that it is a sacrilege to use the services of a priest, and yet thou mockest at his acts; I order therefore that he sit down, and that thou get up to serve him [after a conquest]. [...]

With regard to the heterogeneous products [a new sect], we find it in this verse (Genesis xxxvi. 24): These are the children of Zibeon, both Ajah and Anah; this was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness. What does the word Yemim [an allusion to the Koran] signify? R. Juda b. Simon says that it indicates wild animals; the Rabbis say that it is the produce of a horse and a female ass. According to R. Juda these are the distinctive signs; if the ears are short it is the offspring of a mare and an ass; if they are long, it is born from a female ass and a horse. R. Mena recommended the young men of the house of the Nasi in buying mules to choose those having short ears, being the offspring of a mare and an ass. What did Zibeon and Ajah do? They put a female ass [an Ishmaelite] and a stallion [an Arab] together, which

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 110: R. Hisda says that the officiating minister should be an ordinary Israelite.

<sup>82</sup> Moise Schwab, *The Talmud of Jerusalem*, Vol. I. Berakhoth (Williams and Norgate, 1886) ch. VIII., p. 139.

produced the mule [the Muslims]. The Most High said to them: You have brought into the world a bad object, I will do the same. What did He do? He brought a serpent and a saurian together, which gave birth to the asp [the Quraysh leadership from the Sadducee, Levite Korahites]. Now a man has never been known to recover from the bite of an asp or of a mad dog, or of the kick of a mule, especially if it be white. This determines the origin of heterogeneous mixtures.<sup>83</sup>

While the banner of this new sect was *white* (as opposed to the *black* Saracens), it was the offspring of Jerusalem that formed into a new sect – Islam. Its leader was Rabbi Zeira ben Rabbi Abahoo, whose ‘father’ had earlier flip-flopped between Babylon and Jerusalem, indicating a search for compromises<sup>84</sup> However, Abahoo was likely his and his ‘brothers’ teacher, the head of the Academy at Caesarea. This would be the Abbahu/Abahu in the Babylonian Talmud, believed to have lived in the fourth century.<sup>85</sup> Instead, Zeira also appears as ben Hanina, and he was a Cohen (a Sadducee Levite-Korahite). It does perhaps not have to be pointed out, but this shows some of the mechanism of how the lineages of the Judaic leadership have been constructed.

Rabbi Zeira is among the most frequently mentioned names in the Jerusalem Talmud. He also appears in the Babylonian Talmud (as Rav Ze'era, the pious Babylonian of the fourth century) and seems to have originated in the Academy of Pumbedita from where he emigrated to Jerusalem. He is the leading Rabbi that had earlier fled to Palestine in the wake of the loss of the Temple after the Persian reversal. Having been injured, he had to bribe someone to stay alive.<sup>86</sup> It parallels the Battle of Uhud where Prophet Muhammad was wounded.

This Rabbi Zeira is also the one who utilized the distinctive Muslim ritual of putting both hands before his face, which needs to be revisited here:

How is it that I do not see Rabbi [Zeira] assume upon himself the celestial sovereignty? He answered: When thou shalt see him put his hands on his face, he will be accomplishing this act of submission to God.<sup>87</sup>

He was pre-destined to take over the supreme leadership of Jerusalem. Rabbi Zeira seems to also have had two brothers (or peer-priests), by the Talmudic names Rabbi Hiya bar-Ashia and R. Abba bar-Hanna.<sup>88</sup> Zeira's son was Rabbi Aha bar Zeira.<sup>89</sup>

Since Zeira and his teacher Abahoo are also prominent in the Babylonian Talmud (of the third generation), it seems obvious that not only the JT-Berakhoth is a seventh century work but that the

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 143-144.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., ch. I., p. 27: It has been asked of R. Aha bar R. Zeira: How his father did? Did he act up to the opinion of the Rabbis of Palestine, or those of Babylon? R. Ezechias says: He followed the opinion of those of Jerusalem, and R. Yose followed that of the Rabbis of Palestine. R. Hanina says: This last opinion seems to be the right one; for R. Zeira acted with great severity, as also did those Rabbis (of Babylon); it proves that he was of their opinion.

