JAHANNAM IN MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC THOUGHT
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Introduction

In referring to heaven and hell, the Prophet exhorted Muslims to contemplate the ‘ażīmatayn (the two great ones). From a simple Qur’anic outline of seven levels surrounded by a fiery boundary hell, by the end of the third century, hell acquired a complex geography of mountains, valleys, wells and rivers. The first two chapters focus on Jahannam as place — its topography, climate, vegetation, water resources and animal life. Our sources, apart from the Qur’ān, include popular zuhd texts whose material encouraged reflection on the transience of this world along with some aspects of the afterlife. Less than fifty years later, by Ibn Mājah’s time (d. 275/888), the zuhd section in his Sunan would cover more eschatological ground to include the barzakh, the interrogation of the grave, the resurrection and some material on hell. Afterlife treatises, some written at the same time as the collection of ḥadīth, focused exclusively on one of the ‘ażīmatayn. That topography came first in the order of things can be seen from how later texts on sin (kabā‘ir) utilized the geographical layout to tag an
“address” to its sinners. Semantics played a key role in structuring space; the names for landmarks were selected to reflect aspects related to the infernal experience. Not only directed by Qur‘ānic verse on the specifics of this experience, these terms acquired “prime real estate value”—the appeal of a word like wayl (regret and distress) can be seen in its application to various topographical forms as a desirable address. As a place of punishment the terrain was designed to be difficult, treacherous, unpredictable and dangerous with its steep slopes and high mountains. It was a landscape that repeatedly defeated and frustrated its inhabitants.

My thesis argues against a linear narrative for Jahannam. A comprehensive version did not exist by the time of the Prophet’s death and one can argue that the entire eschatological corpus is subject to constant revision.¹ Much of the spatial description of Jahannam, as the first chapter makes clear, is attributed to the Companions and the two subsequent generations. Most landmarks cannot be attributed to the Prophet. In fact, there was a lot of room for argument. The ṣirāt, clearly influenced by Zoroastrian ideas of justice, was a postscript; Muslim scholars argued on whether there was more than one and how these crossings should situated in the afterlife narrative. As some elements

¹ See David Cook, Contemporary Muslim Apocalyptic Literature (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005.)
were added others were deleted; that God would trap and hunt down his enemies was only alluded to once in Asad b. Mūsā’s *Zuhd*.

Some Western scholars such as Thomas O’Shaunessy assumed the Prophet to be the architect of Jahannam. This authorship cast a long shadow on the scholarship relating to Jahannam. Much attention was given to the *mi’rāj*, or the night journey. Although relatively short and sparse, the Spanish scholar, Miguel Asín Palacios considered the *mi’rāj* a definitive source. An overview of the primary material in first two chapters of this thesis demonstrates that earliest material on Jahannam can be found in *zuhd* texts, Qur’ānic exegesis, early works on sin and the Dāniyāliyyāt of which the ‘Āzamah manuscript is an example. In fact, there were several versions of the *mi’rāj*, a later (and longer) one attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās and an apocryphal such as Samarqandi’s *Qurrat al-‘uyūn*. That Muḥammad was the starting and ending point had an impact on the analysis especially if the Prophet was perceived as an imposter. Consequently the Muslim version of hell was described as derivative, a hodge-podge of borrowed elements or at best a poor imitation of an original, the Judeo-Christian model.

Modern scholarship has questioned many early assumptions. Patricia Crone challenged the notion of Mecca as a thriving trade hub. Along with David Waines, she points to agrarian practices alluded to in the Qur’ān and questioned the notion of pagan Arabs as pastoralists. Crone also bravely confronted the
“assumed” audience of the Prophet who have often been portrayed as having a hazy knowledge of an afterlife. The challenge facing Muḥammad was one of convincing his audience of an imminent afterlife. Using the Qur’ān as her source, Crone demonstrates that Muḥammad’s audience believed in the same God and in a day of judgement without paying much attention to it in the belief that they will be saved. Such a daring premise pulls us away from framing the construction of Jahannam as a novel project.

The Muslim waʿīd is the most appropriate context for exploring a subject like Jahannam and is often alluded to as a tadhkirah (a reminder). The rule of thumb in all waʿīd is that the starker and fiercer the imagery, the more it is likely to breed fear and fight complacency. In structuring a punitive habitat, scholars turned to Qur’ānic stories of communities that had undergone the wrath of God as useful blueprints. There was a pattern to divine anger; the “curse of the land”, for example, are wastelands filled with stunted and bitter plants that were imported wholesale into hell. In fact, ecological distress was built into Jahannam’s eco-system. The end justified the means which was subject to change depending on the audience. Although scholars rejected maskh, or the transformation of man into beast as punishment in the afterlife, it was applied to sinners as a way to mark their transgression on judgement day. The waʿīd as this research will show is a fluid concept; as a format it frees us from temporal paralysis, from the notion of a static monolithic audience or the idea of Jahannam
as a novel project. Islamic *waʿīd* was an “open source” (to use a neologism from internet culture) that operated with the belief in the value of fear as a deterrent from sin. This thesis demonstrates that the clearer and more specific the Muslim idea of sin became, the more lurid the details of its sinners.

The idea of an “open source” means that license was permitted to exaggerate or supplement detail whose material can be found in *waʿz* sermons, dream manuals, hagiographic *sīrah* (*dalāʾil al-nubuwwah*) or later hagiographic entries on șūfī saints. It was a *waʿīd* with a Qurʾānic backbone. Jahannam was a serious project strongly rooted in philology; a term like *al-Ḥuṭamah*, one of the names for hell, connotes repetitive cycles of drought enforcing the built-in ecological distress. One cannot underestimate the contribution of scholars who diligently studied the relevant Qurʾānic verses turned to an entire body supporting body such as exegesis (*tafsīr*), indices (*al-ashbāh wal-nazāʾīr*), lexicons of unusual terms (*gharib al-Qurʾān*), contronyms (*aḍḍād*) and even dream manuals in order to construct an edifice as faithful as possible to the divine plan.

The counterpart to *waʿīd* (the threat) is *waʿd* (the promise). For the Muslim community salvation in the afterlife is a moment of triumph. Believers are the true inheritors of paradise, so how was its counterpart, the community of the disinherited or the dispossessed imagined? The Qurʾān places a cut-off point to speech where the muteness on the part of the supplicants, hell’s inhabitants,
signals the inefficacy of their prayers and their abandonment to the roaring sounds of the flames. Implicit in this *wa’d* is justice and the punishment of a community’s enemies such as will be seen in the Shi’ite doctrine of *raj’ah* and in their list of those marked for hell.

The final chapter explores various accounts of afterlife justice to demonstrate again the rolling narrative. Despite the clarity, the Qur’anic account offers various modes of adjudication (such as questioning or the scales) which later versions attempt to put some order to. Each of the accounts examined show the lack of a clear point as to when the sentencing for hell is made. These versions do reveal that as Muslims became more *shari’ah* confident, the description of these proceedings focused on prosecution with the sinner emerging from his grave as a marked “man” or “woman”. Sinners become villains and believers become heroes. No one escapes publicity (*tashhīr*) as judgment day becomes a celebration of visibility and ranking.

Texts frame the divine amnesty and the eventual release of Muslim sinners as ‘*īṭq* or manumission. The doctrine of atonement (*kaffārāt*) expands so that adversity in this life could be exchanged for punishment in the next. That adversity acts as a credit line or an advance for the next life is an option that was not originally on the books. The final chapter examines the language that accompanies this line of argument and the emergence of *ijārah* or written slips
that declare their owner exempt from hellfire. I conclude with a discussion of the
date of Jahannam — a topic that remained much in debate as late as Ibn Taymiyyah’s time. The premise Muslim scholars maintained is that, as a
believer, the Muslim sinner should not be on the same level as the unbeliever.
Those who argued in favor of takhlid al-kuffar cited the truthfulness of the divine
threat (wa‘id), the incorrigibility of the infidels but more importantly, that hell
should not be regarded as a penitentiary. As more Muslims came to adopt the
language of manumission (and hope), the release of Muslim sinners was cast as
the promise that the Muslim community in the afterlife would indeed be fully
saved and its members liberated.
Chapter One: Jahannam: Image and Landscape

Introduction:

Jahannam is first a place; the Qur’ān outlines a fiery wall enclosing seven levels with their corresponding gates. The fact that the Qur’ān speaks of Jahannam in spatial terms determined its evolution in the Muslim tradition.¹ This chapter explores a geography that begins to take shape more than a century after the Prophet’s death. Muḥammad warned of hell, its heat and punishment, leaving it up to his Companions and the Successors to piece together the master narrative of a place from which prayers (istijārah) would come to seek protection.² Our earliest sources are zuhd texts, Qur’ānic exegesis

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¹ Dār al-ākhira, the mansion of the next life, is mentioned one hundred and fifteen times in the Qur’ān; see Isaac Hasson, “Last Judgement,” EQ 3:136.
² In highlighting the efficacy of sincere prayer, ‘Ayni quotes the opinion that hell and heaven have the capacity to hear prayer or du‘ā’. When a Muslim requests protection from hellfire, hell would take note of the request (wa-qila inna al-jannah wal-nār asma’ al-makhluqāt wa-inna al-jannah
and ḥadīth. By the end of the third/tenth century, a rich body of material would come to be collated in treatises dedicated to the afterlife. Introducing inhabitants into this narrative greatly enhanced its landscape as popular works on sin began to assign a location or an “address” to sinners, thus contributing to the creation of a more powerful infernal landscape in the Muslim imagination.

After reviewing the basic sources, our tour begins with Jahannam’s external structure. The tier assigned to the Muslim community is the primary focus of our texts. This landscape, composed of mountains, valleys, wells, prisons, waterways and shores, was a collaborative enterprise. Geography, as we shall see, formed one aspect of a complex habitat of climate, flora and fauna. Landmarks emerged under the guidance of Qur’ānic verses whose mapmakers were the Companions and the “generation of 800” (as Stephen Humphreys designates the Successors or al-tābi‘īn) composed of exegetes, ascetics and scholars.³ In addition to a hot landscape, our tour covers the cold counterpart known as the zamharīr. We conclude with an overview of the long poles that bolt Jahannam’s gates shut.

II. Sources: 2nd to 4th century hijrī

II. A. Zuhd texts:

In addition to the Qurʾān, two zuhd texts, namely those of Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181/797) and Asad b. Mūsā (d. 212/827) are particularly rich in material on hell.4 Zuhd was a popular genre for themes related to the afterlife — thirty-seven zuhd titles alone have been traced so far to the second and third centuries.5 Chapters on zuhd were included in three of the canonical ḥadīth collections: Muslim’s Ṣaḥīḥ (d. 261/874), Ibn Mājah’s Sunan (d. 275/888) and al-Tirmidhī’s Sunan (d. 279/892). Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/888) shifts his zuhd content to his kitāb al-ādāb.6 The genre’s themes were remarkably uniform highlighting the transience of this world, extolling virtues like patience, repentance, and poverty while warning against the evils of hypocrisy, injustice and arrogance. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā composed treatises dedicated to every zuhd theme. Eschatology, with its


focus on the fearsome reckoning to come, framed the discourse of zuhd by providing images of powderful emotional resonance in support of its praiseworthy values. Ibn Mājah’s section on zuhd, for example, covered the barzakh, su’āl al-qabr, qiyāmah and some aspects of Jahannam. Not all authors of zuhd works were ascetics; often it is difficult to differentiate between content produced by traditionists such as the Ḥanbalis and the compilations of ascetics during the first four centuries.7 Indeed, Ibn Ḥanbal was not primarily an ascetic but his lifestyle endorsed ascetic values.

This early connection between eschatology and zuhd explains why familiar motifs from zuhd literature continue to preface Muslim eschatological treatises. A favorite medieval motif depicts rulers in waʿz gatherings; ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb is paired with Ka‘b al-Aḥbār and ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān with ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām — both were Jewish converts whose influence on Muslim eschatology was extensive. Adab works feature scenes in which rulers solicit admonition (‘iẓnī, khawwifnā) and weep in terror or faint upon hearing detailed descriptions of Jahannam or the qiyāmah (such reactions were also attributed to the early generation of ṣaḥābīs).8 Abdelfattah Kilito provides the most plausible

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8 See F. Meier, “Bakkā,” in EI² 1:959-61. A forceful sermon should induce the high and mighty to weep; Jonathan Berkey cites the case of a preacher named Abū ‘Umar al-Hasan b. al-Filw (d. 426/1035) who addresses these lines to an unnamed sultan: (I went in to the sultan in the palace
interpretation of these scenarios in suggesting that speeches of \textit{wa'\d{z}} or \textit{takhwif} (in early texts the terms are used interchangeably) are a continuation or sublimation of the verbal humiliation found in an older Arabic genre, namely \textit{hij\^{a}}. It is, however, verbal humiliation with a difference: the weeping prince has posterity in mind, so that “in abasing [himself] before God, [the prince] glorifies himself before men. In this way, he turns the sudden despair that afflicts him to his own advantage, for his humility becomes the stuff of stories that will spread and rebound to his greater glory.”

