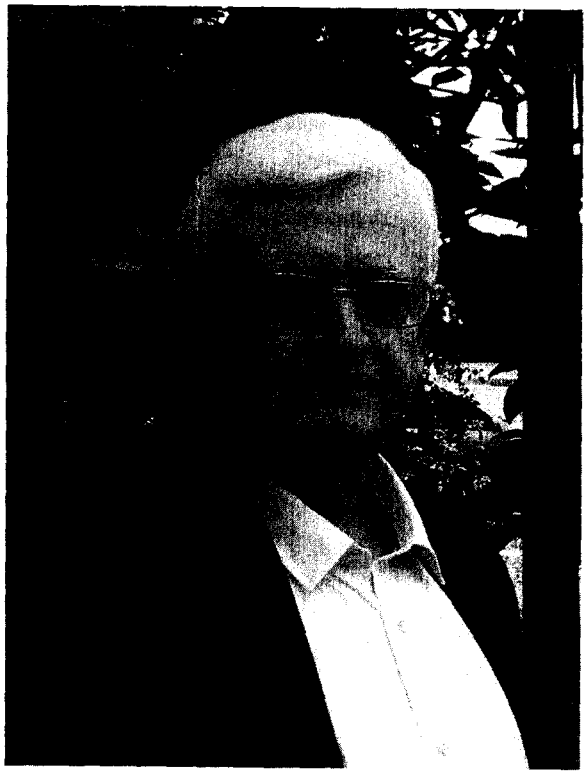

Uri Rubin
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Uri Rubin

Muḥammad the Prophet and Arabia

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Quraysh and Their Winter and Summer Journey: On the Interpretation of Sūra 106

1 Preface

A most extensive study of the Islamic *tafsīr* ("exegesis") of Sūra 106 has been published by Harris Birkeland in 1956.[1] In 1984 I have published my own study of the *sūra*,[2] and in 1987 Patricia Crone discussed the *tafsīr* materials pertaining to Sūra 106 in a monograph about the Meccan trade.[3]

What seems to be missing from these studies is an attempt at reading the *sūra* within its own internal qur'ānic context, i.e. in comparison with parallel qur'ānic passages that contain the same ideas as well as vocabulary. In the following discussion, which forms a revised and updated version of my 1984 article,[4] the internal qur'ānic evidence will be taken as a starting point for the re-evaluation of the significance of Sūra 106, and then the evidence of post-qur'ānic *tafsīr* will be revisited in order to show that rather than being adventitious guesswork, as maintained by Crone, it faithfully represents concepts and ideas of Muslims who projected them back into their own reading of the Qur'ān. These ideas deserve serious attention because they are most revealing with respect to the image of Quraysh as perceived by generations of Muslims.

2 The internal qur'ānic context of Sūra 106

1. *li-īlāfi Qurayshin*
2. *ilāfihim riḥlata l-shitā'i wa-l-ṣayfi*
3. *fa-l-yaʿbudū rabba hādhā l-bayti*
4. *lladhī aṭʿamahum min jūʿin wa-āmanahum min khawfin*

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[1] Harris Birkeland, *The Lord guideth*, Skrifter utgitt av det Norske videnskaps-akademi i Oslo, 2. Hist.-filos. klasse, no. 2 (Uppsala, 1956), 102–30.

[2] Uri Rubin, "The *īlāf* of Quraysh: A study of sūra CVI", *Arabica* 31 (1984), 165–88.

[3] Patricia Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Princeton, 1987), 204–14.

[4] I was able to prepare the present version during my stay in 2009/10 as a Research Fellow in the Institute for Advanced Studies, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I thank Prof. Michael Lecker for reading a draft of this version and for his useful comments, suggestions and corrections.

In the traditional chronological lists of the qur'ānic revelations,[5] Sūra 106 appears among the Meccan *sūras*, and usually as the 28th. Passages contained in other Meccan *sūras* are most relevant to the issues addressed in this *sūra* and especially in its second part (vv. 3–4) where the key words are *jū'*, "hunger," and *khawf*, "fear." These are two kinds of hardship against which God is said to have protected Quraysh, and on this idea several Meccan passages have a direct bearing.

To begin with, in a somewhat later Meccan passage (q 16:112-14), a parable is recounted about a town safe and secure to which its means of subsistence came in abundance from every quarter; but it disbelieved (*kafarat*) in God's favors, therefore God made it taste the utmost degree of hunger (*al-jū'*) and fear (*al-khawf*). There came to them an apostle from among them, but they rejected him, so the punishment overtook them while they were unjust. The disbelief (*kufr*) that is condemned in this parable stands for refusal to recognize Allāh as the ultimate source of the prosperity and security that are enjoyed in a town into which provisions are brought from "every quarter." The idea is of a sacred locality that prospers from incoming pilgrims, but its inhabitants are not taking this prosperity as a sign of God's favors and do not believe in him.

In other Meccan passages the divine blessing that the local inhabitants ignore is associated with the idea of the *ḥaram*, i.e. a territory encompassing a town consecrated by God within which bloodshed is forbidden. Thus in q 29:67 Muḥammad's contemporary unbelievers are condemned for not seeing that it is God who has given them a secure *ḥaram* "while people all around them are snatched away." The verse goes on to assert that their *kufr* consists in disbelieving in God's benevolence (*ni'ma*) while preferring to believe in "vanity" (*bāṭil*), i.e. idols other than God. Implicit here is the notion that the protection enjoyed within God's *ḥaram* should lead its inhabitants to believe in him alone and abandon all other deities who fail to protect their own followers wherever they are. In q 28:57 the same audience is denounced again for ignoring the fact that it was God who has "established for them a safe, sacred territory (*ḥaraman āminan*) to which fruits of every kind are being brought as a sustenance from us." This verse encompasses the full dimensions of the idea of the *ḥaram*, i.e. not only security but also prosperity derived from incoming pilgrims and merchants. But the addressees, i.e. the Meccans, are so

[5] See for example the list of 'Aṭā' al-Khurāsānī (Syrian d. 135/753) in Ibn al-Ḍurays, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, ed. Ghazwat Budayr (Damascus, 1987), 33–4.

unsure that all the benefits of the *ḥaram* come from God that they refuse to follow Muḥammad lest they should be "carried off from our land." In the following verse (q 28:58) God draws their attention to the deserted vestiges of old generations of idolaters in towns other than Mecca who prospered and were then destroyed by God. This implies that God's power superseded that of the local idols who failed to save their followers from extinction.

These passages indicate that the conflict between Muḥammad and his Meccan contemporaries stemmed from different attitudes towards the status of Mecca as a prosperous and secure *ḥaram*. While the Prophet presents to them a monotheistic demand to see in Allāh the ultimate origin of their worldly welfare and security, the unbelievers are not convinced that this is so and do not abandon the worship of other deities, such that are worshipped also by idolaters outside Mecca.

The qur'ānic monotheistic approach to the idea of the *ḥaram*, i.e. that Mecca owes its prosperity and security exclusively to God, is connected in another Meccan passage with the figure of Abraham. In q 14:37 Abraham prays to God saying that he, i.e. Abraham, has made his offspring dwell in a region originally "unproductive of fruit." near God's sacred house (*'inda baytika l-muḥarrami*) so that they "may keep up prayer". Then Abraham implores God to "make the hearts of people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits; haply they may be grateful." Abraham's prayer is reiterated in a Medinan passage (q 2:126) where he asks God to make Mecca a secure town (*baladan āminan*) for those who believe in God and in the Last Judgment, and provide them with fruits. Abraham's prayer is here the ultimate trigger for the benevolence of God who has let the Meccans prosper near his house, i.e. the Ka'ba, thanks to provisions brought in by pilgrims. This implies that to believe in God as the ultimate source of all the benefits derived from Mecca's being a *ḥaram* means to believe in the monotheistic legacy of Abraham.

The same monotheistic approach to the idea of the *ḥaram* is reiterated in Sūra 106. Here the idea is condensed into the demand put to Quraysh to "worship the lord of this house who has fed them against hunger and secured them from fear" (vv. 3–4). The title "lord of this house," as also "lord of this town" which occurs in another Meccan *sūra* (q 27:91), mean that he and no other deity is the origin of the sacred status of Mecca as a *ḥaram* frequented by pilgrims coming to the Ka'ba. The request that Quraysh worship him means that they must treat him in the proper

monotheistic way and abandon the worship of other deities who cannot provide their followers with prosperity and protection.[6]

Not only do the Qurashīs deny that Allāh is the lord of the Kaʿba and hence the only origin of the benefits of their *ḥaram*, they are not even content with those benefits and look elsewhere for more sources of income and prosperity, far away from Mecca. In so doing they turn their back on God and his *ḥaram*. This condemnation is inherent in the opening passage of Sūra 106 which revolves around the theme of *riḥlat al-shitāʾ wa-l-ṣayf*, "the winter and summer journey" (vv. 1–2).

The term *riḥla* that denotes "journey" occurs only once in the Qurʾān but is nevertheless one out of many other indications that Muḥammad's Meccan contemporaries were engaged in travelling. The other indications as well appear in Meccan *sūras*, in admonitions addressed to the unbelievers in request to draw the proper religious conclusion from the fate of ancient generations of idolaters whose dwellings were destroyed by God, and their remnants can be seen daily by the Meccans who pass by them when they travel.[7] The Qurʾān refers to the abode of these extinct generations as *qurā* (sing. *qarya*), i.e. towns, and asserts that they are located "around you."[8] The Qurʾān also states that the Meccans use to pass by these places and reproaches them for not drawing the proper lesson from what they see there. Most explicit is q 20:128 as well as q 32:26, in which it is stated that the Meccan unbelievers go (*yamshūna*) through the dwelling-places of the sinful ancient generations (*al-qurūn*). the Qurʾān mentions among these generations the people of Thamūd about whom it is stated: "So these are their houses fallen down because they were unjust. Most surely there is a sign in this for people who know" (q 27:52; cf. q 28:58). In q 29:38 the same audience is told that the fate of ʿĀd and Thamūd "has become clear to you from their (deserted) dwelling places (*masākin*)," which again means that the Meccans can see them with their own eyes (see also q 14:45).

The vestiges of the Thamūd are located in the area known to us as Madāʾin Ṣāliḥ, about 600 km north-west of Mecca. More or less the same

[6] On the idea of the "lord of the Kaʿba" in connection with the Meccan pre-Islamic polytheism see further, Pavel Pavlovitch, "On the problem of the pre-Islamic lord of the kaʿba," *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 2 (1998/99), 49–74. Pavlovitch holds that Allāh was not always regarded as the lord of the Kaʿba and that this shrine was originally dedicated to other deities.

[7] See Uri Rubin, s.v. "Remnant," *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, (Brill, 2003), IV, 425.