<sup>85</sup> Abbahu/Abahu appears in the Babylonian Talmud hundreds of times and in practically every volume. The translator of the Tosefta Berachot, Eliyahu Gurevich, makes an interesting observation in regards to the timing of Abahoo: Talmud Yerushalmi (Shabbat 8:1, Daf 54b) mentions a story in which Rebbi Abahu says that he learned an ancient Tosefta. Rebbi Abahu lived during the 3rd century and was a contemporary of Rebbi Chiya and Rebbi Oshiya, although younger than they were. It is hard to believe that he would call the Tosefta ‘ancient’ if it was written during his friend's lifetime. He must have been referring to something written much earlier than that. [It did not occur to Gurevich that Abahoo could have lived later to justify the use of the word ‘ancient’.]

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., ch. II., 52: When R. Zeira arrived in Palestine, he had himself bled; then he went to buy a pound of meat from a butcher. He asked: What is the price of this measure? Fifty pieces of money, and a blow which you must receive. I will give you sixty, but spare me the blow. The other refused. Here are seventy pieces. Another refusal. Here are eighty! Here are ninety! Here are a hundred! Well,, then, said he, do according to thy custom.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., ch. I, p. 30.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., ch. I, p. 12.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

Babylonian Talmud must still have been evolving also. These personalities would make a great subject for a dissertation. It would bring forth the minute details of the founder of Islam. “Babylonia gave him birth; Palestine had the pleasure of rearing him; ‘Wo is me,’ says Tiberias, for she has lost her precious jewel.”<sup>90</sup> Likely, at least some could be connected with personalities of the Muslim narrative, in particular the well-defined Zeira and Abahoo.

As pure speculative candy, for these two, my eyes are on Az-Zubayr ibn Al-Awam [read ben Hanina], one of the first to accept Islam, and Abu Bakr, the first Muslim Caliph after Prophet Muhammad of the traditions. Too close to modern tolerance, Rabbi Hiya bar-Ashia perhaps connects with Aisha bint Abi Bakr. It may speak for itself that Aisha was first ‘married’ to Muhammad and then to Zaid (aka Zeira), indicating shifting allegiances.<sup>91</sup> His other ‘brother’ can be identified as well, providing for an irrefutable triple hinge that is beyond any statistical probability of error. But this notion endangers entire species on the Muslim family tree and is not further laid out here.

“They must not bless the light until they have enjoyed the light.” R. Zeira b. R. Abahoo interprets thus the verse (Genesis i.4): It is written, God saw that the light was good, and God divided the light from the darkness. R. Berakhia says that, according to the interpretation of two great personages, R. Yohanan and R. Simon b. Levi, a real distinction is signified. R. Juda b. R. Simon says that he separated heaven [a schism] for himself, and the Rabbis say that he destined it for the just in the future life. What does this resemble? It is like a king who has two generals (strategus), both of whom wish to be on day service, and so the king limits the services of one to the day and of the other to the night. [...]

Knowest thou the origin of the formula, “He forms the light, creates darkness, and makes peace” (Isaiah xlv. 7). God, in appearing, made peace between them.<sup>92</sup>

Jerusalem and Rabbi Zeira seem to have been together at first, then divided, but then they seem to have come to terms for an alliance again.

### **Jihad against Babylon?**

The last chapter in the JT-Berakhoth continues with the natural sequence and deals with an idolatrous enemy. War was declared against them.

If a man see the place from whence earth was taken to sprinkle on animals [Jerusalem], he says: “Blessed be He who speaks and acts, who commands, and keeps His promises” (to destroy idolatry); according to others, on seeing Babylon this verse is said (Isaiah xiv. 23): and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction.

R. Zeira and R. Juda say, in Rab’s name: No blessing is valid if it does not contain the recognition of the divine royalty.<sup>93</sup>

The text contains two elements, one being the intention to destroy ‘idolatry’ and the other that a declaration of war was under the authority of Rabbi Zeira (and Juda). The reason for the aggression, as also found in the Koran, lied in the Trinitarian beliefs of their opponents.

How is it that, according to your doctrines, it is written (Joshua xxii. 22): The Lord God of gods, He knoweth? In spite of that, replied he [Rabbi Samle], the verb is employed in the singular number. Master said his disciples, that reply is a forced one; what would you answer to us? These 3 expressions [Lord

<sup>90</sup> Talmud – Mas M. K. 75b.

<sup>91</sup> Koran 33:37.