These emotional responses to hell were prized in hagiographies as model expressions of piety and faith.

II. B. \textit{Hadith}

In canonical \textit{hadith}, the entries on Jahannam varied in length and focus. The shortest is found in the earliest collection of Mālik b. Anas’s (d. 179/795) \textit{Muwāt\i{t}a’} who cites two \textit{hadith} in \textit{kit\={a}b Jahannam} (also entitled \textit{ṣifat Jahannam}) on the intensity of its heat and its overwhelming blackness.\footnote{Mālik b. Anas, \textit{Muwāt\i{t}a’}, ed. Muḥammad Fu‘ād ‘Abd al-Bāqī (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyyah, 1951), 2:994-5} Muslim, almost eighty years later, offers more material on Jahannam dispersed through various chapters. There is one short vision of hell as witnessed by Muḥammad during an


\footnote{Popular Preaching and Religious Authority in the Medieval Islamic Near East (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2001), 69.}
eclipse and the kitāb al-zuhd that contains a demographic reference to the preponderance of women in hell.¹¹ Other material on Jahannam is inserted in ṣifat al-jannah wa-ṣifat na‘imihā wa-ahlīhā. Among the themes are hell’s initial appearance on the Day of Judgment, its vast depth and fire, the gigantic size of the sinners, ‘Amr b. Luḥayy and the eternal duration of the afterlife. Muslim concludes with the barzakh — the period between death and the Day of Judgment — and a hopeful note on the mercy of God, a favorite zuhd theme known as ḥusn al-ẓann bi-llāh.¹²

II. C. Afterlife texts:

Treatises on either heaven or hell were concurrent with early ḥadīth; we have Ibn Ḥabīb al-Sulamī’s (d. 238/852) K. waṣf al-firdaws, Muḥāsibī’s (d. 243/857) K. al-tawahhum and the prolific Ibn Abī al-Dunyā’s (d. 281/894) Ṣifat al-nār and Ṣifat al-jannah. Muḥāsibī’s Tawahhum, an imaginative text that touches on heaven and hell, is a homiletic exercise on the ordeals of the afterlife.¹³ In addition to individual texts, geographical descriptions of hell and heaven were inserted in ḥadīth sections on cosmography; Bukhārī’s short section on hell (ṣifat

*al-nār* is included in his chapter on creation (*k. bad' al-khalq*).\(^{14}\) Abū al-Shaykh’s (d. 369/979) treatise, *K. al-‘ażamah*, is the most extensive in the genre.\(^{15}\) It is by the fourth/tenth century that a master eschatological narrative synthesizes Qur’ānic commentary with hadīth and akhbār. We have the work attributed to Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash’arī (d. 342/953) *K. shajarat al-yaqīn* (also attributed to ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Qāḍī and many others); Ghazzālī’s (d. 505/1111) *al-Durrah al-fākhirah*, Ibn al-Kharrāṭ’s (d. 582/1186) *K. al-‘āqibah* and Ḥurūbī’s (d. 671/1273) *al-Tadhkirah fī aḥwāl al-mawtā wa-umūr al-ākhirah*.\(^{16}\) These seminal works were consulted by medieval scholars; a later and much respected reference is that of Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbālī’s (d. 795/1392) *al-Takhwīf min al-nār wa-ta’rīf bi-ḥāl ahl al-bawār*, which was important for including some of Ibn Abī al-Dunyā’s lost works.\(^{17}\) The last on our list of encyclopedic works belongs to Abū

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Bakr al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) who composed several relevant texts of which *al-Budūr al-sāfirah fi aḥwāl al-ākhirah* is the most comprehensive.\(^\text{18}\)

II. D. *Kabāʾir* texts:

As said earlier, the introduction of sinners modified Jahannam’s landscape by mapping moral distinctions onto its layout. Here the Qurʾān offers only general information whose scarcity is reflected in the earlier narratives of Asad b. Mūsā and Ibn Abī al-Dunyā.\(^\text{19}\) There was a consensus however that hell’s top level would be assigned to the Muslim community and landmarks were depicted primarily in relation to Muslim sinners. This is not to say that the rest of hell remained blank; Muqāṭil (d. 150/767) believed that punishment increased seventy times with each descending level.\(^\text{20}\) Any discussion of Jahannam’s “operating system” re-introduced the entire structure back into the picture. The lowest level, *al-Hāwiyah*, for example, received considerable attention because the infernal fires were believed to be stoked from below.

The classification of sins by severity came to have an impact on how Jahannam was imagined. Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandi’s (d. 373/983) *Qurrat al-

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19 This typology is a characteristic of Qurʾānic depictions of large groups as well as individuals; see Wadād al-Qādī and Mustansir Mir, “Literature and the Qurʾān,” *EQ* 3:211.  
ʻuyūn wa-mafraḥ al-qalb al-maḥzūn represents this sharp turning point. A Ḥanafi jurist, Samarqandī composed a tafsīr and, more importantly, a short catechism entitled ‘Aqīdat al-uṣūl.’ Contrary to the assumption that it is an eschatological work, Qurrat al-ʻuyūn is essentially a text on Muslim sin and should be treated as one of the first versions of the kabā’ir genre. Using the mi’rāj format, Samarqandī structures his narrative around ten major sins and traces each sinner’s trajectory from decadent lifestyle to death, punishment in the grave, resurrection on the Day of Judgement and, finally, punishment in hell. The unrealistic assumption that a person commits one single kabīrah only reflects Samarqandī’s attempt at creating a typology. His idea of punishment is one extended over several stages and he succeeds in producing an infernal landscape populated with multitudes of sinners undergoing stages of punishments in a variety of places. Jahannam’s topography thus acquires a specificity it did not have earlier; a location or an “address” for the sinners listed in his work. Kabā’ir works, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, had a more aggressive approach toward sin than earlier zuhd works. In these treatises horrific images are used to dissuade people from engaging in sin. In composing an apocryphal mi’rāj, a Hanafi jurist like Samarqandī demonstrates the lengths to which scholars would go to achieve that goal.

23 Nawawī (d. 676/1277) in his introduction to his text on du’ā’ informs us that ṣulamā’ and fuqahā’ were not strict with weak ḥadīth in the genres of faḍā’il, tarihib and targhib in contrast to the
relevant text and was reproduced with additional commentary many centuries later by Zayn al-Dīn al-Mālibārī (d. 987/1579) under the title *al-Jawāhir fi ‘uqūbāt ahl al-kabā’ir*.\(^{24}\)

II. E. Dāniyāl and the *K. al-‘ażamah* manuscript:

Our final sources for descriptions of Jahannam are specific apocalyptic books that began appearing during the late Umayyad and early ‘Abbāsid period and were collectively known as *kutub al-ḥidthān*. Attributing their content to the prophet Dāniyāl, the starting point of these oracle texts was the “Book of Dāniyāl”.\(^{25}\) These texts were read in Egypt as early as 61/680.\(^{26}\) Ibn al-Munādī (d. 336/947) prefaced his Shī‘ite eschatological treatise, *al-Malāḥīm*, with an excerpt he claimed to be from the last version of the Book of Dāniyāl.\(^{27}\) Another fragment was located in an *adab* manuscript in the British Museum whose eschatological content is prefaced by Ka'b al-Aḥbār on the authority of the Book

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\(^{25}\) There were two Dāniyāls in Muslim tradition: an elder who existed in the fatrāh and to whom astrological almanacs were attributed; see B. Carra de Vaux, “Dāniyāl,” in *EI* 2:914-5 and the updated article by G. Vajda in *EI* 2:112-13.

\(^{26}\) Tewfik Fahd, “Djafr,” *EE* 2:375-7. These books remained popular; Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Malik al-Hamadhamī (d. 521/1127) relates that under the vizirate of Abū Ja‘far al-Karkhī (d. 324/936) “... there was a Baghdād bookseller, known as al-Dāniyālī, who traded in ancient books attributed to the Prophet Daniel. He enjoyed great success with the statesmen.”

of Dāniyāl.\textsuperscript{28} Princeton's Garrett collection includes two manuscripts in the ḥidthān genre entitled \textit{K. al-‘ażamah}; one is anonymous and the second attributed to Ibn Abī al-Dunyā. As will be shown, this attribution is likely to be inaccurate.\textsuperscript{29} The introduction to the manuscript certifies that the text is copied from a hidden (and original!) book of Dāniyāl discovered in a cave in Yemen. Transmitted on the authority of ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām, \textit{K. al-‘ażamah} was read to ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān as part of a homiletic \textit{wa‘ẓ} ritual of remembrance and humility. Narrated in stages — due to the fainting fits that overtake the listener from the horrors of hell — its material on Jahannam (fols 17a-33b) remains unequivocally Islamic as attested by the Qur‘ānic verses that structure the narrative.

Unlike \textit{Qurrat al-‘uyūn}, this work does not belong to the \textit{kabā‘ir} genre. The term ‘\textit{ażamah} in the title — identical to that of Abū al-Shaykh’s cosmographic treatise — was used by the Prophet when he urged his followers to remember the ‘\textit{ażimatayn} and went on to identify them as heaven and hell.\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Al-‘ażamah} begins with an overview of the universe, the cosmography of the seven earths, and their inhabitants whose histories parallel the one found in our prophetic...
narrative — not only do they have an Adam and Eve but their own heaven and hell.\(^{31}\) In order to authenticate the Islamic content of Ibn Abī al-Dunyā’s ‘Aẓamah, an *isnad* lists Ibrāhīm al-Khawwāṣ as presenting the text to ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 290/903) for verification (*taḥṣīḥ*). Biographical dictionaries give us two dates for Khawwāṣ’ death — both much later than the authorship of the manuscript purports to be.\(^{32}\) The internal dating of *al-‘Aẓamah* points to a period later than that of its presumed author Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (d. 281/894).\(^{33}\)

The originality of *al-‘Aẓamah* lies in mapping large segments of Jahannam in sequence as if the terrain were photographed with a wide lens. Its narrative unfolds as a guided tour, listing twenty-five types of sinners, their punishment and interactions with hell’s wardens. The *waʿẓ* prefatory format, which breaks from the *miʿrāj* paradigm, is proof that there were various models to early Arabic eschatological narrative. The Dāniyāl books illustrate a trend found in early Islamic eschatology of certifying material with an acclaimed Jewish pedigree.

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\(^{31}\) Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘Aẓamah, fol. 3b.

\(^{32}\) Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) and Shaʿrānī list al-Khawwāṣ’ death date as 291/903; see *al-Risālat al-Qushayriyyah fi ‘ilm al-taṣawwuf* (Cairo: Būlāq, 1867), 21; Shaʿrānī (d. 973/1565), *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Azhariyyah, 1925), 1:97.

\(^{33}\) It was not unusual to attribute a work to an earlier authority in order to protect it from critics and plagiarists; see Abdelfattah Kilito, *The Author and His Doubles: Essays on Classical Arabic Culture*, trans. Michael Cooperson (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 66-70. Ibrāhīm al-Khawwāṣ also appears as a link in a Tanūkhī tale involving elephants and the virtue of *tawakkul*; see Geert Jan van Gelder, “To Eat or Not to Eat Elephant: A Travelling Story in Arabic and Persian Literature,” *BSOAS*, 66, 3 (2003): 421-2. Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) alerts us that there are two Ibrāhīm al-Khawwāṣ, one is Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad, the ascetic and a reliable (*thiqah*) transmitter while another is Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad who gave himself the sobriquet *al-Khawwāṣ* whose *ḥadīth* is forged (*isnādan wa-matnarn mawdūʿah*); see *Kitāb al-mawdūʿāt min al-aḥādīth al-marțūʿāt*, ed. Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī Būyajīlīr (Riyad: Dār al-Salaf), 1:345-6.
The Isrā’iliyyāt, and I agree with Claude Gilliot in widening its definition to encompass the cultural heritage of the Near East, found its way in formative tafsīr, which Gilliot terms “narrative Qur’ānic exegesis”, of which the work of Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767) is an early example.34 One lost manuscript of the Kitāb al-dalāʾil (Book of Prognostications) by al-Ḥasan b. Buhlūl was said to include an apocalyptic malḥama presented as a reply by Kaʿb al-Aḥbār to a question asked by Muʿāwiyah concerning the Mahdi.35

III. The External Structure of Hell:

The Qurʾān outlines hell’s exterior structure as comprising seven gates sealed with long poles. Each gate represents a level known as darak (pl. adrāk/darakāt) and hypocrites will be consigned to its lowest level.36 Darak implies descent: Jahannam’s darakāt are the inverse of heaven’s ascending darajāt.37 In one ḥadith, Jahannam’s depth was assessed by the time it takes for a falling stone to reach its bedrock — estimated at seventy years. Width, on the other hand, was depicted in relation to the gigantic size of its inhabitants.38