[8] Q 46:27. See also q 7:96–8; 11:102; 12:109; 18:59; 28:59.

area is known in the classical sources as Wādī l-Qurā, and it is usually explained that "from beginning to end the valley was made of villages arrayed one after the other."[9] However, the name may just as well denote "the valley of the [ruined] cities," because according to a report recorded by Yāqūt, Wādi al-Qurā – in the vicinity of al-Ḥijr and on the pilgrims' road from Syria to Mecca – was inhabited in the remote past by ʿĀd and Thamūd; God destroyed them there, and their remnants have survived "till now."[10]

The Qurʾān refers to the vestiges of the "dwellers of al-Ayka" [= Leuke Kome] as well. These are also situated "on a manifest roadway" (*wa-innahā la-bi-imāmin mubīn*; q 15:79), and since they are mentioned in juxtaposition with the deserted ruins of the people of al-Ḥijr (q 15:78), their abode, too, must be located on the road to Syria.[11] The Meccans frequented the vestiges of the town of Lot as well (q 29:35; 51:37); the Qurʾān tells the unbelievers that "you pass by them (*la-tamurrūna ʿalayhim*) in the morning and in the evening" (37:137-8).[12] In another verse the Meccans simply "see" its remains (q 25:40). The remnants can be seen because they are "on a road yet remaining" (*wa-innahā la-bi-sabīlin muqīm*; q 15:76).

In view of this explicit evidence as to the northbound long-distance journeys of the Meccans, one may safely assume that the *riḥla* of Sūra 106 is yet another allusion to the same journeys. Their aim was undoubtedly trade, because what purpose other than trade could the Meccans have when going on the roads across Wādī al-Qurā which took them to the north, hundreds of kilometers away from their hometown?[13]

In Sūra 106 the Qurʾān defines the Meccan travels as "winter and summer journey". For such a description we have no direct clue within the Qurʾān, therefore we must look at other classical Arabic texts that can throw light on the context in which winter and summer are usually

[9] Michael Lecker, s.v. "Wādī 'l- Ḳurā", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (Brill, 2003), XI, 18.

[10] Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 5 vols. (Beirut, 1957), s.v. "al-Qurā" (IV, 338).

[11] See Gerd-R. Puin, "Leuke kome = Laykah, the Arsians = ʾAṣḥāb ʾal-Rass, and other pre-Islamic names in the Qurʾān: a way out of the 'tanglewood'?" in Karl-Heinz Ohlig and Gerd-R. Puin (eds.), *The hidden origins of Islam: New research into its early history* (New York, 2008), 335-60. I thank Alba Fedeli for this reference.

[12] This does not necessarily mean that they pass there twice a day but rather that it is located on their way to and from Syria.

[13] Crone maintains that the idea that the winter and summer journey is connected with trade is "simply exegetical interpretation of 106:2, and only one out of many." See Patricia Crone, "How did the qurʾānic pagans make a living?," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 68 (2005), 395, n. 28.

mentioned. As it turns out, winter and summer often occur in the context of the weather conditions that are associated with them. For example, the Qurashī Abū ʿUbayda b. ʿAbdallāh b. Zamʿa (grandson of Muḥammad's wife, Umm Salama) reportedly used to look after a certain Khārijī and give him whatever provisions he needed, and each year he provided him with food supplies and clothes (*kiswa*) for winter and summer.[14] In the expression *kiswat al-shitāʾ wa-l-ṣayf*, "clothing for winter and summer," which recurs in various sources, the conditions of frost and heat are indeed meant rather than the seasons *per se*.[15] Similarly, in the qurʾānic expression *riḥlat al-shitāʾ wa-l-ṣayf*, the respective conditions of frost and heat in which the journeys are taken are primarily meant rather than their calendarial season. This does not mean that Quraysh really set out for their journeys in the least suitable time to do so, only that this is how the Qurʾān looks at the journeys, as if to deplore the obsession of Quraysh with such endeavor which they will not give up even in the heat of summer or in the frost of winter.

The Qurʾān has chosen to describe the involvement of Quraysh in their journeys by means of the word *li-īlāf*. This is the canonical reading that stands for the verbal noun of *ālafa* (form IV); it may denote the same as form I (*alifa*), i.e. "to resort habitually (to a place)."[16] This identical sense of forms I and IV seems to be the reason why in some non-canonical variant readings, the word *li-īlāf* appears without the letter *yāʾ*: *li-ilāf* or even *li-ilf* (verbal nouns of form 1).[17] This is also the case even in the standard ʿUthmānic codex where the second occurrence of the same verbal noun (v. 2) appears without the *yāʾ*: *ilāfihim*. In any case, *īlāf* or *ilāf* or *ilf* seem to refer to the habitual engagement of Quraysh in the winter and summer journey.

The context of the allusion to the winter and summer journey is the same as that of the rest of the *sūra*, i.e. the *ḥaram* as a monotheistic value

[14] Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-aghānī*, 20 vols. (Cairo 1285/1868, repr. Beirut, 1970), XIV, 157 [printed: Rabīʿa instead of Zamʿa].

[15] E.g. Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq li-Ibn ʿAsākir*, 29 vols. (Damascus, 1984–88), IV, 184: ... *wa-aksūka kiswata l-shitāʾi wa-l-ṣayf.*

[16] See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*, ed. ʿAbdallāh ʿAlī al-Kabīr, Muḥammad Aḥmad ḥasbullāh and Hāshim Muḥammad al-Shādhilī, 6 vols. (Cairo, n.d.), s.v. *a.l.f.* (vol. I, p. 108 col. 1): ... *wa-yuqālu ayḍan: ālaftu l-mawḍiʿa ūlifuhu īlāfan.*

[17] E.g. al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*, ed. Aḥmad Yūsuf Najātī, Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Najjār, ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Ismāʿīl Shalabī, 3 vols. (Beirut, n.d.), III, 293; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 30 vols. (Cairo1323/1905, repr. Beirut, 1972), XXX, 197.

ignored by the unbelievers. In such a context the journey can only be mentioned in a tone of disapproval, to deplore Quraysh whose winter and summer journey has become their chief preoccupation, while ignoring the benevolence of the lord of the Kaʿba who has provided for all their needs within their own *ḥaram*. This means that in the eyes of the Qurʾān the repeated winter and summer journey was too excessive and marked the compulsive engagement of Quraysh in an improper habit that stemmed from avaricious pursuit of worldly advantages outside Mecca which contradicted their religious duties. This seems to be the reason why the noun *īlāf* or *ilāf* is twice reiterated (*li-īlāfi ... ilāfihim*) so that the sense of compulsive repetition is intensified. In this manner Sūra 106 emerges as yet another admonition denouncing the *kufr* of the Meccans, which, as in the other verses mentioned above, stems from their dissatisfaction with the benefits of the *ḥaram* in which they live. Instead of being grateful to God for the prosperity and security derived from the position of Mecca as a pilgrimage center, Quraysh are immersed in trade journeys outside the city while the Kaʿba and its lord are not their primary concern. In more practical terms this means that they should be more engaged in prayer and other religious duties than in worldly matters like burdensome long-distance journeys in pursuit of worldly gains.

With this we reach the prefixed preposition *li* which is annexed to the term *īlāf*. When this preposition is used in order to draw attention to something out of the ordinary, it is usually called by the grammarians *lām li-l-taʿajjub*, and is explained in the sense of "O you, wonder at...."[18] In the case of Sūra 106 the *taʿajjub* expresses reservation, which can also be conveyed by means of *waylun li*.[19]

In view of these considerations the *sūra* may be thus translated:

1. Wonder you at the habitual preoccupation of Quraysh,
2. – Their preoccupation with journeying in (the cold of) winter and (in the heat of) summer.
3. Let them worship (instead) the lord of this house
4. Who has fed them against hunger and secured them from fear.

[18] *yā ayyuhā l-rajulu iʿjab li....* See e.g. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*, vol. V, p. 4105, col. 1–2 (s.v. *l.w.m.*).

[19] This is the case in the following verse: *li-ummi l-arḍi waylun* .... This is explained as follows: *yaqūlu hādhā ʿalā jihati l-taʿajjubi, ay, waylun li-ummi l-arḍi....* See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*, vol. IV, p. 2574 col. 2 (s.v. *ḍ.r.r.*).

In this context Sūra 102 is also most relevant. In the traditional chronological lists it appears 15th among the Meccan *sūras*, and in its very beginning it condemns the Meccans for being preoccupied and distracted (*alhākum*) by *takāthur*, i.e. greedy competitive strive to gain all the more profits. Medinan passages are even more explicit; they delineate an outright contrast between trade and piety. Thus in q 24:37 the Qur'ān praises "people whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of God and the keeping up of prayer and from paying the alms." In q 62:11 people are condemned, who "when they see merchandise or diversion they scatter off to it, and leave you [i.e. the Prophet] standing."[20] Sūra 106 shows how already in the Meccan period the Qur'ān has disapproved of trade journeys when grown into a compulsive engagement that distracts one from profound religious devotion.

3 *The post-qur'ānic tafsīr*

The post-qur'ānic exegetes were already aware of the new status of Islam which after the death of the Prophet had defeated mighty empires outside of Arabia. As a result of this historical development, the image of Muḥammad, and with him the image of his own tribe, Quraysh – to which the caliphs who succeeded him belonged as well – gained new dimensions in the mind of the believers, far and beyond their qur'ānic limits. However, the involvement of Quraysh in the opposition to Muḥammad as documented in the Meccan *sūras* could not be concealed, but much could nevertheless be done with respect to their pre-Islamic ancestors who had lived before Muḥammad became a prophet and so played no part in the opposition against him. These ancestors, and especially those belonging to Muḥammad's immediate ancestry, could easily be presented as righteous and even as proper Muslims way before the Qur'ān was ever revealed to their offspring.

The reshaped image of Muḥammad's Qurashī progenitors is reflected in a series of post-qur'ānic traditions asserting that 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Muḥammad's grandfather, as well as the latter's father, Hāshim, as well as the latter's father, 'Abd Manāf, never worshipped an idol.[21] Several figures belonging to the more remote parts of Muḥammad's Qurashī lineage are

[20] For these and other verses dealing with trade, cf. Crone, "How did the qur'ānic pagans make a living?," 397–99.