<sup>92</sup> Moise Schwab, The Talmud of Jerusalem, Vol. I. Berakhoth (Williams and Norgate, 1886) ch. VIII., p. 146.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., ch. IX., p. 149.

God of Gods], replied he, are the attributes of a single name, as people say indifferently, Caesar, Augustus, or Emperor. He was again asked: How is it that it is written (Psalm l. 1): the mighty God even the Lord, hath spoken and called the earth? The verbs, here also, are in the singular number, replied he [...]

How is it that it is written: He is a holy God? No matter, replied he [Rabbi Samle], the verb is in the singular number, as it is said elsewhere (Exodus xx. 5): For I the Lord thy god am a jealous God. [...] To his disciples, who made the same observation, R. Isaac replied that in this verse the plural sign is used to show that several degrees of holiness are meant.<sup>94</sup>

Christians have for centuries combed through the Talmuds in the hope to find proof of Jesus. However, these works are so systematically concealed that any hint remains just that: a hint. The fact that many Rabbinic remnants in the Koran actually originate from the Babylonian Talmud must not be of concern here. Perhaps, multiple histories are intertwined in the Koran.<sup>95</sup> However, if the Babylon Talmud had indeed been a core opponent of the Koran's seed (at least at some point), then the latter is also irrefutable evidence – for the first time – that all sides had believed in Jesus but with different natures. Here, the discussion has perhaps been reduced after the fact to a dispute over the 'several degrees of holiness'.

These are professionally created documents. If one were to expect an express acknowledgement of Jesus Christ – in particular *when* he had been accepted – the here presented textual samples should be instructive. The story is embedded in scriptural lingo and symbolism that only few experts can understand. The authors of the Talmud made sure that the hurdle was set as high as it could be in the seventh century. Whoever reads these texts literally, including the Koran, is wasting time.

### The Night Journey

One of those riddles (it has previously been mentioned) is the passage about the number 515 that is connected to the keys of Paradise. It appears here in the chronology. Is the text trying to provide for a date when the Jihad had failed, perhaps 15 years after the dedication of the Temple by Nehemiah? If so, then that date would be 632 AD (617+15), the renewed loss of the Temple in Jerusalem and the traditional death of Prophet Muhammad. However, since the 500 years cannot be linked to the year of the generally accepted destruction of the Temple, the dating is left open for the time being. Having said that, with the building block of the Jerusalem Talmud, the equation is simpler than one might assume. It brings forth a date with astronomical precision.

Irrespective of the dating, the consequences for them were horrible: the Messiah had arrived, but he had failed to redeem Israel. They lost the Temple once more.

According to Bar-Kapara, Moses escaped in another way. An angel descended from heaven and took the form of Moses, who thus escaped whilst they seized the angel.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>95</sup> Al-Kindi in Andrew Rippin, *Muslims, their religious beliefs and practices* (Routledge, 2005) 14; from Emmanuel van Si, *Radical Islam, Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (Yale University Press, 1985) 2: Show me any proof or sign of a wonderful work done by your master Muhammad, to certify his mission, and to prove what he did in slaughter and rapine was, like the other, by Divine command.

The result of all of this is patent to you who have read the scriptures and see how, in your book, histories are all jumbled together and intermingled; an evidence that many different hands have been at work therein, and caused discrepancies, adding or cutting out whatever they liked or disliked. Are such, now, the conditions of a revelation sent down from heaven?

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

Now, the Night Journey (the first verse in sura 17) would take place with a significant alteration: the direction of travel is reversed. Here the flight of the Temple leadership was *away* from Jerusalem. In the Koran, the trip is understood as travelling *to* the Holy City. The meaning is not the miraculous transportation of a prophet but the move of the institution MHMT to somewhere else. Thus, the foundation of the new state rests not on conquest but rather on retreat.

The reason for the sudden departure appears to have been a political storm, the interruption of the royal power.

According to the Rabbis the earthquakes are caused by discussion, as indicated by this verse, which recalls the same cause (Zechariah xiv. 5): And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah. According to Samuel, on the contrary, this verse does not refer to an earthquake, but to a political storm, to the interruption of the royal power, as it is said (Jeremiah li. 29): And the land shall tremble and sorrow; for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation, without an inhabitant.<sup>97</sup>

As pure speculation, this storm appears to have fallen together with the rise of the Rashidun Caliphate – as Babylonian opponents of the ‘Muslim’ leadership that had fled Jerusalem. Yet, the pilgrimage to Jerusalem remained intact for the time being.