38 A sinner’s tooth would be larger than the mountain of Uḥd; see Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Ṣilāt al-nār, 29-30; Ibn al-Mubārak, Zuhd, 85; Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 57.
Each of the seven levels is a separate entity as heat increases seventy-fold with each descending level. Similarly, each one of the seven fires “warily watches” the one beneath in fear of being “devoured by hotter flames.” The zaqqūm tree remains the only internally connecting landmark that rises from the bedrock, scaling and branching its way throughout its levels.39 One curious plant — that of arugula (jarjir) — depicted in some texts as growing on the edges of Jahannam is a detail left unexplained in our texts.40

The Qur‘ān refers to a pavilion, a surādiq, that encloses Jahannam and acts as a boundary. Zayd b. ‘Alī (d. 123/740) imagined it as a rugged lava field (ḥarrāh).41 Surādiq is an Arabized word; Ibn Rajab describes it as a vestibule, a dihlīz, separating the gate from the structure itself where sinners wait as they file into hell. It was also depicted as a neck of fire (‘unuq min nār), a mist of dark smoke, or a rotating wall.42 Samarqandī interpreted the surādiq as dark smog

39 Majlisi (d. 1111/1699), Biḥār al-anwār (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah, 1957), 8:168. 40 Qurṭubī, Tadhkirah, 1:527-8. Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731) interprets jarjir (Eruca sativa) in dreams as buqlat ahl al-nār fa-lā khayr fīhā wa-man ra‘ā fī l-manām annahu akalahā fa-annahu ya‘mal ‘amal ahl al-nār; see Ta‘īr al-anām fi ta‘bir al-manām, ed. Hanān Muḥammad Nūr Ṭayāna (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1993), 90, s.v. jarjir. Asad b. Mūsā is silent on its connection to hell and recommends it as an aphrodisiac; see Ibn Ḥabīb al-Sulāmī, Kitāb ṭibb al-‘arab, ed. Badr al-Umrānī al-Tanjī (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2007), 49, 87. Dḥāhābī (d. 748/1348) in a medical treatise alludes to it as ‘批发’s bean (baqalāt Ṭīḥāsh) and says that the Prophet described it as evil (khāβīthah) and could have seen it in hell; see al-Ṭībb al-nabawī wa-šī ḍhāhī hašā fi l-samā‘, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ma‘ashī (Beirut: Dār al-Nafā‘īs līl-Ṭībā‘ah wal-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī‘, 2004), 129. The Fatimid caliph al-Ḥākim (r. 386-411) had forbidden jarjir on the grounds that it was one of ‘Ṭīḥah’s favorite foods; see Devin J. Stewart, “Popular Shiism in Medieval Egypt: Vestiges of Islamic Sectarian Polemics in Egyptian Arabic,” Studia Islamica 84 (1996), 41. 41 Zayd b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, Taḥfīr gharīb al-Qur‘ān, ed. Muḥammad Jawād al-Ḥasanī al-Jalālī (Qumm: Maktab al-l-lām al-Islāmī, 1997), 258. 42 Surādiq was generally recognized as a Persian loan word derived either from sīrdār which means antechamber or from sarapurdah which means curtain and therefore means the awning of
that envelops hell’s inhabitants.\textsuperscript{43} Sinners stand unprotected as hot winds (\textit{samūm}) cut through their faces and black clouds (\textit{yaḥmūm}) hang above. They soon experience nausea as dark vapors tear through their intestines. Muqātil describes the \textit{surādiq} as “one band (neck) of fire that surrounds the \textit{kuffār} while another band circles them from the opposite direction joining the first … There are [principally] three bands [of fire] under which [sinners] nap (\textit{yaqilūna}) before entering hell.”\textsuperscript{44}

Others, like Ibn al-Mubārak, described the \textit{surādiq} as a four-cornered pavilion suggesting an angular — not a circular — boundary. Hell, for Ibn al-Mubārak, was full of corners; every edge symmetrically divided into seventy distinct types of torment.\textsuperscript{45}

\textbf{III. A. Orientation}

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\textsuperscript{44} Q56:41-43, 77:30, 18:29; Muqātil, \textit{Tafsīr}, 4:220.

Because of the downward orientation implied in darakāt, wells were the earliest constructs associated with Jahannam. Muḥammad describes hell as a covered well whose flames flare out the moment its warden lifts the lid. In ḥadith hell’s depth is the time it takes for a rock thrown from its edge (shafir) to hit bottom. Q101:9 alludes to the sinners being cast down head first into the pit. An early dream attributed to ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb describes hell as a covered well with an edge (shafir) and ridges (qurūn). Looking down he recognizes several men from Quraysh hanging upside down. Angels pull him to the right. Arabic makes a distinction between jubb, a covered well used to collect rainwater and bi‘r, a generic term for wells. In dreams wells become ominous signifiers of distress and imprisonment. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar was an adolescent when he asked God for this ru‘yā (vision); we can approximate this dream to year five of the hijra when he was allowed by the Prophet to participate

46 This is a Zoroastrian notion as well. The afterlife vision of the high priest Kerdır around the mid third century C. E. describes hell as a deep bottomless dark stinking well full of suffering and evil; see Prods Oktor Skjaervø, “Kerdır’s Vision: Translation and Analysis,” Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran 16 (1983): 297; Philippe Gignoux, “Hell,” E Ir 12:154-6.
48 The term shafir is in a ḥadith originally quoted in Hannād b. al-Sari’s Zuhd; see Bayhaqi, Kitāb al-ba‘th wal-nushūr, ed. Āmir Aḥmad Ḥaydar (Beirut: Markaz al-Khīdamät wal-Abḥāth al-Thaqāfiyyah, 1986), 279; Tirmidhī, Sunan, 4:702; for a variant see Muslim, 2:2184-5.
49 fa-ummuhu hawiyatun has been interpreted in a number of ways: as a curse, as hell being a sinner’s only refuge, as alluding to the sinner’s doom, or as referring to the crown of the head or umm al-ra‘s; see Devin J. Stewart, “Pit,” EQ 4: 100-1.
52 wa-yadull fi al-manām ‘alā al-hamm wal-nakad wal-sijn; see Nābulusi, Ta‘īr, 83, s. v. jubb.
in the battle of al-Khandaq. As we shall see, all dreams related to hell were interpreted literally — the binary model of the afterlife was not one for nuance.

In popular cosmography, heaven is created prior to hell, thus establishing a symbolic hierarchy where God’s mercy always preceeds His wrath. Heaven and hell are vertical polarities; the Day of Judgment in the Qur’ān is described as al-khāfidah/al-rāfi‘ah that emphasizes this binary opposition. We are also reminded that God has the ability to relegate man to the lowest station (asfal al-sāfilīna). Semantically the act of falling (suqūṭ) designates humiliation and the lowering of status. In Ibn al-Jawzī’s Qur’ānic index al-asfal signifies disgrace (inḥitāt fī ‘l-makān) and loss (khusrān). The act of falling, hawā (of which al-hāwiyyah is a derivative) is a repetitive motion in hell. Examples for hawā in Muqātil’s Qur’ānic index imply perdition, a state of limbo and loss. Q56:3 was popular with zuḥd writers who warned their listeners of the reversals of fortune in

53 The Prophet rejected ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr’s attempt to join the battles of Badr and Uḥud; the dividing line between childhood and adulthood was set at fifteen. The Umayyad caliph ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz decreed that all boys under fifteen should be considered minors; see Ibn Sa’d, Ṭabaqāt, 6:105.
56 Q56:3, 95:4; for the names of the qiyāmah, see Suyūṭī, Budūr, 143-4.
58 Q20:81, 14:43, 22:31; Muqātil b. Sulaymān, al-Asbābāh wal-naẓā’i rī fī ‘l-Qur’ān al-ḥarīm, ed. ‘Abd Allāh Shihāṭah (Cairo: Dār al-Gharib, 2001), 320. Anbārī lists hawā among the aḍdād in that it could be used to connote both coming up or/and going down; see Anbārī, Kītāb al-aḍdād (Leiden: Brill, 1881), 243.
the life to come when the poor would be elevated as the rich would be brought low.\textsuperscript{59} Polarity was also horizontal; the Qur’ān refers to the inhabitants of hell as ašḥāb al-mash’āmah or ašḥāb al-shimāl (people of the left) whereas the inhabitants of paradise are ašḥāb al-maymanah or ašḥāb al-yāmīn (people of the right).\textsuperscript{60} With this in mind, the detail at the end of ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar’s dream when he gets pulled to the right was a good sign. In the qiyyāmah, Jahannam will be placed to the left of God’s Throne.

\section*{III. B. The Levels of Hell}

In Qurṭubi’s opinion, Jahannam was the name of all the fires in hell combined; he notes the absence of any sound tradition (athar ṣaḥiḥ) with regards to designation. The earliest references to the seven names of hell can be found in zuhd texts.\textsuperscript{61} Exegetes maintain that these names are synonyms for hell based on the Qur’ānic pairing of these words with fire and chastisement.\textsuperscript{62} As will be seen, there was a consensus on the first and last levels but no logic existed for sorting the designations in between. Qurṭubi’s list, as we will see in chapter two, was based on semantic subtleties that equated descent with an increase in the heat index. Equally disorderly was the allotment of prospective inhabitants.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibn ʿImrān al-Mawṣili, Zuhd, 224.
\textsuperscript{60} Q56:9, 90:19 and 56:41 for ašḥāb al-mash’āmah and al-shimāl; Q56:8; 27, 38, 90, 91, 74:39 for ašḥāb al-yāmīn and ašḥāb al-maymanah. See also Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889), Tafsır gharıb al-Qur’ān, ed. al-Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣaqr (Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabīyyah, 1958), 446.
\textsuperscript{61} Qurṭubi, Tadhkirah, 1:540, 462.
\textsuperscript{62} Qurṭubi includes samūm as one of the names of hell based on ‘adḥāb al-samūm in Q52:27; see ibid., 1:462.
Future occupants include Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Sabaeans, Gog and Magog, the Da'i'il, devils (shayātīn), unbelievers and hypocrites. Shi'iite sources proposed the following as sole occupants of entire levels: Abū Bakr, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, Mu'āwiyah, 'Ā'ishah and 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān.\textsuperscript{63} Whereas the Qur'ān assigns the hypocrites to the lowest level, Shi'iite sources specify that they be defined as solely those who “hate and have let [shī‘at ‘Ali] down” (mubghīṭūna wa-mukhdhīlūna). Another tradition groups the three gates of Laẓā, Saqr and al-Hāwiyyah as exclusive Banū Umayyah domains.\textsuperscript{64} On the other hand, allotting the top level to the Muslim community should be read as a recognition of the privilege of “being first” among nations. A similar concession exists in paradise; not only is Muḥammad the first prophet to knock at the gates but his ummah will form its largest constituency. In other words, this Muslim privilege is manifest across the board.\textsuperscript{65} Assigned to Jahannam’s top floor had its advantages: it was the coolest and offered, as we will see, a quick exit should its sinners be released.

\textsuperscript{63} Majlîs, Bihār, 8:301-2; ‘Ayyāshī (d. 320/932), Kitāb al-Tafsīr, ed. Hāshim al-Rasūlī al-Mahallātī (Qumm: al-Maṭba‘ah al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1961-2), 2:243. “The first gate is for Zurayq … a euphemism for Abū Bakr because Arabs were superstitious about blue eyes; the second for Ḥabtar, the fox (tha‘lab), that is ‘Umar… the third and fourth for Mu‘āwiyah, the fifth for ‘Abd al-Malik, and the sixth for ‘Askar b. Hawsar who could either be Abū Ja‘far al-Dawānīqī or ‘Ā‘ishah and all those involved in the battle of the Camel; or it could be that the camel of ‘Ā‘ishah was named ‘Askar and it was said that it was a demon.”