[21] See Uri Rubin, "Pre-existence and light – aspects of the concept of nūr Muḥammad," *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975), 76 n. 47 [present volume, no. IV].

also presented in the traditions as righteous monotheists, followers of the religion of Abraham.[22] Many of them were even described as bearing in their bodies Muḥammad's pre-existent luminous entity that shined on their foreheads.[23] Their collective pre-existent entity was said to have been placed as light in front of God two thousand years before the creation of Adam.[24]

Sūra 106 was most appropriate for the back projection of the reshaped image of Quraysh. Among the numerous traditions about the virtues (*faḍā'il*) of Quraysh, one finds the following in the commentary of al-Tha'labī (d. 427/1035). It is transmitted by Muḥammad's wife Umm Hānī' on the authority of the prophet himself: "Allāh elevated Quraysh through seven virtues, which were not, nor will be, granted to anyone else: I am from them; the prophethood is from them; the *ḥijāba* (custodianship of the Ka'ba) is with them; the *siqāya* (providing water for pilgrims) is with them; they were given victory over the elephant; they had worshipped Allāh ten[25] years before anyone else; a qur'ānic *sūra* was revealed concerning them, in which no one is mentioned but them."[26]

A particular virtue of Quraysh, namely their caliphate, was explicitly read into the exegesis of the *sūra*; in a tradition attributed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the words "he secured them from fear" (q 106:4) were explained as though meaning that Allāh protected Quraysh from the fear of losing the *khilāfa*.[27] This interpretation was designed to delegitimize any attempt at denying the authority of the Umayyad and 'Abbāsid caliphs, and therefore the interpretation was deliberately put into the mouth of 'Alī, the classic hero of the anti-Umayyad and anti-'Abbāsid Shī'ī opposition.

Another bold example of reading the *sūra* in accordance with the virtues of Quraysh is provided by al-Rāzī (d. 607/1210) who suggests

[22] *Ibid.*, 77–8. The most notable among them are Muḍar, al-Ya's, Ma'add, Nizār, Khuzayma, Kināna and Ka'b b. Lu'ayy.

[23] *Ibid.*, 91–2.

[24] *Ibid.*, 102.

[25] Printed: *'ishrīn* ("twenty") which is erroneous.

[26] Al-Tha'labī, *Al-Kashf wa-l-bayān 'an tafsīr āy al-Qur'ān*, ed. Abū Muḥammad b. 'Āshūr and Naẓīr al-Sā'idī, 10 vols. (Beirut, 2002), X, 299. See also al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, *al-Mustadrak 'alā l-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, 4 vols. (Hyderabad, 1342-1923), II, 536, IV, 54; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr fī l-tafsīr bi-l-ma'thūr*, 6 vols. (Cairo, 1869, repr. Beirut, n.d.), VI, 397.

[27] Tha'labī, *Kashf*, X, 303; al-Māwardī, *al-Nukat wa-l-'uyūn fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, ed. 'Abd al-Maqṣūd b. 'Abd al-Raḥīm, 6 vols. (Beirut, 1992), VI, 349. See also Birkeland, *The Lord guideth*, 127.

that verse 4 could be understood in the sense that God has fed Quraysh against the hunger for knowledge by means of the qur'ānic revelation (to Muḥammad), and protected them from the fear of erring by means of guiding them to the right path. Thanks to these favors they were no longer inferior to the "people of the book" (the Jews and the Christians), because they themselves became known as "people of the knowledge and the Qur'ān," while the others were known as "the ignorant Jews and Christians."[28]

The process of reading into Sūra 106 new meanings is manifest already in the earliest available *tafsīr* sources, and mainly in the interpretation of the winter and summer journey. In spite of the straightforward wording of the phrase, it was interpreted in a variety of ways which were designed to deal with the potential danger to the image of Quraysh posed by the idea that the journey represented a compulsive preoccupation that stood in contrast to religious duties.

In what follows the manner in which the post-qur'ānic exegesis tried to "improve" the context of the winter and summer journey so as to make it more favorable to Quraysh will be examined through three *tafsīr* sources stemming from the first and second Islamic centuries (see Appendix). They will be analyzed and compared with later *tafsīr* as well as some historiographic sources.

3.1 Tanwīr al-miqbās

We begin with a source containing a commentary attributed to the Prophet's cousin Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68/687–8). It is named *Tanwīr al-miqbās min tafsīr Ibn 'Abbās*. The material is related on the authority of Muḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbī (d. 146/763), from Abū Ṣāliḥ (Bādhām, *mawlā* of Umm Hāni', d. 100/719), from Ibn 'Abbās. Even if the attribution to Ibn 'Abbās is questionable, the names of al-Kalbī and Abū Ṣāliḥ seem to indicate that we are dealing with a *tafsīr* stemming from the first Islamic era.[29]

[28] al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, 32 vols. (Tehran, n.d.), XXXII, 109–110.

[29] The material was compiled by Abū Ṭāhir Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Fīrūzābādī (d. 817/1414), but the entire text is already available almost verbatim in Ibn Wahb al-Dīnawarī (d. 308/920), *al-Wāḍiḥ fī tafsīr al-qur'ān al-karīm*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd. 2 vols. Beirut, 2003. On the identity of the author of this work see Andrew Rippin, "*Tafsīr* Ibn 'Abbās and criteria for dating early *tafsīr* texts," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 18 (1994), 38–83; Harald Motzki, "Dating the so-called *Tafsīr Ibn 'Abbās*: Some additional remarks," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 31(2006), 147–63.

The *Tanwīr al-miqbās*[30] starts with the assertion that Sūra 106 is Meccan and proceeds to quote Ibn 'Abbās who reportedly said that the expression *li-īlāf Quraysh* means: "Command Quraysh to become habitually occupied with monotheism."[31] The significance of this interpretation becomes clear in view of a tradition recorded by al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923)[32] in which the same Ibn 'Abbās is quoted by his *mawlā* 'Ikrima (Medinan d. 105/723) to the effect that Quraysh were ordered to accustom themselves (*umirū an ya'lafū*) to the worship of the lord of this house just as they were accustomed (*ka-ilfihim*) to the winter and summer journey. In another version recorded by al-Ṭabarī, 'Ikrima says that Quraysh were accustomed to frequenting Buṣrā [in Syria] and Yemen in the winter and in the summer, and God ordered them to stay in Mecca.[33]

The various versions of 'Ikrima's interpretation correspond with a non-canonical reading attributed to the same 'Ikrima in which the term *li-īlāf* is replaced with the verbal form *li-ta'laf*, i.e. an imperative prefixed by *lām al-amr*, the *lām* expressing command.[34] 'Ikrima's reading and interpretation takes the *sūra* to mean that God has ordered Quraysh to worship him at his house instead of just going abroad on trade journeys.

The same idea is retained in some later sources, such as al-Samarqandī's (d. 375/985) *Tafsīr* in which we have the interpretation of Abū l-'Āliya (Rufay' b. Mihrān, Baṣran d. 90/709) to the effect that Quraysh did not stay in Mecca neither in summer nor in winter, and God commanded them to remain near "the house," i.e. the Ka'ba, and engage in worship.[35]

Some exegetes who perceived the *sūra* in this sense were of the opinion that the prefixed *lam* in *li-īlāf* expresses wonder (*ta'ajjub*). Ibn 'Aṭiyya d. 546/1151) explains on the authority of "some *mufassirūn*" that the *sūra* means:

[30] *Tanwīr al-miqbās min tafsīr Ibn 'Abbās*, on margin of Suyūṭī, *Durr*, VI, 389–95. See also Ibn Wahb, *al-Wāḍiḥ*, II, 520.

[31] *mur qurayshan li-ya'lafū 'alā l-tawḥīd*.

[32] Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, XXX, 199.

[33] *Ibid.*, XXX, 199.

[34] Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, XXX, 197. According to al-Qurṭubī (*al-Jāmi' li-aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, 20 vols. [Cairo, 1967], XX, 202), the reading of 'Ikrima was rather *la-ya'laf (bi-fatḥ al-lām 'alā l-amr)*, and this was also the version of the *muṣḥaf* of the Companion 'Abdallāh b. Mas'ūd (d. 32/652–3).

[35] al-Samarqandī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, ed. 'Alī Mu'awwaḍ, 'Ādil 'Abd al-Mawjūd, and Zakariyyā al-Nawtī, 3 vols. (Beirut, 1993), III, 516–7.

> Wonder you at the engagement of Quraysh in these travels, and their turning away from the worship of Allāh! Then [Allāh] ordered them to engage in worship, and made it known to them that he is the one who fed them and protected them, not their travel. The message is therefore that they should worship him who has fed them in response to Abraham's prayer when he said, 'Provide them with fruits' (q 14:37), and he protected them in response to [Abraham's] prayer when he said: 'God, make this city a protected *ḥaram*' (q 14:35). Therefore they should not be diverted by their travels which are merely a pursuit of profits and a passing matter of this world.[36]

The reference to Abraham's prayer in this interpretation keeps the message of the *sūra* well within its wider qur'ānic context, in line with the idea of Mecca as a prosperous and safe *ḥaram* that owes its position to incoming pilgrims who contribute to its wealth and prosperity.

Other traditions as well note the relationship of the *sūra*, and mainly verse 4, to the position of Mecca as a *ḥaram*; they too allude to Abraham's prayer in which this position originates and thanks to which God fed its inhabitants against hunger and secured them from fear.[37] A short version of the same perception is provided by al-Tha'labī (d. 427/1035) on the authority of the Baṣran grammarian al-Akhfash (d. 210/825):

> The *lām* is *lām al-ta'ajjub*. God says: 'Wonder you at the habitual engagement of Quraysh in the winter and summer journey and their turning away from the worship of the lord of this house.' Then he ordered them to worship him.[38]

The same tone of reproach as conveyed by the *lām al-ta'ajjub* is retained in the tradition about the Medinan Companion woman Asmā' bint Yazīd b. al-Sakan who is said to have heard Muḥammad say: "Woe to you (*wayḥakum*), Quraysh, worship the lord of this house who has fed them against hunger and secured them from fear!"[39] The Anṣārī (Medinan) origin of the narrator of this tradition may explain her readiness to transmit a prophetic utterance that is anything but flattering to Quraysh.

[36] Ibn 'Aṭiyya, *al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz fī tafsīr al-kitāb al-'azīz*, 16 vols. (Rabat, 1975–91), XVI, 369: *...wa-lā yashtaghilū bi-l-asfāri llatī innamā hiya ṭalabu kasbin wa-'araḍu dunyā.*

[37] E.g. Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, XXX, 199 (the tradition of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭalḥa, Ḥimṣī d. 143/760) from Ibn 'Abbās. See also Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm*, ed. As'ad Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib, 10 vols. (Mecca-Riyad, 1997), X, 3467 (no. 19489); Māwardī, *Nukat*, VI, 348, 349; Birkeland, *The Lord guideth*, 125–6.

[38] Tha'labī, *Kashf*, X, 300.

[39] Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Tafsīr*, X, 3467 (no. 19486). See also Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 6 vols. (Beirut, 1978), VI, 460; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-aẓīm*, 4 vols. (Cairo, n.d.), IV, 554; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, VI, 397.