It is written (Prov. Xxiii. 22): Despise not thy mother [the Torah] when she is old. This according to R. Yosse bar-Aboon, signifies that if the explanation of the Mosaic precepts seems old to thee, thou must not despise them on that account in virtue of the above verse. R. Zeira explains it thus: If thy nation be weakened, rise up to sustain it. Thus Elkana urged Israel to enter into the Temple during the three great feasts, as it is written (1 Samuel i. 3): And this man went up out of his city yearly, &c.

It is also written (Ps. Cxix. 126): When it is time to work for the Lord [write a new Law], destroy even your Law [i.e. change it].

Whatever the precise date might be, the flight away from Jerusalem is the hinge to Prophet Muhammad’s Night Journey from Mecca to Jerusalem in the Koran.

If the Jerusalem Talmud indeed turns out to deliver an accurate description of the beginnings of the seventh century, then the Babylon Talmud would also come under scrutiny. Rabbinism would make it part of its mission to deny Jesus in any shape or form, but at the same time, they pretend that they adhered to the Babylonian Talmud. In other words, not only Islam had become a new sect but also modern Jewish Rabbinism.

### ***Beyond the Clash of the ‘Registers’***

Perhaps, the clash of the two ‘registers’ of the Jerusalem and Babylon Talmuds needs to sink in first. Could it be that Caesarea constitutes a third ‘register’ that formed in parallel – the Koran? However, in order to provide some direction, four links that help in understanding the implications are provided.

The first one had been put out as a bait of a description of the Kaaba in Mecca several times before, first in 2011. It may now be understood better in the given context. The Kaaba was covered by a

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

veil that had been sourced in Yemen. Tradition claims that the veil had initially been fabricated in the city of Najran,<sup>98</sup> which was host to a strong textile industry.

Whence that custom of ours is derived, of having a fine linen veil, after the temple has been built, to be drawn over the entrances. But the ten other curtains [...] had golden clasps, in order to join the one curtain to the other, which was done so exactly that they seemed to be one entire curtain. These were spread over the temple, and covered all the top and parts of the walls, on the sides and behind [...].<sup>99</sup>

One might be inclined to recognize a description of the present-day veil that is spread over the Kaaba in Mecca. However, it is a first-century description by Josephus explaining why the Holy Temple in Jerusalem was hidden behind a veil. According to the Koran, the Kaaba is the resting place of the Shechina<sup>100</sup> — the spirit of God. Shechina, in turn, connects the resting place of God back to the Ark of the Covenant, to the Ten Commandments in the Jewish Torah,<sup>101</sup> and of course to the Temple in Jerusalem, the only resting place of God in the Judaic religions. Thus, the Kaaba is primary evidence for its Jewish roots.

Secondly, the Foundation Stone of the Temple in Jerusalem is perhaps one of the most central artefacts in all Judaic religions. Since the Black Stone is embedded into the foundation of the Kaaba, it needs to be taken into consideration that the Sadducees (Levite-Korahites or the House of Joseph) may indeed have pretended that the Lost Ark was in the Kaaba. The Black Stone carries the following inscription.

And he led all nobles from Jerusalem and the people of the house of Jehova to Nergaldad of the Arameans.<sup>102</sup>

Dozy concluded that the Jews had fled to a northern Mesopotamian city before they arrived in Mecca. However, he dated the event after the advent of the prophet Ezra and his accomplice Nehemiah of the Old Testament before the Christian era.<sup>103</sup>

The noble Jews and the Levites of the house of God had not *fled*, but they were *led*. *Nergal* means *cock on the dunghill* and *-dad* means *god*. Thus, the text needs to be read the other way around:

The Levites-Korahites (the Sadducees) and the people of the House of God (Babylonians) were led from their exile to the dunghill (the Temple Mount), which was then in the hands of the Armenian Saracens.

Hence, the Black Stone was at first destined for Jerusalem, not for Mecca. It was moved to Mecca during the Night Journey. In other words, the Black Stone *is* the Foundation Stone of Jerusalem, which may provide for the rationale to change in the orientation of the prayers. The Black Stone thus also amounts to primary evidence for its Jewish roots.