\textsuperscript{64} It was also suggested that this was one gate divided into three compartments; ibid., 8:285.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibn al-Mubārak, Zuhd, 548. Muslims constitute the majority in numbers — out of one hundred and twenty rows, Muslims will be eighty-four. Nothing is said regarding the identity of the rest.
Jahannam, al-Hāwiyaḥ, al-Laẓā, al-Jaḥīm, al-Ḥuṭamah, Saqar and al-Saʿīr are the seven proper nouns for hell.\textsuperscript{66} Generally the counting begins with Jahannam as the top level (awwaluhā) and ends with al-Hāwiyaḥ. Jahannam is mentioned seventy-seven times in the Qurʾān,\textsuperscript{67} followed by al-Jaḥīm, twenty-three times; sinners are referred to as ašḥāb al-jaḥīm.\textsuperscript{68} Saʿīr comes third (seventeen times); sinners are also referred to as ašḥāb al-saʿīr (three times) and punishment as ‘adḥāb al-saʿīr (four times).\textsuperscript{69} Saʿīr is also associated with combustion (twice) and is used as an adverb (eight times).\textsuperscript{70} Saqar is mentioned four times, Laẓā twice, al-Ḥuṭamah twice and al-Hāwiyaḥ once.\textsuperscript{71} The generic term, al-nār, hellfire, is mentioned a total of one hundred and fourteen times throughout the Qurʾān.\textsuperscript{72}
III. C. Loan Words

Two out of the seven, *Jahannam* and *Jaḥīm*, are of non-Arabic origin. It is important to note that some early exegetes like Muqātil b. Sulaymān acknowledged their foreign source and lexicons devoted to obscure and difficult (*gharīb*) terms formed part of the enterprise of Qur’ānic commentary. The rise of Arabic grammatical studies highlighted the difficult morphological structures and irregular phonetic features of the Qur’ān. Ṭabarī’s position with regard to *ta‘rīb*, or Arabization, is to state that apart from the uncertainty of the origin of these terms, the Arabs do not have the right to claim that an expression originated with them rather than with the Persians or vice versa.\(^73\) Medieval Muslim apologetic writings that emphasized the merits of the Qur’ān grappled with the self-referential proclamations of the sacred text being in clear (*mubīn*) Arabic speech.\(^74\) Foreign words remained a matter of open debate made difficult because of the doctrine of the inimitability of the Qur’ān.\(^75\)

*Jahannam*, in Anbārī’s lexicon, is derived from the Hebrew compound *gē-hinnōm* but if it were an Arabic word it could have been derived from *juhnām*

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\(^75\) See T. E. Welsh, “al-Ḳur‘ān,” in *EF* 5:419-25. As we will see in much of the discussion around Qur’ānic terminology in later chapters, *aḍḍād* are more the focus than foreign loan words. Anbārī in his introduction to his own dictionary proudly points out that the polarity in *aḍḍād* reveals, and not masks, the precision of the Arabic language. The earliest *aḍḍād* lexicon known to date is that of Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad b. al-Mustanīr (d. 206/821); see Hans Kofler, “Das *Kitāb al-aḍḍād* von Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad Quṭrub b. al-Mustanīr,” *Islamica* 5 (1931-32): 243-84; G. Weil, “Aḍḍād,” *EF* 1:184-6.
which alludes to depth. Similarly, \textit{al-Jaḥim}, which Anbārī considered an approximation of an Ethiopic term could also be a derivative of the Arabic \textit{jaḥama} meaning to pile up (layers of fuel?). Anbārī adds \textit{saqar} to the list of possible loan words saying that as an Arabic root it alluded to the act of imprinting the flesh from which the word \textit{sāqūr}, a metal pole for branding donkeys, is derived.

For some Western scholars these loan words were proof of how derivative the Muslim afterlife was. Thomas O'Shaunessy’s work on the seven names of hell is a relic of an Orientalist phase where these variants implied that a Meccan audience could, like himself, detect these “corrupted” foreign borrowings. So thoroughly obsessed was O'Shaunessy with detecting Christian influence that \textit{Saqar}, in his view, was an Arabized form of the Latin \textit{sacrum}. At the heart of Muḥammad’s grand hoax was a secret coach, an Ethiopian Christian slave, well versed in Latin. O'Shaunessy’s methodological pitfall (shared with an early

\footnotesize{76} Ibn al-Athīr grants the Hebrew origin and adds that it has also been attributed to Arabic with reference to hell's depth as in the phrase \textit{rakiyyah juhnām}, a deep well; see \textit{Nihāyah}, 1:323, s.v. \textit{jahannam}.

\footnotesize{77} Anbārī discusses all seven terms in the context of supplication (\textit{isti‘adhah}); see \textit{Zāhir}, 2:146-49. Ibn al-Athīr considers \textit{saqar} a loan word then quotes the \textit{ḥadīth} on the \textit{saqqārūn}, the cursers or \textit{la‘ānūn}, at the end of time; \textit{Nihāyah}, 2:377-8, s.v. \textit{saqar}.

\footnotesize{78} Thomas O’Shaunessy, “The Seven Names of Hell in the Qur‘ān,” \textit{BSOAS}, XXIV (1961): 454. Equally incomprehensible are his other works; \textit{Muḥammad’s Thoughts on Death: A Thematic Study of the Qur‘ānic Data} (Leiden; Brill, 1969) and \textit{Eschatological Themes in the Qur‘ān} (Manila: Loyola School of Theology, 1986).

\footnotesize{79} O'Shaunessy, \textit{Eschatological Themes}, 71. Father O'Shaunessy stands in a long line of Christian polemics obsessed with the idea of Muḥammad’s “secret teacher”; see John Tolan, \textit{Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination} (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 60-4. R. Paret is uncritical with regard to O'Shaunessy’s approach and believes that his work might yield “further insight” into material known to the Prophet through Christian and Jewish intermediaries! See R. Paret, “The Qur‘ān – I,” in \textit{Arabic Literature to the end of the Umayyad
generation of scholars) was the erroneous hypothesis that Jahannam was a complete entity by the time of Muḥammad’s death.

Geographical dictionaries, a source overlooked by O'Shaunessy, indicate that a number of these “infernal” terms were geographical landmarks within Arabia and would have been familiar to Muḥammad's audience. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī cites *Saqar* as a mountain in Mecca as was *Nazā’at al-shawā*. *Laẓā* was a place in Khaybar belonging to the tribe of Juhaynah and *al-Ḥuṭamah* was one of the names for Mecca. Another derivative, *ḥuṭamiyyah*, were wide heavy shields of which ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib owned one. Bakrī’s geographical dictionary quotes the following popular anecdote where the caliph ‘Umar asks a man from the Banū ‘Abs his name, and he replies “Jamrah.” “Son of whom?” “Ibn Shihāb.” “From where?” “Al-Ḥurqah.” “Where do you live?” “Bi-ḥarrah al-nār.” “Where exactly?” “Bi-dhāt al-laẓā.”

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As this exchange demonstrates, terms related to fire in a pre-Islamic context need not have had a negative connotation. The kunyā Abū Lahab, for example, highlighted a flattering ruddiness. Nonetheless, a logic connected name to reality; ḥadīth records Muḥammad’s inherent dislike of rough Jāhili names (wa-kāna [Muḥammad] yuḥibb al-fa’l wal-ism al-ḥasan wa-yakrah al-ṭiyara wal-ism al-qabīṭ). More importantly, these ill-omened names, as we will see, reflect aspects of hell such as ḥuzn, ‘āṣ, shayṭān, ghurāb, ḥubāb and shihāb.

Such names were conversely changed; a woman named ‘Aṣiyyah became Jamīlah, an area called ghadrah (deceit) became khaḍirah (green) and shi‘b al-ḍalālah (path of error) became shi‘b al-hudā (path of guidance).

This strict and literal connection of name to reality is key to understanding how specific Qur’ānic terms became infernal landmarks. The act of naming a landmark is one of creating a symbol; Jahannam’s landmarks were associated with humiliation, downfall, defeat, hardship, challenge and so on.

IV. A Preface to Jahannam’s Geography:

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83 According to Jawād ‘Alī, sa‘īr was not only an idol but a man’s name and the idol represented the sun; see Tārikh al-‘arab qabl al-ʿIslām (Baghdad: al-Majma’ al-‘Ilmi al-‘Irāqi, 1955), 6:277-8.
84 Yāqūṭ al-Ḥamawi, Mu‘jam, 5:120-1; Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, 4:289.
85 Ibid., 4:288; Ibn al-Athīr, Nihāyāt, 3:180, s.v. ‘atala; Yāqūṭ al-Ḥamawi, Mu‘jam, 5:120-1 and Bakrî, Mu‘jam, 2:692. Yāqūṭ also includes Yaḥmūm, a watering hole and a mountain on the way to Mecca; see Buildān, 5:494-5. For a more comprehensive list see M. J. Kister, “Call Yourselves by Graceful Names,” Der Islam 41 (1965): 3-25. I would like to thank Prof. Cook for this reference.
1. The Qurʾān is not a text rich in topographical data; it might come as a surprise to many that only eight place-names are cited throughout the entire codex. The creation of landmarks, as will be seen, involved selecting Qurʾānic terms associated with hell before deciding on form (mountain, valley, river or pit). Words like wayl, ghayy, șaʿūd, hawā, āṯthām, ḥuzn and ghassāq were part of the early selection. This basic stock was popular; other terms, like khusr in the ‘Aẓamah manuscript or suḥqā in Ibn Abī al-Dunyā’s Ṣifat al-nār were not as widely quoted in later texts. The topographical list also included non-Qurʾānic place-names; Ibn al-Mubārak cites lamlam, sijn būlus, biʿr habhāb and wādī al-sakrān. Shiʿites also contributed their own such as the mountain of kamad for all detractors of ‘Alī and the ahl al-bayt. One can safely say that by the middle of the third/ninth century, a sizeable number of infernal landmarks were in place.

2. Literary convention structured infernal space through a “composite format”. Similar to a Matryoshka doll, or what are known as Russian dolls, the spatial convention assigns the same attribute to a series of objects, each smaller than the one preceding it. The format hoped to convey magnitude, complexity and precision.

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Two examples from the ‘Aẓamah manuscript illustrate this format:

“God created Jahannam and gave it seven gates, four feet (qawā’im) and seven heads. Each head has seven faces with the ugliest features, each face has seven hundred thousand mouths, within each mouth are long fangs measuring three hundred thousand years in length.”

Here is a description of a mountain range:

“The mountain of Ghayy [measures] three thousand years in height with three thousand trees, each tree having three thousand hooks/nooses (ma’āliq) for sinners to be strung upside down. In wādī Ghayy there is a mountain known as wādī al-sakrān composed of five hundred thousand valleys full of wells containing boxes. Each box in turn is packed with five thousand rooms, within each are five thousand coffins containing demons waiting for their prospective tenants.”

3. There was no agreement as to form and, as the above quote demonstrates, Ghayy — within the same paragraph — could be a mountain and a valley. In many cases, the single frame was the basic unit with no connection

88 Ibid., fol. 20a.
between one frame and the next. The Qur’anic list became the *bona fide* address and acquired, in most cases, a number of topographical forms. Nor was there agreement among our mapmakers as to what lay at the center of Jahannam. Ibn al-Mubārak imagined the zaqqūm emerging from hell’s bedrock to intersect with the *ṣīrāṭ* on the Day of Judgement. Sinners hang on to its various branches after which it proceeds to descend — like a modern lift — landing them on their respective levels.\(^{89}\) Another version, keen on law and order, places Mālik’s seat (referred to as a *minbar!*) at the center of Jahannam.\(^{90}\) The ‘Aẓamah manuscript positions an agora it calls *wādī jāmi‘ al-‘uqūbāt* for a public exhibition of its sinners.\(^{91}\)

4. Jahannam’s landscape evolved into individual frames whose map, if one were to draw one, would be a diagrammatic one. Such a map would resemble something similar to the London Underground where stops are outlined in relative positions along the railway lines. This comparison is not anachronistic; the early maps of the Balkhī school of geographers were composed of itinerary

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\(^{89}\) Ibn al-Mubārak, *Zuhd*, 166-7; Majlisî, *Bihār*, 8:168. The idea of ascending lifts was not uncommon; in one *mi’rāj* there was a stairway that lowered itself down to the Prophet’s level “like a camel.” See Najîm al-Dīn al-Ghayṭi (d. 982/1521), *Qiṣṣat al-mi’rāj al-kubrā* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Halabī, 1952), 69.


\(^{91}\) Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘Aẓamah, fol. 25a.
stops illustrating stages in a journey or a pilgrimage.\textsuperscript{92} Samarqandi’s \textit{Qurrah} landscape demonstrates this diagrammatic format.

5. Infernal cities are alluded to briefly in some texts. Urbanity is not a theme picked up in any of the individual frames with the exception of a central public place, \textit{wādī jāmi‘ al-‘uqūbāt}, in the ‘Aẓamah manuscript. The most extensive description we have is in a late \textit{mi’rāj} attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās to reveal the following:

“When the cover was pulled off, [Jahannam] appeared black, filled with the wrath of God … I saw seventy thousand seas of \textit{ghislin}, seventy thousand of \textit{ghassāq}, seventy thousand of \textit{qaṭrān} (tar), and seventy thousand of \textit{rašāš} (lead). On the shores of each are a thousand fiery cities with a thousand fiery castles; each castle houses seventy thousand fiery coffins, each coffin contains seventy thousand fiery boxes (\textit{ṣundūq}) and within each seventy thousand types of torment were packed.”\textsuperscript{93}


The popular *Masā’il ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām* attributes to the Prophet the statement that four cities from this world will be exported to Jahannam:

Pharaoh’s city in Egypt, Antioch, a third in Armenia (unidentified) and al-Madā’in in Iraq.\(^94\) In Ibn ‘Abbās’ *mīrāj* these cities function as incarceration units. In fact, cities receive a bad press in the Qur’ān; the term *qaryah* (for city/town) is used a total of fifty-seven times (plurals included), of which a third are associated with the verb *ahlaka* (to perish).\(^95\) Cities are the breeding grounds of sin: twenty-six Qur’ānic citations allude to them as “unjust, desolate, or given over to pleasure” highlighting their negative role in the prophetic narrative. No cities are destroyed unless a warner has been sent and rejected.\(^96\) In dream manuals, the names of cities affected their interpretation so that Tiflis, for example, stood for financial loss or bankruptcy (*iflās*).\(^97\) In this sense, dream manuals applied the same principle we’ve seen operate in the creation of afterlife landmarks.