In a less delicate version of her tradition Muḥammad says: "Woe to your mother (*wayla ummikum*), O Quraysh."[40]

Such explanations are free of the pro-Qurashī attitude that is distinctive already in much earlier interpretations such as that of Ibn 'Abbās and his *mawlā* 'Ikrima. The latter's interpretation is already phrased in a less offensive fashion, without the sense of *ta'ajjub*. As we have seen, the form *li-īlāf* has been replaced by the more neutral imperative *li-ta'laf*. 'Ikrima is even reported to have condemned those who adhered to the reading *li-īlāf*,[41] and his objection seems to be aimed against the sense of reproach inherent in the prefixed *li*. Therefore 'Ikrima's attitude, although not far removed from the basic message of the *sūra* as confirmed by its internal qur'ānic context, allows us a glimpse at the first stage in the transition of the winter and summer journey from a compulsive engagement to a less condemnable habit.

A similar mild wording of the same message is recorded on the authority of Abū Ṣāliḥ: "Allāh knew how much they loved Syria, so they were commanded to keep to the worship of the lord of this house, just as they kept to the winter and summer journey."[42]

The *Tanwīr al-miqbās* goes on to report that some say that verse 1 means: "Mention my benevolence unto Quraysh so that they become habitually occupied with monotheism just as they are occupied with the winter and summer journey."[43] In this formulation explicit reference is made to God's benevolence (*ni'matī*) unto Quraysh which expressly turns their winter and summer journey from an objectionable occupation into a sign of God's blessing.

The same perception is reflected in other *tafsīr* sources, as for example in the interpretation of Mujāhid (d. 104/722) who says that *li-īlāfi Quraysh* means *ni'matī 'alā Quraysh*.[44] This is also related on the authority of Sa'īd b.

[40] al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, ed. Ḥamdī 'Abd al-Majīd al-Salafī, 25 vols. (Baghdad, 1980–85), XXIV, no. 447; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, VI, 397.

[41] Māwardī, *Nukat*, VI, 346; Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, XX, 202; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, VI, 397.

[42] Suyūṭī, *Durr*, VI, 398. See also a shorter version, Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, XXX, 199. Cf. Birkeland, *The Lord guideth*, 113–14.

[43] *udhkur ni'matī 'alā Qurayshin li-ya'lafū 'alā l-tawḥīdi ka- īlāfihim riḥlata l-shitā'i wa-l-ṣayf.*

[44] Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, XXX, 198. See also Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Tafsīr*, X, 3467 (no. 19488). This is also the interpretation of Sufyān b. 'Uyayna (d. 196/811) as recorded in Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 9 vols. (Beirut, n.d.), VI, 219 (*Tafsīr* [65], Sūra 106).

Jubayr (Kūfan d. 95/713–14) from Ibn ʿAbbās.[45] Mujāhid adds that Quraysh became habitually occupied with the journey so that no winter or summer journey was too hard for them.[46] It is implied here that God has made the journey easy for them.

The sense of the winter and summer journey as signaling divine favor could even be maintained with the perception of the prefixed *li* of *li-īlāf* as expressing wonder. Al-Farrāʾ (d. 207/823) says: "Wonder you, Muḥammad, at the benevolence of Allāh towards Quraysh... so let them not be diverted by it from following you, and from believing in Allāh."[47] This time the wonder expresses admiration.

The transformation of the winter and summer journey from a compulsive engagement into a non-problematic routine, or, as put in al-Māwardī's (d. 450/1058) *tafsīr*, *al-ʿāda al-maʾlūfa*, "the customary habit,"[48] is reflected in further interpretations recorded in the *tafsīr* sources. Qatāda (d. 117/735) maintains that *īlāf* stands for the habit (*ʿāda*) of Quraysh in taking the winter and summer journey.[49] According to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalḥa (Ḥimṣī d. 143/760) from Ibn ʿAbbās, *īlāf* means *luzūm*, i.e. the clinging of Quraysh to their caravans,[50] or, according to al-Farrāʾ, their engagement in the preparation of the winter and summer journey.[51] It was explained that Quraysh had to worship Allāh in order to be able to prepare their journey, so that it would proceed uninterruptedly.[52]

Some commentators emphasized the idea of the winter and summer journey as representing divine benefaction by having recourse to a grammatical reinterpretation according to which the term *li-īlāf* is not merely transitive, as in form 1 ("to resort habitually to a place"), but ditransitive ("to cause someone to resort habitually to"), so that it governs

45 Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, XXX, 198.

46 Mujāhid b. Jabr, *al-Tafsīr*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sūratī, 2 vols. (Beirut, n.d.), II, 785: *kānū alifū dhālika fa-lā tashuqqu ʿalayhim riḥlatu shitāʾin wa-lā ṣayfin.*

47 Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī l-Qurʾān*, III, 293:... *fa-lā yatashāghalunna bi-dhālika ʿan ittibāʿika wa-ʿan al-īmāni bi-llāhi.*

48 Māwardī, *Nukat*, VI, 345.

49 ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, ed. Muṣṭafā Muslim Muḥammad, 3 vols. (Riyad, 1989), II, 398; Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, XXX, 199; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Tafsīr*, X, 3467 (no. 19490). See also Māwardī, *Nukat*, VI, 345.

50 Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, XXX, 198 (Ibn ʿAbbās). See also al-Ṭabrisī, *Majmaʿ al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 30 vols. (Beirut, 1957), XXX, 198; Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, XXXII, 105.

51 Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī l-Qurʾān*, III, 294: ...*ay annahum yuhayyiʾūna wa-yujahhizūna.*

52 Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, XXXII, 105: ... *wa-l-maʿnā: li-tajhīzi Qurayshin riḥlatayhā ḥattā tattaṣilā wa-lā tanqaṭiʿā.* See also Birkeland, *The Lord guideth*, 117.

two objects, Quraysh and *riḥla*, the subject being God. The syntactic role of Quraysh has thus been changed from subject to object in the sense that God has blessed them in habituating them to the winter and summer journey.

This sense is suggested in the interpretation of Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) who says that God's intention was to habituate Quraysh to the two journeys.[53] He goes on to explain that the two journeys were the origin of Mecca's livelihood and therefore God ordered them to thank him, saying: "Let them worship the lord of this house".[54] In Ibn Qutayba's perception, the winter and summer journey rather than the status of Mecca as a *ḥaram* is the origin of the prosperity mentioned in verse 4, and for which Quraysh are instructed to thank God by worshipping him. In this case the prefixed *li* in *li-īlāf* is perceived as if used *li-l-taʾlīl*, i.e. to indicate the reason or the cause. As put by al-Zajjāj (d. 311/924): "Let them worship the lord of this house because of their *īlāf*."[55]

The perception of the winter and summer journey as a sign of divine blessing is reflected also in the notion that Quraysh had two trade journeys a year, each to a different destination. We have already met the idea above in one of ʿIkrima's versions according to which Quraysh were accustomed to frequenting Buṣrā and Yemen in the winter and in the summer. Such a perception takes the expression "winter and summer journey" in its literal meaning, as if denoting two seasonal travels. This perception eliminates the insinuation of excessive engagement in a compulsive activity. The appearance of Yemen in the traditions as a destination equally regular as that of Syria expands the scope of the journeys which in the Qurʾān are mainly northbound (see above), and hence of the divine blessing.

53 ...*faʿala dhālika li-yuʾlifa Qurayshan hātayni l-riḥlatayni.*

54 Ibn Qutayba,*Taʾwīl mushkil al-Qurʾān*, ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqar (Cairo, 1973), 414–5. A similar perception is adopted in a tradition recorded on the authority of Abū Mālik: *kānū yattajirūna fī l-shitāʾi wa-l-ṣayfi fa-ālaftuhum dhālika*, "they used to trade in winter and in summer, and I (i.e. Allāh) habituated them to it." See Suyūṭī, *Durr*, VI, 398 (from Saʿīd b. Manṣūr and Ibn al-Mundhir). This is also implied in the interpretation quoted from al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad (d. 170/786) to the effect that the Qurʾān says *li-īlāf* because God *ālafaum īlāfan*, "habituated them" (Māwardī, *Nukat*, VI, 345).

55 Al-Zajjāj, *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān wa-iʿrābuhu*, ed. ʿAbd al-Jalīl Shalabī, 5 vols. (Beirut, 1988), V, 365. This is also the view of al-Khalīl as well as that of Sībawayhi (d. 180/796) as quoted in al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, XXXII,105. See also Ṭabrisī, *Majmaʿ al-bayān*, XXX, 199. See further, al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāfʿan ḥaqāʾiq al-tanzīl*, 4 vols. (Cairo, 1977), IV, 287; Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, XX, 208. Cf. Birkeland, *The Lord guideth*, 114–15, 118.

The literary role of the Syria-Yemen space becomes even clearer in early Islamic traditions in which this pair of zones marks the idealized northern and southern borders of the Islamic domain. Thus Muḥammad's mother, Āmina, sees, when giving birth to Muḥammad, light emerging from her that illuminates the whole region between Syria and Yemen.[56] The adjustment of the scope of the qur'ānic winter and summer journey to the same boundaries turns it into yet another sign predicting the Islamic expansion that was set in motion in a blessed act of God.

Coming back to the *Tanwīr al-miqbās*, Syria and Yemen are mentioned again in the subsequent comments, but this time the journey is bound for Yemen in the winter and for Syria in the summer. This particular timing conveys a specific aspect of blessing which is clarified in further sources telling us that in the frosty winter Quraysh could find warmth in the south, and in the hot summer they could enjoy the cool weather of the north. This is stated in so many words in a tradition recorded by al-Ṭabarī on the authority of Ibn Zayd (Medinan d. 182/798) to the effect that in winter they could not travel to Syria because of the cold and therefore they went to Yemen.[57] Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d. 327/938) has a tradition on the authority of 'Ikrima that envisions their pleasurable journeys differently: in winter they used to travel by sea to Ayla and thence to Palestine, seeking warmth, and in summer they betook themselves to Buṣrā and Adhri'āt for coolness.[58] According to Abū Ṣāliḥ as well, both their journeys were to Syria; in winter they went to its warmer regions and in summer – to its cooler zones.[59] As for the *Tanwīr al-miqbās*, here we find a further assertion of the pleasurable nature of the winter and summer journey: "Some say that monotheism shall not be difficult (*lā yashuqqu*) for Quraysh, just as the winter and the summer journey was not difficult for them."

Further on, the *Tanwīr al-miqbās* explains that the statement that God has fed Quraysh against hunger (v. 4) means that he satiated them after a seven-year famine. The idea of God's protection against hunger has thus been detached from the general idea of the *ḥaram* and the pilgrims that pour into it with provisions, and was connected instead to a specific event of divine intervention that has terminated a seven-year famine. The number seven is symbolic and occurs elsewhere in the Qur'ān (q 12:48) in connection with the seven years of drought at Joseph's time. Besides,

[56] Rubin, "Pre-existence," 88–9.

[57] Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, XXX, 199.

[58] Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Tafsīr*, X, 3467 (no. 19491).