<sup>98</sup> Najran is said to having been the first place in the Arab Peninsula where Christianity arrived.

<sup>99</sup> Flavius Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* ca. 90 AD, III:6.4, translated by William Whiston.

<sup>100</sup> Koran 48:4.

<sup>101</sup> Koran 2:248: The sign of his kingdom is that there shall come to you At-Tabut [the lost Ark of the Covenant], wherein is Sakinah from your Lord and a remnant of that which Moses and Aaron left behind [the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments], carried by the angels.

<sup>102</sup> Reinhart Dozy, *Die Israeliten zu Mekka*, (1864) 161: Und er führte weg all Vornehmen von Jerusalem und das Volk im Hause Jehova's nach Nergaldad der Aramäer.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

Thirdly, there is no dispute over the tremendous influence that Judaism had in the Abbasid capital of Baghdad. That city hosted twenty eight synagogues alone. However, just how great this influence was is largely unknown.

One of the Jewish leaders in Baghdad during the visit of Benjamin of Tudela was Daniel, who was styled "*Our Lord the Head of the Captivity of all Israel.*" Benjamin said:

He possesses a book of pedigrees going back as far as David, King of Israel. The Jews call him "Our Lord, Head of the Captivity," and the Mohammedans call him "Saidna ben Daoud," and he has been invested with authority over all the congregations of Israel at the hands of the Emir al Muminin, the Lord of Islam.

For thus Mohammed commanded concerning him and his descendants; and he granted him a seal of office over all the congregations that dwell under his rule, and ordered that every one, whether Mohammedan or Jew, or belonging to any other nation in his dominion, should rise up before him [the head of the exiles] and salute him, and that anyone who should refuse to rise up should receive one hundred stripes.<sup>104</sup>

The Jews could probably not rise to higher honors, and the difference between a caliph and a Jewish leader did not seem all that big at this point in time. The caliph and Lord of Islam even spoke Hebrew.<sup>105</sup> Daniel's position only becomes fully clear with the following passage:

And every fifth day when he goes to pay a visit to the great Caliph, horsemen, Gentiles as well as Jews, escort him, and heralds proclaim in advance, "Make way before our Lord, the son of David, as is due unto him, [...]" Then he appears before the Caliph and kisses his hand, and the Caliph rises and places him on a throne which Mohammed had ordered to be made for him, and all the Mohammedan princes who attend the court of the Caliph rise up before him. And the Head of the Captivity is seated on his throne opposite to the Caliph, in compliance with the command of Mohammed to give effect to what is written in the law — "The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor a law-giver from between his feet, until he come to Shiloh: and to him shall the gathering of the people be."<sup>106</sup>

There can be little doubt that there is an uninterrupted evolution from before the seventh century up to the Abbasid caliphate.

Fourth and last, my research-friend Omar Nineveh in Iraq has provided me with an unpublished paper 'Decoding Early Islam'. This paper will be published after assuring that it does not contain any location revealing content that might be embedded in the document's metadata. However, perhaps his most important finding for this context is the following:

In Iraq, the supposed ancestors of Hussein (and thus the prophet) call themselves "Saddah" (سادة) sometimes with emphasis on the letter D). The Arabized meaning of the word is masters (Sadah سادة in Arabic masters). Linguistic evidence confirms them indeed as Sadducees/Saddoukaioi: masters. The plural Arabic word Sadah (masters) has no emphasis on the D. Instead, the term Sadducee (Middle English), Sadduce (Old English), Sadducaeus (Latin), Saddoukaioi (Greek), adduqi (late Hebrew), and the modern Iraqi colloquial Saddah (سادة) still retain the emphasis on the D.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>105</sup> The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela (1171) 55: There the great king, Al Abbasi the Caliph holds his court, and he is kind unto Israel, and many belonging to the people of Israel are his attendants; he knows all languages, and is well versed in the law of Israel. He reads and writes the holy language [Hebrew] [...]

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>107</sup> Omar Nineveh, Decoding Early Islam, 2013.

One may no longer wonder over the provenance of the first Muslim Caliph, Abū Bakr as-Şiddīq. There is an uninterrupted thread from the deep past up to modernity.