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\(^94\) *Masā’il ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām*, 133. Horovitz believes that the original questions put to the Prophet have their origin in Jewish sources that were later enlarged into whole books. The *masā’il* is a popular genre; Horovitz was not aware that another *masā’il* attributed to Ibn Isḥāq poses the questions of monks (not rabbis) to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib; see J. Horovitz, “‘Abd Allāh b. Salām,” in *EF* 1:52; Ibn Isḥāq (attrib.), *Alf rāhib wa-rāhib wa-qīṣṣatuhum ma’ al-Imām ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalib*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥīm (Beirut: Dār al-Makhtūtāt al-'Arabiyyah, 1993).

\(^95\) *Madīnah* occurs fourteen times in the singular, four refer to Yathrib as *al-madīnah* in Q9:101, 120: 33:60; 63:8; see Nasser Rabbat, “City,” *EQ* 1:338. For a discussion on the role of cities in Qur’ānic punishment stories, see Moḥammad Hosamm Fadel, “Chastisement and Punishment,” *ibid.*.1:297.


\(^97\) In dream manuals, al-Jazīrah denoted a change in affairs prompted by the root *j-z-r*, to cut off or to slaughter, and Tarsūs was read as a deterioration in one’s affairs prompted by *sūs*, which means “woodworm”. Non-Arab towns were on the bad list; Constantinople for “weakness of religion and forbidden livelihood” or Darband for “a difficult situation”; see Geert Jan Van Gelder, “Dream Towns of Islam: Geography in Arabic Oneirocritical Works,” in *Myths, Historical Archetype, Symbolic Figures in Arabic Literature: Towards a New Hermeneutic Approach*.
6. Numbers and measurements reflected magnitude and were subject to literary convention. The Qur’an is rich in its range of Arabic terms to denote fractions (in inheritance, for example) and mathematical concepts such as addition, subtraction, division, multiplication and ratios. Magnitude, on the other hand, is a cultural variable; in ancient Roman speech “six hundred” was used as a rough equivalent for infinity. In putting a number to the idea of infinite wealth (mālan mamdūdan) in Q74:12, Ibn Ḥabīb al-Sulamī sets his figure at one thousand because it was the ultimate numeration (li-annahu ghāyat al-ḥisāb). Once the figure reaches one thousand, the count begins again. Al-Ḍahḥāk interprets al-qanāṭir al-muqantarah in Q3:14, another reference to wealth, along similar lines; one qinṭār is one thousand dīnārs of gold and twelve thousand dirhams of silver. The first Arab rulers to confer one thousand dīnārs and above were Mu‘āwiya and his son Yazīd. Cultural definitions of abundance

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99 Ibn Ḥabīb al-Sulamī, *Kitāb al-tarīkh*, ed. Jorge Aguadé (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto de Cooperación con el mundo Árabe, 1991), 188. Ibn Ḥabīb makes other interesting distinctions: moderate wealth (awsat al-ghinā) was one hundred to five hundred and the base line for poverty (faqīr) was estimated from one to one hundred dīnārs. A faqīr is richer than a miskin because he would have a trade or a means of earning a living denied to the miskin. When a nomad was asked if he was a faqīr, he replied that he was a miskin. Al-Ḍahḥāk (d. 105/723), *Tafsīr*, reconstructed and edited by Muḥammad Shukrī Āḥmad al-Zuwaytī (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 1999) 1:240-1. The qanāṭir al-muqantarah in Mujāhid’s opinion are equivalent to seventy thousand dīnārs, while al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī considered the value of one person’s blood money (diyāh) to be a fair estimate of wealth; see Samarqandī, *Tafsīr*, 1:251.

100 Al-Ḍahḥāk (d. 105/723), *Tafsīr*, reconstructed and edited by Muḥammad Shukrī Āḥmad al-Zuwaytī (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 1999) 1:240-1. The qanāṭir al-muqantarah in Mujāhid’s opinion are equivalent to seventy thousand dīnārs, while al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī considered the value of one person’s blood money (diyāh) to be a fair estimate of wealth; see Samarqandī, *Tafsīr*, 1:251.

did not escape Ibn Khaldūn’s observation centuries later when he noted that “seventy” as used by the Bedouin of his day was meant to imply “many”.\textsuperscript{102}

In Jahannam’s composite units, the numbers and variants of “five” and “seven” are repeated. In studying numbers in the Qur‘ān, Rippin points out that “five” is generally used to express large numbers: five thousand angels aid Muslims in battle or one day in the qiyāmah equaling fifty thousand years.\textsuperscript{103} Although the symbolic relevance of “seven” can be traced as far back as Babylonian times, all Qur‘ānic citations around the number “seven” are connected to cosmography: seven gates of hell, seven heavens or seven oceans.\textsuperscript{104} “Seven,” Rippin observes, “is the number of the supra but also sub-mundane world.”\textsuperscript{105} Symmetry in cosmographic descriptions is a hallmark of the divine. The obsession with numerical duplication, as we shall see, in all topographical “composite units” counteracts the notion of vacuum; creation, as the divine prerogative, negates emptiness. Q19:94 addresses this point: “[God]
has indeed counted (āḥṣā) them and He has numbered (‘adda) them.”

It is within these parameters that exegetes could state with much confidence that every inch of hell is accounted for.  

Measuring distance on the basis of time can also be traced to the Qur’ān: God measures the night and day, one day in God’s eternal realm equals one thousand or five thousand of our “years”. Terms like amad (an interval or a term) and miqdār (a long interval) are Qur’ānic concepts. Back on earth, the farsakh, or “the marching mile”, is a unit that measures distance covered by foot in an hour and was factored into diagrammatic mapping. One stage (marḥalah, pl. marāḥil) is anywhere from six to eight farsakhs a day. Paradise’s “extended shade” (zill mamdūd) in Q56:30 was estimated as a distance of seventy thousand years while the width of tūbā, the paradisiacal tree, was described as measuring one hundred years for the rapid rider (al-rākib al-musri’). In hell

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106 Ibid., 2:550; also see Q6:95, 21:47, 31:16 where God knows of every leaf and every grain in the darkness of the earth; also see Neuwirth, “Geography,” 2:305.
110 In Islam the farsakh al-shar‘ī was officially fixed at three Arab mīl (miles), each mīl at one thousand bā‘ (fathoms). One bā‘ is the measure of two arms extended with the body in between; see Lane, Lexicon, 1:276, s.v. bā‘; W. Hinz, “Farsakh,” in EI 2:812-3. See also Ibn al-Athīr, Nihāyah, 4:382-83, s.v. mīl; the geographer Yāqūt breaks the farsakh down into mīl, dhirā‘ and usbu‘; see Mu’jam, 53.
111 N. Elisséef, “Manāzil,” in EI 6:454-6. Yāqūt gives us some figures: the inhabited land comprises 24,000 farsakh: 12,000 for the Indians (al-sind wal-hind); 8,000 for Gog and Magog, 3,000 for the Rūm and 1,000 for the Arabs. In terms of time, Makḥūl al-Dimashqī estimated five hundred years from one end of the earth to another: two hundred for water, two hundred uninhabited territory, eighty belonging to Gog and Magog, and twenty years for humanity; see Mu’jam, 1:35.
112 Suyūṭī, Budūr, 522.
cycles of time (\textit{amad}), as we will see in chapter two, are punctuated according to the re-ignition patterns of fire. Other Qur\’anic measuring units include \textit{qāb qawsayn} (two bows’ length), and \textit{dhar’/dhirā’} (cubit), where an infernal chain in Q69:32 measures seventy \textit{dhirā’}.\textsuperscript{113} One should also add \textit{qaṣr}, the equivalent of three feet (or the width of a palm trunk), that is given in the Qur\’ān as the size of hell’s crackling flames.\textsuperscript{114}

V. The Landscape of Jahannam:

V. A. The Bedrock of Hell: \textit{al-Hāwiyyah}

A derivative of the verb \textit{hawā} (to fall/cast down), \textit{al-Hāwiyyah} in Q4:145 claims hypocrites as its future residents.\textsuperscript{115} \textit{Hadith} alludes to a depth of seventy years — the time in which a large stone thrown from its edge would settle on its bedrock\textsuperscript{116} — so that assigning sinners to a pit so deep led Qurṭubī to despair of their release. In the minds of many, the bottom of Jahannam functioned as a furnace where the well of \textit{hibhāb/habhab} from which all of hell’s fires cyclically reignite is located. Water tanks — in the form of the wells (\textit{ghayy} and \textit{āthām}) — were also placed at the base of Jahannam.\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{113} Q53:9; Said, “Measurements,” 3:333. The \textit{qāb qawsayn} refers to the proximity of the Gabriel to the Prophet as that of two bows’ length.


\textsuperscript{115} Q4:145 (\textit{inna al-munāfiqīna fī al-darāki al-asfali min al-nārī wa-ilan tajida lahum naṣīrān}). Torrey believed that \textit{Hāwiyyah} was borrowed term from Hebrew \textit{hōwā}, meaning disaster; see Stewart, “Pit,” 101.


Al-Hāwiyah is the ultimate prison. Rāzī applies the general description of Jahannam in Q15:44 to this bedrock thus dividing the level into seven separate compartments, each with its own gate.\textsuperscript{118} This was an unusual reading; other exegetes packed hell’s bedrock with houses or iron coffins (tawābīt min ḥadīd) engulfed by flames.\textsuperscript{119} Suwayd b. ‘Alqamah, for example, visualized this prison as units of fiery boxes (ṣundūq min nār) in which sinners are pinned down with fiery nails. Each ṣundūq would be placed in a second locked box.\textsuperscript{120} Such solitary confinement would have every soul in al-Hāwiyah believe that no one beside himself existed in hell.\textsuperscript{121} Locked up and forgotten in the pit, this enormous catacomb is populated by hell’s most invisible inhabitants.

In Muqātil’s Qur’ānic index, hawā signifies perdition (halāk), descent, limbo, loss and divine anger.\textsuperscript{122} These associations were echoed in Muslim dreams; all modes of falling whether from a wall, a mountain or the skies, were

\textsuperscript{118}Rāzī (d. 606/1209), Mafātih al-Ghayb (Cairo: al-Matba’ah al-Khayriyyah, 1889), 5:402.


\textsuperscript{120} Bayhaqi, Ba’th, 299.

\textsuperscript{121} Sijistānī, Tafsīr gharib, 47. Solitary confinement is a marked feature of the Zoroastrian hell. As Ardā Wirāz goes further into dark Hell he relates, “And I saw that dangerous, fearful, terrible, painful, harmful, stinking, very dark Hell. Then I pondered and it seemed to me like a well to the bottom of which thousands of cries could not reach... None can see the others nor does he hear a sound. Everyone thinks: ‘I am alone’”; see Ardā Wirāz Namag: the Iranian ‘Divina Commedia’, trans. Fereydun Vahman. Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies, Monograph series, 53 (London, Curzon Press, 1986), 208.

ominous. Falling is an act that is repeated endlessly in hell as flames blast sinners upward only to be smacked down by waiting angels. Nor were sinners in the top level of Jahannam spared; they found themselves repeatedly pushed off high forts like qaṣr hawā. 

V. B. Mountains:

Mountains have the advantage of exceptional visibility. Contrary to the invisibility of al-Hāwiyah, punishment on the slopes is broadcast throughout Jahannam. Steep slopes were not limited to peaks; valleys in hell inclined at dangerous angles. Whether mountains were depicted in the singular or plural was a choice of the compiler; al-Qāḍī’s reproduction of Ash’ari’s Shajarat al-yaqīn portrays Ṣa’ūd as a range of mountains. In the ‘Aẓamah manuscript mountains have multiple functions: they could be packed with trees with nooses, fitted with chains and manacles as if they were upright walls, or provide hot rocky surfaces for roasting sinners’ faces.