[59] Tha'labī, *Kashf*, X, 302.

a seven-year drought is mentioned in widely-current traditions relating that Quraysh persecuted Muḥammad and rejected him as an impostor and therefore the Prophet prayed and invoked upon them seven years of drought like Joseph's years. In the famine that ensued they were forced to eat carrion.[60] These traditions retain a less flattering aspect of Quraysh who, when Muḥammad was already acting as a prophet in Mecca, offered him tough opposition. This did not prevent al-Rāzī from including the episode in his commentary of q 106:4, explaining that Quraysh rejected Muḥammad and therefore the prophet invoked a seven-year drought upon them, like those of Joseph, and when they repented, Muḥammad prayed again and they regained their prosperity.[61] But the *Tanwīr al-miqbās* is more sensitive to the image of Quraysh and therefore has censored the circumstances of the famine so that the attention is focused exclusively on its termination thanks to God's benefaction unto Quraysh. No mention is made of the fact that the famine was a divine retribution for their disbelief in Muḥammad.

The same explanation is repeated by al-Farrā' who adds some significant details. He says that the famine in Mecca was terminated when the Syrians who possessed abundance of corn brought provisions to the region of Mecca (al-Abṭaḥ), and so did the Yemenites who carried their food supplies to Jeddah. In this manner God provided Quraysh with provisions from two regions sparing them the trouble of the winter and summer journey (*wa-kafāhumu l-riḥlatayni*). At this point al-Farrā' reverts to Muḥammad's own times saying that if Quraysh follow Muḥammad and stay close to the house (= the Ka'ba), God will again spare them the trouble of the two journeys as he did before.[62]

This explanation reads into the *sūra* the idea that already before its revelation, way back in pre-Islamic times, Quraysh could afford to give up the winter and summer journey and thus not neglect their religious duties as regards God and the Ka'ba. This was a divine benevolence extended to them through the Syrians and the Yemenites.

In more versions the favors done by the Yemenites unto Quraysh are expounded, which betray a political interest to praise this particular

[60] See M.J. Kister, "'O God, tighten thy grip on Muḍar....': Some socio-economic and religious aspects of an early *Ḥadīth*," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 24 (1981), 242–73.

[61] Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, XXXII, 108. Cf. Birkeland, *The Lord guideth*, 126–7.

[62] *fa-in iitaba'ūka wa-lazimū l-bayta kafāhumu llāhu l-riḥlatayni ayḍan ka-mā kafāhum.*

group of early Islamic society.[63] A tradition of al-Kalbī (d. 146/763) as quoted in the *Tafsīr* of al-Huwwārī (d. 280/893),[64] relates that Quraysh used to go each winter and summer to Yemen and Syria respectively, till their hardships increased. Now, the Yemenite coastal towns of Tabāla and Jurash, as well as the Yemenite people of the inland, were prosperous. The latter carried their merchandise on camels to al-Muḥaṣṣab [near Minā] and the former brought provisions by sea to Jeddah. Thus the Meccans could get as much provisions as they liked, and Allāh spared them the trouble of the two journeys. It should be noted that the people of Tabāla and Jurash are mentioned yet again as saviors of Quraysh, this time in a tradition about the seven-year drought that Muḥammad invoked upon them as punishment when they rejected him (see above). The tradition is recorded in al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273) who says that when Quraysh repented the Prophet prayed for them again, and then the Yemenite people of Tabāla and Jurash became prosperous, and they carried food to Mecca.[65]

The assertion that already before the revelation of Sūra 106 Quraysh were spared the trouble of the winter and summer journey has turned them into righteous people enjoying God's blessing so that there is no longer any trace of misbehavior on their part, and the *sūra* has thus been reduced to a mere request that they thank God for his benevolence.

In more variations of the same idea the virtues of cities have been interpolated. According to one of them, Abraham asked God to provide Mecca's people with fruits (q 2:126; 14:37) and thereupon God transferred the city of al-Ṭā'if from Syria to Arabia.[66] Implicit here is the idea that thanks to al-Ṭā'if Quraysh were spared the trouble of going on long-distance journeys. The same idea is conveyed in another tradition about al-Ṭā'if, this time beyond the sphere of trade. It is attributed to Ibn 'Abbās and says that Quraysh used to spend the winter in Mecca thanks to its warmth and spend the summer in al-Ṭā'if due to its fresh air. "This is the greatest blessing, when people have a warm resort to protect them

[63] The Yemenite pre-Islamic ancestors, too, like the Qurashī ones, are presented in the traditions as righteous Muslims. See Rubin, "Pre-existence," 79–80.

[64] Hūd b. Muḥakkam al-Huwwārī, *Tafsīr kitāb Allāh al-'Azīz*, ed. Belḥāj Sharīfī, 4 vols. (Beirut, 1990), IV, 536. See also Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb, *al-munammaq fī akhbār Quraysh*, ed. Khurshīd Aḥmad Fāriq (Beirut, 1985), 219.

[65] Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, XX, 209.

[66] E.g. Suyūṭī, *Durr*, I, 124 (on q 2:126), IV, 87 (on q 14:37). See further, M.J. Kister, "Some reports concerning al-Ṭā'if," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 1 (1979), 17.

against the cold of winter, and a cool resort to protect them against the heat of summer. Allāh reminded them of this blessing".[67]

The next interpretation recorded in the *Tanwīr al-miqbās* keeps to the same line, saying that Quraysh used to travel twice each year, to Yemen in winter and to Syria in summer, and God warded (*dafa'a*) this trouble off them.

A more explicit version of the same interpretation has been recorded by al-Ṭabarī with the family *isnād* of the Kūfan 'Aṭiyya b. Sa'd al-'Awfī (d. 111/729) from Ibn 'Abbās:

> He (i.e. God) forbade them to travel, and he ordered them to worship the lord of this house, and he spared them the trouble. Their journey took place in winter and in summer, and they did not have rest during winter nor during summer. Afterwards he provided them with food against hunger, and protected them from fear, and (henceforth) they journeyed at their pleasure (*wa-alifū l-riḥlata*) i.e. if they wished they set out, and if they wished they stayed (at Mecca). This belonged to the benefaction of God unto them.[68]

Here, as in the*Tanwīr al-miqbās*, God is kind enough to spare the Meccans the trouble of traveling and provides for their sustenance and security, but this time the origin of the prosperity is not in al-Ṭā'if, but rather within Mecca itself. This is implied in the assertion that only after Quraysh were used to being absent from Mecca, God intervened and provided them with food and protection. This seems to mean that he turned Mecca into a pilgrimage destination and a protected *ḥaram*, thus enabling Quraysh to stay home when they felt like it. This interpretation reflects a transition in the perception of the *ḥaram* from an age-old state dating back to Abraham's time to a more recent development, but still old enough to have liberated Quraysh from the burden of the winter and summer journey way before the revelation of Sūra 106.

The next passage of the *Tanwīr al-miqbās* reverts to the idea that the winter and summer journey signals divine blessing, but now it is part of a wider benefaction that starts in Sūrat al-Fīl (105). This *sūra* deals with the defeat of the "people of the elephant," whom the exegetes identify with the army of Abraha, the Ethiopian leader who besieged Mecca and planned to destroy the Ka'ba. The *Tanwīr al-miqbās* says that God

[67] Māwardī, *Nukat*, VI, 348. See also Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, XX, 206. A concise version of the same interpretation is found in Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, XXX, 199. Cf. Birkeland, *The Lord guideth*, 112, 121–2.

[68] Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, XXX, 198.

has secured Quraysh from the fear of the Ethiopian Najāshī and asserts that Sūra 106 is adjoined (*ma'ṭūfa*) to the pervious *sūra* (al-Fīl).[69] This explanation implies that God has defeated the people of the elephant in order to protect and maintain the winter and summer journey of Quraysh. This is stated in so many words by Ibn Isḥāq (d. 150/767) who quotes the two *sūras* in one sequence, explaining that the defeat of the people of the elephant protected Quraysh against any change in their state, due to God's favorable purpose regarding them, if only they subsequently believed.[70]

The same interpretation is repeated in al-Farrā''s commentary where it is explained that the prefixed *li* in *li-īlāf* is synonymous with *ilā*, which denotes addition of something to something else; as if the divine benevolence described in Sūra 106 has been added to the one recounted in Sūra 105.[71] But the prefixed preposition was also explained as denoting purpose (= *kay*), as if God destroyed the people of the elephant in order to maintain the consolidation of Quraysh and their mutual solidarity as well as their winter and summer journey.[72]

The combination of Sūra 105 and 106 into one is just another exegetical attempt at reading the sense of divine benevolence into the winter and summer journey and does not seem to represent the original state of the qur'ānic text, as suggested by Shahid.[73] In fact, in the early chronological lists, Sūra 105 and 106 are never subsequent, and in 'Aṭā' al-Khurāsānī's list, for example, Sūra 105 is the 18th, whereas Sūra 106 is only the 28th.

The attachment of Sūra 106 to Sūra 105 is only one aspect of the historical impact attributed in post-qur'ānic tradition to the defeat of the people of the elephant. A further aspect is revealed in Ibn Isḥāq's report to the effect that "when Allāh turned back the Ethiopians from Mecca

[69] It is reported that in the *muṣḥaf* of the Companion Ubayy b. Ka'b, Sūra 105 and 106 were written as one chapter with no division between them (Tha'labī, *Kashf*, X, 300). For further references see al-Sayyārī, *Kitāb al-qirā'āt*, in Etan Kohlberg and Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi (eds.), *Revelation and falsification* (Leiden, 2009), 192, and note 699.

[70] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, and 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ Shalabī, 4 vols. (Beirut, 1971), I, 56.

[71] Farrā', *Ma'ānī l-Qur'ān*, III, 293. See also Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, XXX, 197–8.

[72] E.g. Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, XXX, 198, the tradition of Ibn Zayd ('Abd al-Raḥmān, Medinan d. 182/798); Zajjāj, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, V, 365; Samarqandī, *Tafsīr*, III, 516; Tha'labī, *Kashf*, X, 300; Māwardī, *Nukat*, VI, 345.

[73] Irfan Shahid, "Two qur'ānic sūras: al-Fīl and Quraysh," in Wadad al-Qadi (ed.), *Studia Arabica et Islamica, Festschrift for Iḥsān 'Abbās* (Beirut, 1981), 429–36. See further, Victor Sahhab, Īlāf Quraysh riḥlat al-shitā' wa-l-ṣayf (Beirut, 1992), 19–32.

and inflicted upon them his vengeance, the Arabs admired Quraysh and said: they are the people of Allāh. He has fought for them, and spared them the trouble of their enemies."[74] A report of Ibn Jurayj (d. 150/767) maintains that this was the stage when Quraysh started to be aware of the sacredness of Mecca and, in due course, they established a special *dīn* of their own, known as *ḥums*, which was marked by its profound devotion to the Ka'ba and to the sacred *ḥaram* of Mecca. Accordingly, they confined all their religious ceremonies to this sacred territory.[75] In this exposition Quraysh emerge as the most devoted Arabian group to God's house at Mecca, way before the revelation of Sūra 106.