### ***Conclusion - Erroneous Assumptions***

While the Middle Age is far distant, humanity is still driven and divided by belief and superstition. In this generation, there has never been a time where this would have been more apparent. Proponents of any given religion cannot fathom that something could be wrong with their traditions. Their opponents in faith do not dare to touch it. With modern technology, we should have long been able to lay out the real historic progression.

I did not set out to submit the Jerusalem Talmud to scientific scrutiny. Quite the contrary. I have a stack of ‘pleasure’ books to read on my bedside table. This work had sat at the bottom for years. I only wanted to read it as a balance to the studies that I had undertaken in the Babylonian Talmud. Only because I did not want to take my mind off the Koran investigation, I thought to fly through it. However, the ‘what is this?’ moments started piling up, essentially from the beginning. The miracle is that nobody seems to have seen the obvious.

How can this be?

The mechanism of religious history is fairly straight forward: all Judaic parties have an inherent interest to detach themselves from each other. It is a core doctrine in all of their books not to associate with those that do not belong to the believing community of the same sect. Thus, apart from some key moments, the history of the Jews is whatever fuels their purpose; the history of the Christians imagines unity where sectarian division and militancy was rampant; Islam’s history, as is well established, serves the purposes from two hundred years after the fact. The result is three histories that are largely autonomous as if they had lived in different worlds.

With the application of modern technology and an iron will of discipline, the history of the Koran becomes accessible. It is a masterpiece of deception. Personalities that can be identified in all three, the Koran’s traditions, the Jerusalem Talmud, and the Babylonian work provide for the hinges to unlock all of their secrets. It is astonishing just by how large a margin modern research underestimates the obvious strength and power of the various Judaic groups, in particular when they united. This is not to say that anybody wants harm to come upon the Jews, but we cannot learn from history how to avoid another holocaust if we do not investigate meticulously and learn with impartial diligence what lessons there might be buried in reality.

The JT-Berakhoth has neither been completed in the fifth century, nor has it been started then. This Talmud is a seventh century work that provides for a chronology and the actors of an inner-Jewish drama that led to the founding of Islam. The Babylonian Talmudists had accepted a Trinitarian form of Jesus Christ while Jerusalem advocated Jesus as a human being. However, the living messiah on the Mount appears to have had a higher standing. For Jerusalemites he seems to have been the Son of God.

The Talmuds’ writers never expected their work to reveal its secrets. They hoped it being far too complex. Precisely because of this mechanism, the JT-Berakhoth amounts to solid primary evidence with

which the central religious shifts in the early seventh century of the Middle East can be reconstructed with fairly good detail.

Even better, the JT-Berakhoth is largely intact in chronological order, and these are just the low hanging fruits. To uncover all of the details of this text will take tremendous effort and is an academic team project on its own that I will leave to other experts that can dig deeper into the linguistic fineries. Whoever takes this on will be able to come forth with much better precision, with countless details, and with the names of the actors. Some of the specifics in this working paper may be rejected, but the probability of doubt for the big picture is nil. The JT-Berakhoth was not only edited in the seventh century, it was created then in full.

This notion immediately opens a Pandora Box for those researchers that long for a Christian kernel in the Talmud. The Koran is the primary and irrefutable evidence that Jesus has not only been subject of both Talmudic versions but that they both had accepted the Messiah. Broadly speaking, like the Christians, the Jews had split into factions in Babylon and Jerusalem (Tiberias) with opposing positions. The divinity of Jesus is found in Babylon while Jesus as a prophet messiah was established in Tiberias. But researchers do not need to jump to conclusions: nothing has been said about the timing of this acceptance or the doctrinal differences between Jerusalem and Caesarea. The latter's leaders are those that end up forming Islam.

The confirmation in the Koran also attests to a different process: while Jesus is a topic in the Koran, the Talmuds have been better concealed. Some of these alterations could have happened *after* the inception of the Koran. Pico Mirandola may have still had access to full versions in the fifteenth century.<sup>108</sup> While, he does not use the word Jesus, he found “the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Word, and the divinity of the Messiah.” These concepts are still part of the Babylonian Talmud since their concealed language was always part of their religious mechanism.

Those that want to stop picking corns as blind hens need to study the Jerusalem and the Babylonian Talmud. However, while the former is slightly easier to absorb than the Koran (assuming the presence of the entire Judaic scriptural foundation), the Babylonian work is exponentially more difficult and larger. It is not unlike learning an entirely new language. It is needless to say that I need all the help that I can get for my work.