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123 Other modes of falling, from a minaret into a well, for example, signal a fall from power and/or a second marriage to a bossy loud-mouthed woman; Ibn Sirin (d. 110/728), Tafsir ahlām al-tashā’um, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥāfiz Baydūn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah), 14, 29. This attribution to Ibn Sirin has been contested by scholars who maintain that it was composed in the 9th/15th century by Abū ‘Ali al-Husayn Ibn Hasan al-Dārī; see Van Gelder, Dream towns, 508.
124 Ibn al-Mubārarak, Zuhd, 97; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Šilat al-nār, 50, 54; Bayhaqi, Ba’th, 298-9; Qurṭubī, Tadhkira, 1:483-4.
125 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Šilat al-nār, 41; Ibn Rajab, Takhwif, 91.
126 ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Qāḍī, Daqā’iq al-akhbār, 32.
Sha‘ūd’s fame as a mountain in Jahannam is due to an explicit wa‘īd where God threatens al-Walid b. al-Mughirah with an arduous ascent in hell.\textsuperscript{127} The root š-‘d is mentioned in two other Qur‘ānic contexts; as an adjective modifying punishment ‘adḥāban ša‘adan to indicate extreme distress and as a slippery plateau ṣa‘īdan zaliqan.\textsuperscript{128} Images of the infernal ṣa‘ūd rely on these verses to depict a treacherous surface; Asad b. Mūṣā portrayed it as a rock (ṣakhrah) of frustrating illusiveness. Once sinners place their hands on it, its surface disappears only to re-emerge when they would lift their hands off (īdhā waḍa‘ū aydiyahum ‘alayhā dhābat wa-īdhā rafa‘ūhā ‘ādat).\textsuperscript{129} Ṣa‘ūd was also depicted as a sleek slope (zaliq, ṣakhrah malsā'); on reaching its top, its hapless climbers find themselves sliding down to restart their journey in endless cycles.\textsuperscript{130} Muqāṭil shifts Ṣa‘ūd to Saqar, on the fifth level, though most texts imply its location on the top level.

\textsuperscript{127} Q74:17; Asad b. Mūṣā, Zuhd, 63.  
\textsuperscript{128} Q72:17, 18:40; Ibn Manzūr (d. 711/1312), Lisān al-‘arab, ed. ‘Alī al-Shīrī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1988) 7:341-5, s.v. ša‘ada.  
\textsuperscript{130} Al-Dahḥāk, Tafsīr, 2:914. Ash‘ari and ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Qāḍī have different versions of what happens at the top of ṣu‘ūdan. In Shajarat al-yaqīn the mountain hugs its sinners tightly pushing them downwards (yaḍummuhum al-jabal ẓamman fa-yarudduhum ilā qa‘rihi khāsi‘īna) while ‘Abdel Raḥmān al-Qāḍī uses the opposite, these ranges of mountains push their climbers off (qadhafathum al-jibāl fī qa‘r jahannam khāsi‘īna); see Shajarat al-yaqīn, 80; Daqā‘iq al-akhbār, 32.
Suddi interpreted the slipperiness (zalaq) in Q18:40 to mean barren land where nothing takes root and Sha‘ūd as a slippery slope.\(^{131}\) Zayd b. ‘Alī understood ša‘adan in Q72:17 to mean an extreme form of chastisement (ma‘nāhu ashadd al-‘adāb) so that ša‘ad — and not only ša‘ūd — was also applied to another mountain in hell.\(^ {132}\) Samarqandi concurs that the particular ordeal of ša‘adan in Q72:17 involves ascending a slippery surface, and that as far as punishments go, this one offers no breaks (ša‘ūdan min ‘adhāb Allāh lā rāḥatan fihī).\(^ {133}\) All exegetes place the height of Ša‘ūd at seventy years.\(^ {134}\)

Masā‘īl ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām temporarily places Ša‘ūd outside hell on an earth called al-Hāwiya. Portrayed here as a seismic mountain, it trembles every fifty thousand years, shaking off all its climbers. One will occasionally find in the genre of cosmographical marvels (gharā‘ib al-makhlūqāt) infernal landmarks located at the periphery of the universe which, at the end of time, will be relocated to their intended locations.\(^ {135}\)

\(^ {131}\) Suddi (d. 128/745), Tafsīr al-Suddi al-Kabīr, reconstructed and edited by Muḥammad ‘Aṭā Yūsuf (Maṣūrah: Dār al-Wafā’, 1993), 335; 466. In 1978 an Egyptian movie revolving around an Egyptian spy for the Mossad was issued entitled “al-Šu‘ūd ilā al-Hāwiya”. The paradox in the title captures the slippery slope of the world of espionage!

\(^ {132}\) Zayd b. ‘Alī, Gharib, 439, 443.

\(^ {133}\) Samarqandi, Tafsīr, 3:412.


Muqātil adds other details such as the hot and cold winds associated with Ṣaʿūd. It is worth pointing out that these atmospheric variables also characterize the Zoroastrian Hamistagān, the counterpart of the Aʿrāf. Here is how Muqātil describes al-Walīd b. al-Mughīrah's tough ascent of Ṣaʿūd:

“[Al-Walīd b. al-Mughīrah] is placed in Saqar, the fifth level of Jahannam. [God] will force him to climb a fiery slippery rock (ṣakhrah) ... it has an opening (kuwwah) for the hot winds which God Almighty has mentioned as ‘adhāb al-samūm. These gusts slash [his body] causing his flesh to explode (tanāthara laḥmuḥu) ... it is a fiery mountain measuring seventy years which he ascends on his face and once he reaches its peak he slips back down to begin the climb again. Also, from its openings, cold winds tear his skin and his face as he ascends until all flesh is flayed from the bone.”

Samarqandi has other plans for this diligent hiker:

“He will be forced to climb a mountain, a slippery rock in the fifth level of Saqar. Once he reaches the peak (ra’s al-‘aqabah), smoke enters his throat causing his intestines (and all internal organs) to fall out. He slips to the base of the

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136 Ardā Wirāz, 196.
137 Muqātil, Tafsīr, 4:493, 495 to Q74:17. Al-Walīd b. al-Mughīrah is not the only hiker; as we will see in chapter four, the Shiʿites assign ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to Ṣaʿūd.
mountain where he is handed ḥamīm to drink. He reaches the peak [again] and falls a distance of seventy years.”

**Al-‘Aqabah**

Many of the early exegetes applied the term ‘aqa‘bah, or elevation, to the mountain of șa‘ūd. The creation of ‘aqa‘bah (Q90:11-12) as an infernal landmark is due to the fact that the relatively short sūrah 90 (al-Balad) concludes with a reference to hell’s imprisoned inhabitants."139

Ka'b al-Aḥbār described al-‘Aqabah as an elevation of seventy levels in hell (sav‘in darajah fī ‘l-nār)."140 We should keep in mind that a darajah in paradise is described as an upward slope of one hundred tiers."141 Some exegetes fell back on the more familiar ground in describing ‘Aqabah as a seismic mountain (jabal zilzāl) whose height measured seven thousand years (one way)."142 Qatādah and al-Ḥasan al- Bàṣrī remained faithful to the wording of the Qur‘ānic verse that alluded to iqtīḥām (to cross/wade/ford) changing the depiction of al-‘Aqabah from a mountain to something akin to a physical

138 Samarqandī, Tafsîr, 3:422.
139 Stewart points out that the construction [X* -mā X-mā adrāka mā X*] is a standard form in the oracular stylistic repertoire of the pre-Islamic kuhhān; see Stewart, “Pit,” 102.
140 Qurṭubî, Tadhkirah, 1:490; Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 51.  
141 Tirmidhî, Sunan, 7:214-5.
142 Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 51, 90.
challenge of wading through fire without the assistance of a bridge. An exegete like Suyūṭī, on the other hand, would suggest that the number of virtuous acts specified in the preceding verses such as the manumission of a slave, the feeding of an orphan or exercising patience, could spare an individual from being forced to take on the challenge. Suyūṭī presents these acts as conditions that would make the ascent of al-‘Aqabah easier for sinners who had performed them in life.

It is important to examine the hesitancy some had in including al-‘Aqabah as an infernal landmark. The meritorious deeds in the verses are conducive to salvation, so that an exegete like al-Ḍahḥāk interpreted al-‘Aqabah as a crossing similar to the širāṭ in other words, outside Jahannam. Those who concurred maintained that it was a higher and steeper parallel bridge. In some Shi‘ite versions, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib will be the first to cross al-‘Aqabah followed by Muḥammad who, along with the ahl al-bayt, will navigate its perils effortlessly. This hesitancy, as will be pointed out in the conclusion, demonstrates the careful thought given to Qur‘ānic context.

143 Qurṭubī, Tadhkirah, 1:490.
146 Majlisi, Biḥār, 8:66.
Al-Kamad

The Kamad is a Shī'ite landmark with a former existence on earth. This “importing” phenomenon was not unusual. In one contested ḥadīth, the mountain of Uḥud, rewarded for its protection in the famous battle, was declared by the Prophet to be a landmark of paradise. Others assumed that Uḥud would be honored as the Aʾrāf — the mountain situated between heaven and hell.  

Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī names another mountain in Medina, that of ‘Ayr, as Uḥud’s counterpart by placing it alongside one of the gates of hell. Kamad, not cited in Yāqūt’s mu‘jam, was believed to be located between Mecca and Medina. A companion of a son of al-Ḥusayn commented on how black and desolate it appeared on the left side of the road (emphasis added) and was told:

“This jabal is called al-Kamad and lies by one of the valleys of Jahannam where the killers of my father are incarcerated. Beneath this mountain run all the waters of Jahannam: ghislin, ṣadid, ḥamīm and all what falls into the wells of hawā, falaq, from āthām, ṭinat al-khibāl, from Jahannam, Laẓā, Ḫuṭamah, Saqar, Jaḥīm and al-Hāwiyah. Every time I pass through here I hear their screams ... [this

147 ‘Aynī, ‘Umdat al-qārī, 15:262. ‘Aynī explains that on approaching Uḥud the Prophet declared that it was a mountain “that loves us and is loved by us” and that this statement could be taken as literal truth (haqqatan), or as metaphor (majāzan) or by association (min bāb al-idmān) in the sense that “its people love us”. Ibn al-Jawzī refutes the ḥadīth that describes Uḥud as one of the corners of paradise; see Mawḍūʿāt, 1:221; Aṭfayyish (d. 1332/1914), al-Junnah fi waṣf al-jannah (Muscat: Suṭānat ‘Umān, Wizārat al-Turāth al-Qawmī wal-Thaqāfah, 1983), 231.

148 ‘Ayr’s proverbial infamy, according to Ibn al-Kalbī, lies in its association with a man of ʿĀd who deserted his faith (irtadda) and was punished by a fire that rendered the mountain desolate and black; see Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī, Mu‘jam, 1:135, 1:193-5; s.vv. Uḥud, ‘Ayr.
mountain] ... is connected to the sixth earth. Jahannam is located in one of its valleys with keepers as numerous as the stars.\textsuperscript{149}

\textit{Al-Kamad}, which means distress, is not the only earthly landmark connected to Jahannam endorsed by Shi'ites. The infamous well of Barahüt in Yemen has also a direct connection to hell and is cited in a \textit{khabar} attributed to 'Ali b. Abi Ṭālib.

**Other Mountains**

The shadows of \textit{yaḥmūm} in Q56:43 led exegetes to speculate whether the verses allude to a mountain.\textsuperscript{150} Landmarks can acquire commonplace names; texts cite the mountain of \textit{Sakrān} (drunkenness) whose slopes dip into the valley of \textit{Ghaḍbān} (wrath)! In popular texts the wells in \textit{Ghaḍbān} are a warehouse for infernal clothes, chains and manacles.\textsuperscript{151} Qurṭubī’s \textit{Sakrān} is a moat (\textit{khandaq}) for those who have died in a state of inebriation.\textsuperscript{152}

**V. C. Valleys:**


\textsuperscript{150} Qurṭubī, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:485.