The same message is conveyed in the report of al-Tha'ālibī (d. 429/1038) to the effect that originally Quraysh used to trade only with merchants coming during the sacred months to the markets near Mecca; Quraysh did not leave their abode and did not go out of their *ḥaram* because they were devoted to their *dīn* and loved their *ḥaram* and their *bayt*, and used to serve the incoming pilgrims. Only afterwards they obtained security pacts from the tribes and could travel safely beyond the boundaries of the *ḥaram*.[76] In this formulation the contrast between the winter and summer journey and the injunction to worship "the lord of this house," as put forward in Sūra 106, has been eliminated.

In sum, the *Tanwīr al-miqbās* has recorded a whole range of exegetical approaches that were designed to read into the Qur'ān the post-qur'ānic idea of the constant righteousness of Quraysh whose conduct was guided by God's blessed benevolence. In some interpretations the idea of divine benevolence was applied to the winter and summer journey that has thus changed from a distracting preoccupation that must be given up into a sign of divine blessing which God himself helped Quraysh go on with since pre-Islamic times. In other interpretations, the winter and summer journey has retained its sense of a habitual preoccupation with worldly matters, which accords with the internal qur'ānic context of the *sūra*, but God himself is said to have already spared Quraysh the trouble of the

[74] Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, I, 59. Cf. Kister, "Some reports concerning Mecca," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 15 (1972), 75.

[75] al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makka*, in F. Wüstenfeld (ed.), *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka* (Göttingen, 1858, repr. Beirut, n.d), vol. I, 120.

[76] al-Tha'ālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb fī l-muḍāf wa-l-mansūb*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, 2 vols. (Damascus, 1994), I, 214. Quoted in M.J. Kister, "Mecca and Tamīm," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 8 (1965), 118 [repr. in *idem, Studies in Jāhiliyya and early Islam*, Variorum CS 123 (London, 1980), no. I].

journey, helping them to forgo it thanks to provisions brought to them from outside. This implies that already before the revelation of the *sūra* they have changed their priorities and became sufficiently religious and righteous.

Let us now proceed to our second *tafsīr* source.

3.2 *Muqātil b. Sulaymān*

In the *Tafsīr* of Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767),[77] the winter and summer journey is again a burdensome preoccupation, and the divine benevolence consists once again in helping Quraysh give it up, way before the revelation of the *sūra*. But the details of the divine help are new. Muqātil says that Quraysh were merchants who in winter procured provisions in Jordan and Palestine because the route along the seashore was warmer, and in summer they abandoned that route because of the heat and went to Yemen for provisions. But then the matter became arduous for them and therefore there was no more trade and they were cut off of provisions. This is the meaning of the words *īlāfihim riḥlata l-shitāʾi wa-l-ṣayf*. Muqātil goes on to say that God eventually put it into the heart of the Ethiopians to carry food on ships and sell it in Mecca. So they carried it to the Meccans and the latter set out towards them on camels and donkeys and procured their food in Jeddah, at a distance of only one or two days from Mecca. This went on for years and so God has spared them the trouble of the winter and summer journey. Further on Muqātil says that the term *īlāf* is derived from the trouble of moving between different places.[78]

Muqātil's reference to the Ethiopians represents a tendentious bias rather than a historical development. They appear here as the agents of God's benevolence unto the Meccans, and this seems to have been designed to improve the image of the Ethiopians in Islamic society, especially in view of the negative role played by them in the traditions about Abraha's expedition to Mecca. This strategy becomes clear in another version found in al-Māwardī's *Tafsīr*,[79] according to which Quraysh suffered of famine in the *jāhiliyya*, so God put it into the heart of the Ethiopians to carry food for them. They brought it along but the Meccans thought that they had come to wage war, and set out fully armed only to find out that

[77] Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAbdallāh Maḥmūd Shiḥāta, 5 vols. (Cairo, 1979), IV, 861–3.

[78] *wa-l-īlāfu mina l-muʾna wa-l-ikhtilāf*.

[79] Māwardī, *Nukat*, VI, 348.

the Ethiopians had come with food for them. The Ethiopians went on assisting them with food supplies and this is the meaning of the words (v. 4): "He fed them against hunger." The apologetic message of the story is clear: the Ethiopians were not only enemies of God's *ḥaram* (in the expedition of the elephant) but also the saviors of its inhabitants. Such propaganda served the interests of Muslims of East-African origin.

Muqātil goes on to explain that the instruction in verse 3 that Quraysh worship the lord of this house means that he spared them the trouble of fear and hunger, therefore they should become habitually occupied with his worship as they had been habituated to the Ethiopians whose help they did not anticipate. As for verse 4, he explains that God has secured Quraysh from fear by making them secure within their *ḥaram*.

In sum, Muqātil too has preserved the initial meaning of the winter and summer journey as a burdensome preoccupation, and this time the Ethiopians appear as the agents of the divine help which rendered Quraysh independent of the journey, thus enabling them to make God and the Kaʿba their chief priority.

3.3 *Ibn Isḥāq*

Ibn Isḥāq is best known for his *Sīra*, i.e. the biography of Muḥammad, but his compilation contains plenty of *tafsīr* material that sheds light on the earliest stages of the Islamic Qurʾān exegesis. As already seen above, Ibn Isḥāq treats the winter and summer journey as a sign of divine blessing bestowed on Quraysh together with the destruction of the people of the elephant. But Ibn Isḥāq links the origin of the winter and summer journey to a time much earlier than the expedition of the elephant, to the glorious deeds of Hāshim, father of Muḥammad's grandfather and ancestor of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs.

Hāshim's magnification as the initiator of the winter and summer journey was designed not only to glorify Muḥammad and the ʿAbbāsids, but also to disparage the Umayyads, descendants of ʿAbd Shams, brother of Hāshim. Ibn Isḥāq has accomplished this task most efficiently. He praises Hāshim for both aspects of the winter and summer journey as perceived by the exegetes. On the one hand he says that Hāshim was rich and used to stay in Mecca to look after the affairs of the pilgrims, God's guests who had come to worship Allāh at the Kaʿba, in contrast to ʿAbd Shams who, Ibn Isḥāq says, was given to traveling and hardly ever stayed

in Mecca.[80] With such a description Ibn Isḥāq has managed to present Hāshim as extremely devoted to God and to the Ka'ba as well as to the pilgrims coming to it, much in anticipation of the demand put to Quraysh in Sūra 106. In this manner Hāshim has been isolated from the rest of Quraysh, the sinful ones, who only traveled and turned their back on God and the Ka'ba.

On the other hand, Ibn Isḥāq also praises Hāshim for being the first to have established for Quraysh the winter and summer journey.[81] Ibn Isḥāq has thus remained faithful to the idea that the winter and summer journey signaled divine blessing, and did not fail to credit Hāshim with this merit as well. Ibn Isḥāq has been able to adduce for this twofold virtue of Hāshim some poetic verses on the authority of an anonymous poet.[82] They praise 'Amr (= Hāshim) for being the first to provide the famished Meccans with *tharīd* (crumbled bread in broth) well as credit him with the initiation of each of the two seasonal journeys.[83] Implicit here is the idea that the prosperity and welfare of Quraysh as stated in q 106:4 did not originate solely in the inner sphere of Mecca as a *ḥaram* but also in the outer sphere of the winter and summer journey.

4 *Pacts of security*

The perception of the winter and summer journey as the main or even sole origin of the Meccan prosperity and security has already been encountered above in Ibn Qutayba's commentary; further traditions expressing the same idea add more details that revolve around the theme of the pacts of security that were reportedly obtained for Quraysh during the journeys. These traditions are recorded in historiographical and lexicographical sources.

One of these traditions has been recorded in al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rīkh* on the authority of Kalbī (d. 146/763) as quoted by his son, Hishām b. Muḥammad

[80] Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, I, 143.

[81] Loc. cit.: .. *awwala man sanna l-riḥlatayni li-Quraysh.*

[82] In other sources the poet is 'Abdallāh b. al-Ziba'rā, Muḥammad's Companion. See al-Balādhurī, *Jumal min ansāb al-ashrāf*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār and Riyāḍ Ziriklī, 13 vols. (Beirut 1996), I, 65–6, or Maṭrūd b. Ka'b, a poet of the Khuzā'a to whom various verses in praise of Quraysh are attributed. See Ibn Ḥabīb, *Munammaq*, 27; al-Ya'qūbī, *al-Tārīkh*, 2 vols. (Beirut, 1960), I, 243–4.

[83] Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, I, 143-4: *sunnat ilayhi l-riḥlatāni kilāhumā.*

(d. 204/819).[84] Ibn al-Kalbī relates that after the death of 'Abd Manāf, his four sons – Hāshim, 'Abd Shams, Nawfal and al-Muṭṭalib – ruled Quraysh together, being called *al-mujabbirūn*, "those who restore people from poverty to wealth."[85] The four of them were the first to obtain for Quraysh pacts of security (*'iṣam*) from the leaders of Syria, Ethiopia, Persia and Yemen, respectively, which enabled them to set out safely for journeys outside the ḥaram.

This as well as other traditions about the four brothers[86] elaborate on q 29:67 which, as seen above, speaks about the secure *ḥaram* with which God has blessed the Meccans, "while people all around them are snatched away." Ibn al-Kalbī's tradition maintains that Quraysh were protected even outside the *ḥaram* thanks to the pacts of security obtained for them by 'Abd Manāf's magnificent sons.

In further versions the root *'.l.f.* emerges being used to describe the relations established between the four brothers and the leaders of the neighboring states. This is the case with Abū 'Ubayd al-Harawī (d. 224/838) who explains that Sūra 106 alludes to pacts (*'uhūd*) obtained by the sons of 'Abd Manāf who established friendly relations (*yu'ālifu*) with each of the neighboring non-Arab kings.[87] According to al-Balādhurī's version of the report of Ibn al-Kalbī, Hāshim was called *ṣāḥib īlāfi Qurayshin al-riḥlatayni*, "the one who habituated Quraysh to the two seasonal journeys." This formulation is based on the perception of the qur'ānic word *li-īlāf* in its ditransitive sense and turns Hāshim into the agent of God's benevolence unto Quraysh in habituating them to the winter and summer journey. The tradition goes on to say that Hāshim and his brothers obtained

[84] al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*,ed. M.J. De Goeje et al., 15 vols. (Leiden, 1879–1901), I, 1089. Cf. al-Maydānī, *Majma' al-amthāl*, ed. M.M. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, 2 vols. (repr. Cairo, 1972), II, 127 (no. 2961).