The enormity of the overall task requires drastic simplification. Prominent scholars, such as Patricia Crone sel., have viewed as amateurish the notion that the obsession with Arabic letters should be ignored. These absolute opinions of ‘authorities’ need not lead researchers to shy away from further inquiries into an intellectually challenging subject that nobody has yet conquered. As most of the Koran was originally not written in Arabic and vowels are claimed to having been injected after the fact, arguing

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<sup>108</sup> Pico Mirandola, *Oration On the Dignity of Man* (1496), translated by A. Robert Caponigri (Regnery Publishing, 1956): Pope Sixtus the Fourth, the immediate predecessor of our present pope, Innocent the Eighth, under whose happy reign we are living, took all possible measures to ensure that these books would be translated into Latin for the public benefit of our faith and at the time of his death, three of them had already appeared. The Hebrews hold these same books in such reverence that no one under forty years of age is permitted even to touch them. I acquired these books at considerable expense and, reading them from beginning to end with the greatest attention and with unrelenting toil, I discovered in them (as God is my witness) not so much the Mosaic as the Christian religion. There was to be found the mystery of the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Word, the divinity of the Messiah; there one might also read of original sin, of its expiation by the Christ, of the heavenly Jerusalem, of the fall of the demons, of the orders of the angels, of the pains of purgatory and of hell.

about Arabic letters and words seems rather futile. Despite the advances in information technology, for the last 150 years or so, research has made little progress in understanding this scripture for the simple fact that the context of all Judaic religions is problematic from their very inception. To engage in fights over the letter is ridiculous where the big picture of the religious foundation is largely absent other than tales of traditions and wishful thinking that is further complicated by the various versions of Talmuds that *aim* to provide no historic anchors. Contradicting accounts have been piled on top of each other, leaving the last naturally as the hardest to be understood. Hence, it seems preferable in the approach to the Koran to trying to understand the Judaic roots behind mysterious words and expressions in their original languages (in and beyond the example of Inarah) and to assume that the Arabic version constitutes the beginning of distorting early Muslim history. Hence, fuzzy logic and phonetics of the large and ancient biblical context might reveal much more than clinging to the pity letter of an Arab text that needs to be placed at the end of a chain of revelations.

To stem potential protests, this research is not inspired by religious or anti-religious agendas. Its sole purpose is the search for knowledge with the tools of science available today, and it is detached from spiritual questions. However, the early release of this puzzle piece has to do with a Christian researcher-friend of mine, who is holed up in Iraq. The illumination of the birth-pains of Islam through knowledge creation by the research community might be their most important contribution toward peace among the numerous Judaic sects and for the world.

Even though the sensibilities of Israel's eternal promise call for extreme academic prudence and political correctness, the Middle East of the seventh century cannot be resurrected without the Star of David coming under scrutiny. This is history, not religio-politics. This author's main interest — having ancient Sephardi roots — lies in the religio-economics of poverty of the Saracens from over 500 years later, and in order to understand the events of that time, the beginnings of the seventh century are critical.

The modern world's number one enemy claims to be a Quraysh, thus a Sadducee, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi al-Husseini al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, the elusive leader of the Islamic State. Since the implication is perhaps clear to most academics in the field, this paper presents a powerful intellectual weapon to destroy the 'legitimacy' of Baghdadi, whether his association with the Sadducees is real or fabricated. It is a potential weapon against absolutist radicals of any religious denomination and against the Islamic State. In the face of the Islamic State, any modern mind should be offended by claims to leadership that are based on religion. Only the Islamic research community can present this gift to the world.

These findings have been sitting idle, awaiting for the completion of my large commentary on the Koran. Knowing what the implication will be for those that take this guidance seriously — it will trigger a chain reaction — I humbly apologize to my research friend now under the yoke of the Islamic State for not having released this earlier. He is desperate for an intellectual weapon against the evil that has befallen mankind. I also apologize to those offended by these findings, but the discovery cannot be undone. The builders of the trap are to be indicted, not those that try to prevent others from falling into it.

As the Talmud says, they can read it, but they cannot interpret it: fools walketh in the dark.

The Talmud is laughing at mankind no more.