\textsuperscript{152} Qurṭubī, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:484.
The magnitude of Jahannam’s valleys can be traced to ‘Ata’ b. Yasăr (d. 103/721) who described hell as: “[having a total of] seventy thousand valleys, each divided into seventy thousand ravines (shib), each containing seventy thousand burrows (juhr), with a snake underneath ready to consume the faces of the ahl al-när.”¹⁵³ As we will see, exegetes assign many Qur’ānic names such as wayl, sa’ir, saqar (valleys of pus) and suḥqan to valleys and that they were indeed a popular topographical form.¹⁵⁴

Wādī Wayl

An expression of calamity, wayl is mentioned a total of thirty-four times in the Qur’ān. According to Anbārī, wayl is extreme punishment (al-shiddah fi ’l-‘adhāb),¹⁵⁵ and for Ibn Kathīr it is the antithesis of security and safety (didd al-salāmah wal-najāt).¹⁵⁶ Ibn Mas‘ūd — taking into account the high correlation of wayl with mukadhdhibūn (twelve times) assigns all liars to wādī Wayl.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 95.
¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 92; Jazā’iri, Qīṣaṣ, 133; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Ṣifat al-nār, 42; Suyūṭi, Budūr, 420; Q:67:11.
¹⁵⁵ Anbārī, Zāhir, 1:137; Samarqandī, Tafsīr, 1:401-2. Four sins are paired with wayl: falsely attributing texts to God (Q2:79); cheating with scales (Q83:1); gossiping (Q104:1); and tardiness in prayer (Q107:4). Wayl is also associated with the mukadhdhibūn who deny Judgement Day (Q52:11, 83:10, 77:15, 19, 24, 28, 34, 37, 40, 45, 47, 49); the zālimūn (Q14:2, 19:37, 38:27) and appears as an admonitory phrase and expression of guilt in Q41:6, 43:65, 21:18, 24, 46, 97, 36:52, 37:20, 39:22, 68:31, 20:61, 28:80, 46:17.
¹⁵⁶ Ibn Kathīr, Nihāyah, 305.
¹⁵⁷ Bayhaqī, Ba’th, 272; Dīhabī (d. 748/1348), K. al-kabā’ir (Damascus: al-Maktabah al-Umawiyyah, 1071), 27; Suyūṭi, Budūr, 418. In the Zoroastrian hell the House of the Lie is described as a “long life in darkness, foul food and the word ‘woe’”; see Shaked, “Eschatology: In Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrian Influence,” E Ir 8:566.
Given such strong Qur'anic endorsement, several landmarks were named *Wayl*. Primarily a valley, it has been described as a steep winding crevasse between two mountains measuring forty or seventy years in length.\(^{158}\) *Wayl* is also a gorge and a cistern (*şihrij/masıl*),\(^{159}\) a rock (*ḥajar*) teeming with sinners going up and down or a mountain (*jabal*).\(^{160}\) While Ibn Abī al-Dunyā describes the heat of *Wayl* as sufficient to dissolve mountains, Samarqandi insists on the superlative — *Wayl* is the hottest and steepest valley (*ashadduhā ḥarran, ab’aduhā qa’ran*), packed with snakes and scorpions (*wa-aktharuhā ḥayyāt wa-‘aqārib*) reserved for the Muslim who delays his prayers.\(^{161}\) Others sinners, like the wine-drinker (*shārib al-khamr*), are also relegated to *Wayl*.\(^{162}\) Assigning multiple groups to one location is a clever utilization of a Qur’ānic address.

**Wādī Lamlam**

It is because Q53:32 alludes to *lamlam* as a sin that this infernal valley was created. *Lamlam*, in Ibn Manẓūr’s lexicon, is a minor infraction (*mā dūna al-kabāʾir min al-dhunūb*) whose derivative *mulamlam* describes the condition of overcrowding. One should note that Ibn Manẓūr makes no reference to *lamlam*


being a location in hell.\textsuperscript{163} \textit{Wādi lamlam} appears first in \textit{zuhd} texts; ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Mubārak described it as the hottest valley to which many groups are consigned.\textsuperscript{164} Its relative obscurity — in contrast to \textit{Wayl} — guaranteed that \textit{Lamlam} would always remain a valley and that variants would be minor. The valley of \textit{Lamlam} is associated in the \textit{athar} with housing a prison for tyrants and whose snakes are as large as camels' necks.\textsuperscript{165}

\textit{Wādi Mawbiq}

Al-Ḍāḥḥāk read the \textit{mawbiq} in Q18:52 as a place of perdition in hell (\textit{mahlakan fı jahannam}).\textsuperscript{166} \textit{Mawbiq} in the verse is a boundary. When God challenges idolators on the Day of Judgement to call on their protectors, a \textit{mawbiq} will form a barrier (\textit{ḥājiz}) between believers and unbelievers. Exegetes understood \textit{mawbiq} as this scheduled encounter (\textit{mawbiq al-maw‘id}).\textsuperscript{167} Ṭabarī preferred this reading as did others who questioned whether it should be in hell proper.\textsuperscript{168} In afterlife texts \textit{mawbiq} acquires many forms: a river of pus and blood,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{163} Ibn Manzūr, \textit{Lisān}, 12:547-54, s.v. \textit{lamlam}; see also Samarqandi, \textit{Tafsîr}, 3:292-3.
  \item \textsuperscript{166} Al-Ḍāḥḥāk, \textit{Tafsîr}, 1:743; 2:547.
  \item \textsuperscript{167} Anbārī, \textit{Zāhir}, 1:297-8.
  \item \textsuperscript{168} Ṭabarī, \textit{Jāmi‘}, 15:172; Zayd b. ‘Ali, \textit{Ghabīb}, 258.
\end{itemize}
a deep valley or a fiery river with large snakes on its banks from which sinners escape by leaping into the flaming waters.\textsuperscript{169}

\textbf{V. D. Wells:}

\textit{Jubb al-Ḥuzn/jubb al-Ḥāzān}

By the middle of the third/ninth century, a hadith in Tirmidhī assigns the hypocritical qurrā’ to \textit{jubb al-ḥuzn}. Such specificity marks a major shift compared to less than fifty years earlier when Asad b. Mūsā confines the same wretched Qur’ān reciters (\textit{ashqiyā’ hamalat al-Qur’ān}) to a nameless \textit{jubb}.\textsuperscript{170} Although Ibn al-Jawzī contests the authenticity of the \textit{khabar}, we understand from \textit{awā’il} texts that rulers prior to ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭālib imprisoned wrongdoers in wells and that ‘Ali was the first to construct a prison.\textsuperscript{171} \textit{Jubb al-ḥuzn} was a popular address; Samarqandī includes the singular and plural (\textit{ḥuzn/ahzān}) in two locations: in the valley of \textit{Lamlam} and as a deep well from which \textit{nār al-anyār} reignites the waning fires of hell.\textsuperscript{172} Works on sin, such as Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytami’s \textit{Kabā’ir}, assign a variety of sinners to the location.\textsuperscript{173}

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\textsuperscript{172} Samarqandī, \textit{Qurrah}, 8, 45.

\textsuperscript{173} Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytami, \textit{Zawājīr}, 2:252, 137; also see Suyūṭī, \textit{Budūr}, 422.
The Qur'ān pairs ḥuzn with hardship and regret. Those entering paradise in Q35:37 thank God for doing away with ḥuzn which encompasses ḥuzn al-nār, the ordeals of death and the burden (hamm) of making a living in the dunyā. During the Prophet's raid on Khaybar he refused to take a path known as ḥuzn; Lane points out that the term indicates a rugged terrain. Within the afterlife context, ḥuzn would come to represent the fear of death (khawf al-khātimah) and is associated with crucial eschatological junctures such as the perilous crossing of the ūlāt or the moment the gates of hell are bolted. It should not surprise us then that Hannād b. al-Sarī (d. 243/857) alludes to al-Hāwiyyah with its double-locked metal coffins as jubb al-ḥuzn. Similarly, Qurṭubi blocks out an entire area on the sixth level as jubb al-ḥuzn whose doors periodically open to expose its horrendous contents, causing everyone in hell much anxiety (ḥuzn).

**Ghayy and Āthām**

Ghayy and Āthām are hell's water reservoirs in al-Hāwiyyah and are depicted as either wells or valleys. Both terms have strong Qur'ānic

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175 Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī, Mūjam, 5:120-1, s.v. Maḥāb; Lane, Lexicon, 2:502, s.v. ḥuzn.
177 *Ibid.*, 93-4. Jubb al-aḥzān appears in the story of Joseph as a desolate and narrow black pit and on his second release — this time in Egypt — his incarceration experience is inscribed on the door: “This is the grave of the living and the House of Sorrows (bayt al-aḥzān)”, suggesting the association of wells with imprisonment; see Tha'labī, Qīṣāṣ, 99; 111.
178 Qurṭubi, Tadhkirah, 1:465.
179 This is attributed to Abū Umāmah b. ‘Ajlān al-Bāhili; see Ibn al-Mubārak, Zūhd, 86; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Šifat al-nār, 26, 32; Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 54; a variant appears in Muslim, Şaḥīḥ, 4:2184-5.
associations with sin,\(^\text{180}\) Muqatil’s Qur’anic index links āthām (sing. ithm) to idolatry (shirk), disobedience (ma’siyah), minor infractions (dhanb), adultery (zinā) and error (khaṭa’).\(^\text{181}\) As we have seen, strong Qur’anic endorsement would generate a multiplicity of topographical forms. Asad b. Mūsā cites ghayy as a wādi and/or a river; Ibn al-Mubarak describes Ghayy and Āthām as valleys — one filled with blood and pus, the other with snakes and scorpions.\(^\text{182}\) Ṭabarī adds that Ghayy could be a deep and foul river (khabīth al-ṭa’m ba’id al-qa’r).\(^\text{183}\)

**Habhab**

A tradition quoted by al-Dārimī (d. 255/869) assigns tyrants (jabbārūn) to the valley of Habhab.\(^\text{184}\) Although Ibn al-Jawzī contests this ḥadīth based on its matn he includes Habhab as an infernal landmark in his popular wa’ẓ manual, Bustān al-wā‘īżīn, along with jubb al-ḥuzn.\(^\text{185}\) The root h-b-b describes the flaring up of flames and in most texts Habhab has a dual function: as Jahannam’s “pilot light” and as a high security prison packed with padlocked fiery coffins (wa-

\(^{180}\) Ghayy is mentioned four times in the Qur’ān as the opposite of rushd (the right path) and as a location of those who do not perform their prayers in Q2:256, 7:146, 202, 19:59. Āthām is far more extensive, in the plural it appears eleven times (Q2:85, 188, 3:178, 5:62-3, 6:120, 24:11, 42:37, 53:32, 58:8-9): seven times in relation to sinners (Q2:276, 4:107, 26:222, 45:7, 68:12, 83:12, 5:106) and twice in relation to the zaqqūm (Q2:206, 44:4).


\(^{182}\) Asad b. Mūsā, Zuhd, 57-8; Bayhaqi describes it as a hot river (nahr hamim); see Ba’th, 273; Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 90; Ibn al-Mubarak, Zuhd, 96-7; Muqatil, Tafsīr, 2:632 to Q19:50.

\(^{183}\) Ṭabarī, Jāmi’, 16:75-6.

\(^{184}\) Dārimī, Sunan (Ḥijāz, n.p., 1966), 2:238. Ibn al-Athīr describes habhab as a mirage (al-sarāb idhā taraqqa), but this has nothing to do with the Habhab of hell; see Nihāyah, 5:241, s.v. habhab.

‘alayhā aqṭāl min nār). The well’s lid, “the door”, is secured with a rock which when removed allows Habhab to re-ignite all hell’s fiery wells in a blink. Majlisī also places Habhab deep within hell (at the bottom of Saqar); its lid when lifted exposes all inhabitants to an intense heatwave. In another section of his work, the strength of Habhab incinerates the killers of al-Ḥusayn, thus making it another Shī‘ite landmark.

**Falaq**

_Sūrat al-falaq_ or Q113 is essentially a prayer for protection whose prefatory verses request the mercy of God who creates daybreak (_al-falaq_). _Falaq_ was not always associated with hell; Zayd b. ‘Ali reads it as a reference to dawn but also as a path between two steep slopes (_tariq bayna ḥaddayn_). Its designation as a well/house in hell in _tafsīr_ is traced to Ka‘b al-Aḥbār. Though the anecdote might be apocryphal it reveals a Muslim supremacy that marks its afterlife narrative. On entering an impressive Byzantine church in Syria Ka‘b was dazzled by its opulence and consoled his bruised pride by saying: “Magnificent job [wasted] on an erring people! All of you will be destined to al-Falaq ... a house/well in hell ... whose doors, when flung open, would send all nearby sinners scurrying from its intense heat.” Thus the landmark of _al-Falaq_ is born

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186 wa-inna fi qa‘r Saqar la-jubban yuqāl lahu habhab kullamā kushifa ghiṭā‘ dhālika al-jubb ḍajja ahl al-nār min ḥarrihi; see Majlisī, _Biḥār_, 75:346 and Qurtubi, _Tadhkirah_, 1:465.
187 Majlisī, _Biḥār_, 7:127.
and texts describe it as the “pilot light” responsible for re-igniting the waning flames. Another *khabar* traced to another Jewish convert, Wahb b. Munabbih, who describes the appearance of hell as the moment when a flare from *al-Falaq* would dry the seas of this world in a blink to reveal Jahannam.\(^{190}\) *Falaq* was also a zone and a depression (ṣad') housing seventy thousand units infested with large snakes.\(^{191}\) Shi‘ites coopted *al-Falaq* as a high security prison for their notorious enemies. As a *jubb*, it contained the standard fiery coffins where Mu‘āwiyah, the Khārijite Dhū l-Thudayyah who was killed by ‘Alī at the battle of Nahrawān and Ibn Muljam (the murderer of ‘Ali) will be imprisoned.\(^{192}\)

Minor wells include *al-Mansā*, a derivative of *nisyān*, an allusion to God’s abandonment of all unrepenting sinners. Qurṭubī houses all *jabrīs*, innovators (*mubtadi‘*) and those who drink wine in that forsaken pit.\(^{193}\)

**V. E. Prisons**

Ibn ‘Abbās believed *al-Falaq* to be a prison.\(^{194}\) Texts mention another prison, *sijn Būlus*, surrounded by a ring of impassable flames (*nār al-anyār*).
where the arrogant (mutakkabirūn) will be incarcerated.\textsuperscript{195} Nār al-anyār, as Ibn al-Athīr would explain, is an unusual plural and a superlative.\textsuperscript{196} Texts do not expound on Būlus except in one where Būlus was believed to be an allusion to St. Paul as responsible for leading Christians astray.\textsuperscript{197} In fact, Būlus is a Manichaeans import Arabized from Persian Bōlos, a prison where demons will find themselves unable to multiply and cause evil.\textsuperscript{198} Manichean ideas certainly circulated in Syria where we find St. Ephraim (d. 373 CE) alluding to Satan as Bōlos. This connection has largely gone unnoticed by scholars who have written on Manichean influences on Islamic eschatology.