[85] This is the figurative meaning of the verb *jabbara*, which literally means to set a bone, reduce it from a state of fracture. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'arab*, s.v. *j.b.r.* (vol. I, p. 536 col. 2). The title *al-mujabbirūn* recurs in the saying: *awfad min al-mujabbirīn*, "more given to visiting than the *mujabbirūn*." See Ibn Sa'īd al-Andalusī, *Nashwat al-ṭarab fī tārīkh jāhiliyyat al-'Arab*, ed. Naṣrat 'Abd al-Raḥmān, 2 vols. (Amman, 1982), I, 329. This means that Quraysh became a prototype of the international traveler. The same title recurs in the saying: *aqrash min al-mujabbirīn*, "more unifying than the *mujabbirūn*," which elaborates on the name Quraysh as denoting consolidation (*Ibid.*, I, 328).

[86] For an extensive survey of these reports see Kister, "Mecca and Tamīm," 116ff.

[87] al-Suhaylī, *al-Rawḍ al-unuf*, ed. 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Sa'd, 4 vols. (Cairo, 1971), I, 76 (from Abū 'Ubayd).

security pacts from the neighboring kings and consequently they were all habituated to the two journeys (*fa-alifū l-riḥlatayni*).[88]

Most significant are the versions that use the definite form *al-īlāf* as an independent technical term denoting the pacts of security, thus being synonymous with terms like *ʿahd*, *ḥabl*, etc. This form appears, to begin with, in a report about Hāshim as recorded by al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/869) in his epistle, *Faḍl Hāshim ʿalā ʿAbd Shams*.[89] Al-Jāḥiẓ says that Hāshim was the first to have obtained the īlāf for Quraysh before any of his brothers, and this is the meaning of q 106:4, "and he secured them against fear," i.e. their fear of the tribes and the enemies in whose territories they passed. The idea that Hāshim was the first to obtain the *īlāf* recurs in a tradition attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās as quoted in the lexicographical sources. It is explained here that *īlāf* means pact (*ʿahd*) and protection (*dhimām*).[90]

Al-Īlāf is also the name given to the security pacts in the traditions about the four brothers. The Kūfan philologist Ibn al-Aʿrābī (Muḥammad b. Ziyād, d. 231/845) says that ʿAbd Manāf's four sons were *aṣḥāb al-īlāf*, "initiators of the *īlāf*." They were called *al-mujīrūn*, "providers of *jiwār*," i.e. protection, because they used to "put the *jiwār* together" (*yuʾallifūna l-jiwāra*), i.e. "to provide it in one sequence" (*yutbiʿūna baʿḍahu baʿḍan*).[91] In this report the title *al-mujabbirūn* has been changed into *al-mujīrūn* which, without the diacritics, looks the same as *al-mujabbirūn*.

The term *al-īlāf* recurs also in a further version of Ibn al-Kalbī's tradition which has been recorded by Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 245/859) in his *Munammaq*.[92] It is explained here that *al-īlāf* means that Quraysh were secure when passing through the territory of those who granted them the *īlāf* without the need for alliance (*ḥilf*). According to another version, Quraysh were isolated within the *ḥaram*, being prevented by the hostile Arabs from setting out to procure provisions. When the four sons of ʿAbd Manāf came of age they became leaders of the Arabs and they managed to open up the road for the Qurashī merchants and invented the *īlāf* that God has mentioned in the Qurʾān.[93]

88 Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 66.

89 al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasāʾil*, ed. Ḥasan al-Sandūbī (Cairo, 1933), 70-71. Quoted in Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*, ed. Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 20 vols. (Beirut, 1987), XV, 202–3. Cf. Kister, "Mecca and Tamīm," 119.

90 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*, s.v. *a.l.f.* (vol. I, p. 108 col. 3).

91 *Loc. cit.* (vol. I, 108 col. 2).

92 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Munammaq*, 41–3. Cf. Kister, "Mecca and Tamīm," 116–7.

93 Ibn Saʿīd, *Nashwat al-ṭarab*, 329.

The *īlāf* emerges also in poetic verses attributed to Maṭrūd b. Kaʿb in praise of the sons of ʿAbd Manāf. Here we find sometimes the assertion that they possessed security pacts in all the surrounding lands and took the journey of the *īlāf*.[94] In fact, from further sources we learn that the *sunna*, i.e. precedent, of the *īlāf* became a kind of *topos* which could be used for praising anyone of Quraysh, as was for example, Ḍirār, son of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, in verses attributed to his own mother.[95]

4.1 The pacts and Sūra 106

In spite of the clear tendentious shaping of the traditions and poetic verses about the *īlāf* agreements, the mere idea of the pacts of security may well be historical. Moreover, it may well be, as maintained by Kister and others, that the pacts were indeed known as *īlāf* or *īlāf*. The traditions to this effect do not seem to owe their existence to *tafsīr* because they almost never appear in the *tafsīr* sources, only in the lexicographical and the historiographical ones.[96]

If this is really the case, i.e. the pacts of security were indeed known as *īlāf*, then we gain a better insight into this term when used in Sūra 106. We have seen above that the internal context of this *sūra* indicates that it disapproves of the high priority allotted to trade journeys by Quraysh, and now we can observe that to express this disapproval the Qurʾān has borrowed one of the best-known names of the pacts – *īlāf* – and has given it a new context, deliberately downgrading it to a verbal noun meaning compulsive engagement in an improper enterprise. The same disapproval is conveyed through the downgrading of the commercial caravans into

94 Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 67; Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 244: *al-ākhidhūna l-ʿahda min āfāqihā/ wa-l-rāḥilūna li-riḥlati l-īlāf*.

95 Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 98: *Sanna li-Fihrin sunnata l-īlāf/fī l-qurri ḥīna l-qurri wa-l-aṣyāf*.

96 Crone (*Meccan trade*, 212) says: "The proposition that Quraysh had agreements known as *īlāf* can also be rejected. If *īlāf* had been a technical term for an institution of central importance for the Meccans, as also for the tribes with which they were in contact, it would have been a very familiar word. Yet later scholars, many of them Meccans, were puzzled by it. They disagreed over its pronunciation and also over its meaning, and where some took it to be a singular, others understood it as a plural. All this shows clearly enough that this was a word that they had never encountered before." But the term *īlāf* is indeed a very familiar word, as is clear from the traditions just seen about Hāshim and his brothers. If the Muslim scholars are "puzzled" at all, it is regarding the reading (*qirāʾa*) of the qurʾānic text, not regarding the very idea that the pacts were known as *īlāf*. The issue of the variant readings of the Qurʾān has dynamics of its own which are not relevant to the question of how the pre-Islamic security pacts were called.

something absurdly burdensome and superfluous, a mere "winter and summer journey."

Furthermore, the function of the term *īlāf* in ancient Arabic is not confined to pacts of security but is used also in the sense of protection provided by God.[97] This is indicated in the expression *ilāfu llāh* which is explained as *amānu llāhi*, "God's safeguard." God's Protection was usually granted within a sacred territory defined as *ḥaram* which was considered as God's sacred zone. In view of this we may surmise that the request in Sūra 106 that Quraysh worship the lord of this house means that they are instructed to shift from a human *īlāf* to a divine one. This could only be achieved by giving up the habitual preoccupation with trade journeys and with temporal *īlāf* agreements that were seldom observed.[98] All this should be abandoned in favor of a monotheistic devotion to Allāh and to his *īlāf* as symbolized in his Meccan sanctuary.

4.2 The pacts and the exegetes

As noted above, the traditions about ʿAbd Manāf's sons and their pacts of security are widely current in the historiographical as well as the lexicographical sources, but are almost entirely missing from the classical *tafsīr* sources. Here they are seldom used to illustrate the manner in which the winter and summer journey represented divine blessing.[99] This calls for explanation.

It seems that much as the exegetes were sensitive to the image of Quraysh, their primary aim in interpreting the Qurʾān was to draw from it didactic, moral and religious lessons relevant to the community of believers. The pacts of security could not serve this aim because as soon as Islam spread throughout Arabia the pacts became superfluous and irrelevant. More urgent was the need to praise the status of Mecca which became one of the three most sacred Islamic cities, as well as to elevate the value of the pilgrimage which became one of the pillars of Islam. This

[97] See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*, s.v. *a.l.f.* (vol. I, p. 109 col. 1). And see also the verses about Maʿadd quoted in Kister, "Mecca and Tamīm," 118, n. 4.

[98] See Kister, "Mecca and Tamīm," 119: "... the *īlāf* agreements had not been actually carried out. Quraysh feared that some tribes might refrain from carrying out the terms of the pacts."

[99] Hāshim is mentioned in Thaʿlabī, *Kashf*, X, 303, as well as in al-Wāḥidī's (d. 468/1075) *al-Wasīṭ fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-majīd*, ed. ʿĀdil Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd et al., 4 vols. Beirut, 1994), IV, 557. The four brothers are mentioned in Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, XX, 204-5. See also Suyūṭī, *Durr*, 398.

was the reason why the pacts were left out of the *tafsīr* and why other traditions were preferred, which glorify the idea of the *ḥaram* and the pilgrimage.

One of the earliest manifestation of this approach is provided in the interpretation of Qatāda to the effect that the protection of Quraysh when travelling outside the *ḥaram* was based on their sacred status as people of God's *ḥaram*.[100] As for the pilgrimage, this was presented as the ultimate source of the Meccan prosperity instead of the pacts. Accordingly, it was explained that the two seasonal journeys were actually the *ḥajj* and the *ʿumra*,[101] i.e. the travelling of non-Meccans into Mecca. This forms part of the wider perception of the pilgrimage as the main origin of Mecca's livelihood.[102] Another variant of the same idea appears in the *tafsīr* of the Shīʿī commentator al-Qummī (d. 307/919). He explains that at first Quraysh depended on their trade journeys which were their blessed origin of livelihood, and then Muḥammad appeared as a prophet and people began coming to him as well as going on pilgrimage to Mecca, and so Quraysh could give up their own trade journeys.[103] Here the status of Mecca as a pilgrimage center begins only in Islamic times, as a result of the prophetic charisma of Muḥammad, and is taken to be a blessing that surpassed the blessing of the trade journeys.

The wish to find in Sūra 106 confirmation for the elevated status of Mecca eventually went beyond the sphere of trade and economical welfare. Thus, for example, when al-Farrāʾ explains the fear from which God has protected Quraysh (v. 4), he says that it is leprosy (*judhām*).[104] This indicates that Muslim exegetes have read into Sūra 106 the virtues (*faḍāʾil*) of Mecca as a protected *ḥaram* whose inhabitants were immune

[100] ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Tafsīr*, II, 398; Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, XXX, 200; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Tafsīr*, X, 3467 (no. 19490).

[101] Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, XXXII, 107. Cf. Birkeland, *The Lord guideth*, 122.

[102] This perception of the *ḥajj* is expressed in traditions recorded in the commentaries on q 9:28; they state that the Meccans used to get their food supplies mainly from the non-Meccan pilgrims who frequented the Kaʿba. See e.g. Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, X, 75, 76; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 226. Most characteristic in this context is the statement of ʿUmar who was once asked by his *mawlā*, whether Quraysh used to trade during the *ḥajj* in pre-Islamic times. ʿUmar's answer was: "their livelihood was (gained) only during the *ḥajj*" (Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, II, 165: ... *wa-hal kānat maʿāyishuhum illā fī-l-ḥajj*).

[103] al-Qummī, *al-Tafsīr*, 2 vols. (Beirut, 1991), II, 445.

[104] Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī l-Qurʾān*, III, 294.

against serious kinds of illness.[105] Similar traditions are found in the *faḍā'il* of Medina, the second Islamic *ḥaram* of Arabia; for instance, the statement ascribed to the Prophet to the effect that Medina was immune against the *ṭā'ūn* ("plague").[106]

5 *Epilogue: The dating of Sūra 106*

Although Sūra 106 appears in the chronological lists among the Meccan sūras, some scholars of the first Islamic century reportedly held that it was revealed in Medina.[107] Their view seems to preserve the initial sense of the winter and summer journey as an improper habit, and its dating to the Medinan period seems to have been designed to find in the *sūra* divine justification for Muḥammad's attacks on the Meccan caravans which were launched after the *hijra* when the Prophet was already operating from Medina. As if to say that since the Qur'ān deplores the winter and summer journey, Muḥammad in Medina was fully justified in attacking the Mccan caravans. With this re-dating the exegetes merely extended to the Medinan period a religious monotheistic message that was already delivered in Mecca.

[105] See also Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, XXX, 200; Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf*, IV, 287; Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, XXXII, 109; Birkeland, *The Lord guideth*, 126.

[106] E.g. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, III, 28 [*Ḥaram al-Madīna* [29], *Bāb lā yadkhulu l-dajjāl al-Madīna*. Cf. also L.I. Conrad, "Ṭā'ūn and wabā'," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 25 (1982), 285ff.

[107] Māwardī, *Nukat*, VI, 345; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-masīr fī 'ilm al-tafsīr*, 9 vols. (Beirut, 1984), IX, 238; Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, XX, 201, on the authority of al-Ḍaḥḥāk (d. 102/720) and Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 146/763). Cf. Birkeland, *The Lord guideth*, 118.

Tanwīr al-miqbās on Sūra 106 [al-Fīrūzābādī, *Tanwīr al-miqbās min tafsīr Ibn 'Abbās* (Beirut, 2006), 705]

وبإسناده عن ابن عباس في قوله تعالى {لإِيلاَفِ قُرَيْشٍ}، يقول: مر قريشا ليألفوا على التوحيد. ويقال: اذكر نعمتي على قريش ليألفوا على التوحيد {إِيلاَفِهِمْ} كإيلافهم {رِحْلَةَ ٱلشِّتَآءِ وَٱلصَّيْفِ}، على رحلة الشتاء إلى اليمن والصيف إلى الشام. ويقال: لا يشق التوحيد على قريش كما لا يشق عليهم رحلة الشتاء والصيف. {فَلْيَعْبُدُواْ} فليوحد قريش {رَبَّ هَـٰذَا ٱلْبَيْتِ} رب هذه الكعبة {ٱلَّذِىٓ أَطْعَمَهُم مِّن جُوعٍ} أشبعهم من جوع سبع سنين. ويقال: دفع عنهم مؤنة الجوع ومؤنة الرحلتين الشتاء والصيف، وكانوا يرتحلون في كل سنة رحلتين رحلة إلى اليمن بالشتاء ورحلة إلى الشام بالصيف فدفع عنهم مؤنة ذلك. {وَآمَنَهُم مِّنْ خَوْفٍ} من خوف العدو بأن يدخل عليهم. ويقال: من خوف النجاشي وأصحابه الذين أرادوا خراب البيت وهذه معطوفة على السورة الأولى.

Muqātil b. Sulaymān on Sūra 106 [IV, 861-63]

{لإِيلاَفِ قُرَيْشٍ} وذلك أن قريشاً كانوا تجاراً يختلفون إلى الأرض، ثم سميت قريش، وكانوا يمتارون في الشتاء من الأردن وفلسطين، لأن ساحل البحر أدفأ، فإذا كان الصيف تركوا طريق الشتاء والبحر من أجل الحر، وأخذوا إلى اليمن للميرة، فشق عليهم الاختلاف فأنزل الله تعالى {لإِيلاَفِ قُرَيْشٍ} يقول: لا اختلاف لهم ولا تجارة، قد قطعناها عنهم، فذلك {إِيلاَفِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ ٱلشِّتَآءِ وَٱلصَّيْفِ} فقذف الله عز وجل في قلوب الحبشة أن يحملوا الطعام في السفن إلى مكة للبيع، فحملوا إليهم فجعل أهل مكة يخرجون إليهم بالإبل والحمير، فيشترون الطعام على مسيرة يومين من مكة، وتتابع ذلك عليهم سنين فكفاهم الله مؤنة الشتاء والصيف. ثم قال: {فَلْيَعْبُدُواْ رَبَّ هَـٰذَا ٱلْبَيْتِ} لأن رب هذا البيت كفاهم مؤنة الخوف والجوع، فليألفوا العبادة له كما ألفوا الحبشة، ولم يكونوا يرجونهم. {ٱلَّذِىٓ أَطْعَمَهُم مِّن جُوعٍ} حين قذف في قلوب الحبشة أن يحملوا إليهم الطعام في السفن. {وَآمَنَهُم مِّنْ خَوْفٍ} يعني القتل والسبي، وذلك أن العرب في الجاهلية كان يقتل بعضهم بعضاً ويغير بعضهم على بعض، فكان الله عز وجل يدفع عن أهل الحرم ولا يسلط عليهم عدواً، فذلك قوله {وَآمَنَهُم

مِّنْ خَوْفٍ}. وأيضاً، {لإِيلاَفِ قُرَيْشٍ} يقول: لا ميرة لقريش ولا اختلاف، وذلك أن قريشاً كانت لا تأتيهم التجار ولا يهتدون إليهم، فكانت قريش تمتار لأهلها الطعام من الشام في الشتاء ومن اليمن في الصيف، وذلك أنهم كانوا في الشتاء ينطلقون إلى الشام ليمتاروا الطعام لأهلهم فإذا جاء الصيف انطلقوا إلى اليمن، فكانت لهم رحلتان في الشتاء والصيف، فرحمهم الله عز وجل فقذف في قلوب الحبش أن يحملوا إليهم الطعام في السفن، فكانوا يخرجون على مسيرة ليلة إلى جدة فيشترون الطعام، وكفاهم الله مؤنة الشتاء والصيف. فأنزل الله عز وجل يذكرهم النعم فقال {لإِيلاَفِ قُرَيْشٍ إِيلاَفِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ ٱلشِّتَآءِ وَٱلصَّيْفِ}. والإيلاف من المؤنة والاختلاف. ثم قال {فَلْيَعْبُدُواْ رَبَّ هَـٰذَا ٱلْبَيْتِ} يقول: أخلصوا العبادة له. {ٱلَّذِيٓ أَطْعَمَهُم مِّن جُوعٍ} حين قذف في قلوب الحبشة أن يحملوا إليهم الطعام في السفن، ثم قال {وَآمَنَهُم مِّنْ خَوْفٍ} يعني القتل والسبي، لأن العرب كانت يقتل بعضهم بعضاً ويسبى بعضهم بعضاً، وهم آمنون في الحرم.

Ibn Isḥāq on Sūra 106 [Ibn Hishām, I, 143-44]

قال ابن إسحاق: فولي الرفادة والسقاية هاشم بن عبد مناف وذلك أن عبد شمس كان رجلا سفارا قلما يقيم بمكة وكان مقلا ذا ولد وكان هاشم موسرا فكان – فيما يزعمون – إذا حضر الحاج قام في قريش فقال يا معشر قريش، إنكم جيران الله وأهل بيته وإنه يأتيكم في هذا الموسم زوار الله وحجاج بيته وهم ضيف الله وأحق الضيف بالكرامة ضيفه فاجمعوا لهم ما تصنعون لهم به طعاما أيامهم هذه التي لا بد لهم من الإقامة بها، فإنه والله لو كان مالي يسع لذلك ما كلفتكموه. فيخرجون لذلك خرجا من أموالهم كل امرئ بقدر ما عنده فيصنع به للحجاج طعاما حتى يصدروا منها. وكان هاشم فيما يزعمون أول من سن الرحلتين لقريش رحلتي الشتاء والصيف وأول من أطعم الثريد بمكة وإنما كان اسمه عمرا ، فما سمي هاشما إلا بهشمه الخبز بمكة لقومه . فقال شاعر من قريش أو من بعض العرب:

عمرو الذي هشم الثريد لقومه — قوم بمكة مسنتين عجاف

سنت إليه الرحلتان كلاهما — سفر الشتاء ورحلة الأصياف

MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS IN EARLY ISLAM

To my teacher, Prof. M.J. Kister, on his seventieth birthday.

Preface

Western scholars have already noticed that according to Muslim sources, before the five daily prayers became part of the "pillars" of Islam, the Muslims used to pray only twice a day. Goldziher states that "before the duty of prayer was extended to five times a day, the Muslims are said to have observed only two canonical times of prayer: morning and afternoon...".[1] Other scholars, like Mittwoch, for instance, who studied the evidence of Muslim sources, maintained that the first two prayers which the Muslims reportedly used to pray daily were *ṣalāt al-fajr* (before sunrise), and *ṣalāt al-'ishā'* (after sunset).[2]

In the present study various reports and traditions are examined which may give us a better insight into the evidence of Muslim sources concerning the first times of prayer in Islam, their special significance, and their position in relation to other times of prayer.

I. Ṣalāt al-ḍuḥā

A. The first report to be examined was recorded on the authority of al-Wāqidī (d. 207H/823), by al-Balādhurī (d. 279H/892).[3] This report was quoted from al-Balādhurī by Ibn Ḥajar,[4] and it was also reproduced by al-Maqrīzī,[5] who in turn was quoted by al-Ḥalabī.[6] The most coherent version of this report of al-Wāqidī is that of al-Maqrīzī. It reads:

[1] I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, ed. by S.M. Stern, London 1971, I, 43.
[2] E. Mittwoch, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des islamischen Gebets und Kultus*, Berlin 1913, p. 10.
[3] Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 113, 117.
[4] *Iṣāba*, VIII, 25–26. Cf. also Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, I, 42–43.
[5] Maqrīzī, *Imtā'*, I, 16–17.
[6] Ḥalabī, I, 267.