V. F. Waterways and Shores

Rivers in Jahannam lead nowhere. Although the ocean was central to Semitic creation myths,\textsuperscript{199} none of the three monotheistic faiths appears to have adopted the extensive waterways of Greek mythology. Muslim afterlife texts

\textsuperscript{195} Ibn al-Mubārak, Zuhd, 52; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Ṣifat al-nār, 45; also in Kitāb al-ahwāl, ed. Majdī Fathī al-Sayyid (Giza: Maktabat Āl Yāsīr, 1993), 247; Ibn al-Athīr, Nihāyah, 1:163; Qurṭubī, Tadhkira, 1:487; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytāmī, Zawājir, 1:68; Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 94; Mundhirī, Tarih, 4:18; Dhahabi, Kaba‘īr, 77; Suyūṭī, Budūr, 127.

\textsuperscript{196} Ibn al-Athīr, Nihāyah, 5:127.

\textsuperscript{197} Jazā‘īrī, Qiṣṣas, 133.


\textsuperscript{199} See A. J. Wensinck, The Ocean in the Literature of the Western Semites (Amsterdam: Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen 19, 1918), 1-66. Herbert Eisenstein notes that in ancient Arabic poetry reference to fish was rare and that early Muslims were not familiar with the most common edible species. It is a telling sign that the single reference to a pearl fisher (ghawwāṣ) in the Qurʾān was not human but a demon diving for Solomon. That said, water is well represented in the Qurʾān with sixty references — more than fifty to rivers and more than forty to seas; see Eisenstein, “Hunting and Fishing,” EQ 2:466-7; Ian Richard Netton, “Nature as signs,” ibid., 3:530.
insert infernal rivers in their sections on “food and beverages of the ahl al-nār” — in other words, it was seen as a resource instead of a landmark. In one mi’rāj, the Prophet witnesses usurers swimming upstream in an unnamed river of blood. The more famous waterway is nahr al-Ghawṭah flowing from the genitals of prostitutes; equally well known is nahr al-khibāl composed of pus and sweat.200

If shores were depicted in Jahannam at all, they were dead ends with their own brand of hurdles. Introductions to cosmographic texts specified the ratio of land mass to water; and al-‘Aẓamah begins its general survey of hell in the same way. Hell contains twenty thousand “turbulent fiery seas” and within each another twenty thousand islands populated by vigilant zabāniyah.201 A later mi’rāj attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās describes seventy thousand seas thick with pus, tar (qatrān), and lead (rašās) on whose shores a thousand fiery cities loom.202 Ibn al-Jawzī contested the authenticity of a tradition that maintained that those who coveted the earnings of others would be drowned in a black sea amid malodorous winds.203 Jahannam’s shores teem with snakes and scorpions lacerating (takshiṭuhum kashṭan) the eyes and lips of escaping sinners.204

200 Qurṭubī, Tadhkirah, 1:487; Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 120.
202 Ibn ‘Abbās, Mi’rāj, 18.
203 Ibn Ḥibbān objected to the presence of Ibrāhīm b. Hudbah in the isnād: kāna dajjālan lā yaḥill li-Muslim an yaktub ḥadīthahu illā min jihat al-ta’ajjub; see Ibn al-Jawzī, Mawḍū‘āt, 3:599-600.
204 Ibn al-Mubārah, Zuhd, 95; Qurṭubī, Tadhkirah, 1:489; Mundhirī, Tarḥīb, 4:234; Suyūṭī, Budūr, 443.
Coastlines and riverbanks are lined with snakes (as large as mules) aggressively attacking sinners who dive into the fiery waters to escape their menace.205

V. G. The Zamharır

The zamharır is integral to hell’s structure.206 Ḥadīth explains its harshness in Q76:13 as the opposite of heat, as extreme cold. Cosmographic texts trap the infernal zamharır (with its counterpart samūm) in the seventh earth.207 Some scholars, like Ibn Mas‘ūd, thought it was a type of punishment (lawn min al-‘adhāb). The ‘Aẓamah manuscript takes the bold step of portraying the zamharır as a glacial, arctic zone parallel to Jahannam. The zamharır as place was not an unusual reading; ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥumayr, regarded it as a separate place, others thought it was a well, or a space beyond hell that functioned like a refrigerator or as Etan Kohlberg would frame it, a “heat-resistant igloo”.208 Asín Palacios speculated that the zamharır would be the ideal habitat for punishing the fiery jinn — a connection that none of the texts I have consulted make.209 Another term associated with cold is the unusual ghassāq interpreted

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205 Sha‘rānī, Mukhtāsar, 196.
207 Tha‘labī, Qīsāṣ, 7.
208 inna zamharır jahannam bayt yatamayyaz fihī al-kāfīr bardahu; see Ibn Rajāb, Takhwīf, 43, 73; Qurtūbī, Tadhkirah, 1:459; al-Isrā’ wal-mi‘rāj, 23; Suyūṭī, Budūr, 429. In Twelver Shi‘ism, the walad zinā is relegated to an upper house (ṣadr) in hell as protection from heat. As the topic of children is not included in this thesis, my use of Kohlberg’s work is limited to a footnote (for now); see “The position of the Walad Zinā in Imāmī Shi‘ism,” BSOAS 48 (1985): 262. I would like to thank Jocelyn Sharlet for this interesting lead.
as “an unbearable freeze” \((\text{bard } lā \text{ yustaṭā}').\)\(^{210}\) Muqātil believed that \(\text{ghassāq}\) was extreme cold \((\text{al-bārid alladhī qad intahā barduḥu})\) which had effects identical to intense heat on a sinner’s body \((\text{fa-tuqaṭṭa‘ julūduhum wa-tataṣadda’ } 'iẓāmuhum wa-taḥriq kamā yahriq ḥarr al-nār').\(^{211}\) Whether it was a type of punishment or a cold zone, early ascetics associated \(\text{zamharīr}\) with hell. When Zubayd b. al-Ḥārith (d. 122/739) was preparing for his nightly prayers, he is said to have placed his hand in cold water and remained still until daybreak with the single thought of how cold hell’s \(\text{zamharīr}\) could actually get.\(^{212}\)

In the ‘\(\text{Aẓamaḥ}\)’ manuscript, the sinners’ ceaseless complaints about hell’s intolerable heat lead Mālik, Jahannam’s warden, to plan an excursion to the \(\text{zamharīr}.\) \(\text{Zabāniyah}\) round up all hell’s inhabitants “from mountains, valleys, coffins, ravines, caves and grottos \((\text{kuḥūf wa-maghā’īr})\), even fishing them out of [hell’s] seas”. Strung in chains, sinners are led — as if on a school trip — to the \(\text{zamharīr}.\)\(^{213}\) A glacial wind, \(\text{ṣalṣal}\), blows through an arctic landscape full of grottos \((\text{maghā’īr})\), mountains \((\text{jibāḥ})\) and fortresses \((\text{ājām})\). Created from the \(\text{zamharīr}\) are dogs and angels wielding knives “operated by the anger of God”. Sinners stand “barefoot, naked and crying — their senses chilled from the inside”. \(\text{Ṣalṣal}\) blows and disperses them throughout the landscape. Defenseless, angels proceed to carve sinners up, casting their flesh to the

\(^{210}\) Q38:57, 78:25; Asad b. Mūsā, \(\text{Zuhd}, 61\); Bayhaqī, \(\text{Ba’th}, 291\); Ibn al-Mulaqqin, \(\text{Gharib}, 339\).
\(^{211}\) Muqātil, \(\text{Tafsīr}, 3:651\); also see Sijistānī, \(\text{Gharib}, 208\).
\(^{212}\) Abū al-Shaykh, ‘\(\text{Aẓamaḥ}, 51\); Ibn Rajab, \(\text{Takhwīf}, 73-4\).
\(^{213}\) Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘\(\text{Aẓamaḥ},\) fol. 32b.
zc̣amharir dogs. Screaming for relief, their voices echo throughout the walls of this enclave (ḥiṭān al-zamharir). Water is poured on their heads, freezing them even more. When taken back to Jahannam, the sinners experience a marked increase in its heat. They alternate between hot and cold zones, spending one hundred years in each.214

VI. Putting it all together: Jahannam's Landscape in the ‘Aẓamaḥ manuscript

‘Abd Allāh b. Salām, our guide, begins his tour of Jahannam by describing its external structure. He prefaces his narrative by establishing that every inch of hell is inscribed with the names of its prospective owners (laysa fiḥā qadr shibr illā fiḥī ism šāhiḥihā maktūb ‘alayhā).215 After this brief outline of the seven levels, the gaze from now is on the top level as it moves from one frame to the next in a diagrammatic reading of the landscape. Mountains and valleys display the action on the slopes. Noticeably absent is any mention of subterranean caverns on the scale of al-Hāwiyah. Again, the landscape is rich with grottos, caves, fortresses and ravines. As we have seen from the zamharir excerpt the text merges topography with climate, fauna, angels and sinners so that each single frame pulses with life.

214 Ibid., fols. 33a-b.
Our first major landmark is *Wādī al-ḥuzn* — a range of five hundred mountains planted with *zaqqūm* trees. Between every tree, there is a “spot of fire” (*buq’ah min nār*) known as a *khusr*. Each *khusr*, in turn, is composed of valleys teeming with small lethal scorpions which thousands of *zabāniyah* are assigned to herd the way shepherds tend their flocks.

Next (*ba’da dhālika*) comes a valley filled with five hundred thousand wells (*jubb*) separated by blazes of fire (*arj*). Each *arj* is composed of valleys whose grottos (*maghā’ir*) are reserved for wayward scholars (*‘ulamā’ al-sū*). *Zabāniyah* await their future occupants with their professional garb and distinctive headgear (*‘amāmah* (sic) *min nār wa-aṭālis* (sic) *min nār*).

These grottos lead to the large mountain of *Ghayy* that measures three thousand years in height and is filled with trees fitted with nooses (*ma’āliq*). On *Ghayy* there is another mountain, which the text names as *wādī al-sakrān*, that acts as an incarceration complex of wells/boxes/houses/coffins. In each of these five thousand coffins lies a demon awaiting its prospective tenant. Also located in *wādī al-sakrān* are two other mountains: *Ṣa’ūd*, a mountain of seventy years height that dwarfs the mountain of *Ghayy*, and *al-Falaq*, a mountain with a deep

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216 Q103:2.
217 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘*‘Aẓamah*, fols.18a-b.
valley as well as seas and islands (called meadows, *marj/murūj* in the text). Six hundred thousand angels with knives await sinners who are cast into these waters.\(^{219}\)

Next comes *wādī al-ḥuzn* subdivided into six hundred thousand smaller valleys with caves (*kuhūl*) furnished with multi-colored fiery carpets. Here we also find *Saqar*, another valley of many wells.

We also learn of three chains of mountains that stand out in this landscape. The first has an excellent view of the gates where sinners are doomed to repeatedly break free of their chains and rush to exits that never open. The second range is fitted with manacles where sinners, chained by their necks, get their cheeks roasted “from left to right”. The third range, “as countless as the stars”, functions as elevated heights from which sinners are repeatedly thrown. Behind these mountains are long valleys lined with brimstone pebbles along which sinners are dragged.\(^{220}\)

All the valleys in the ‘*Aẓamah* lead to a central arena, *wādī jāmi‘ al-‘uqūbāt* where sinners are paraded in long chains, or on fiery donkeys and mules.\(^{221}\) The

\(^{219}\) *Ibid.*, fols. 21a-22a. A *ṭaylasān* is a type of shawl; the plural is *ṭayālis* and *ṭayālisah*.


\(^{221}\) *Ibid.*, fols. 25a-28b.
section on hell concludes with the punishment of the *zamharır* which we have already reviewed.

**VII. Bolting the Gates**

The bolting of Jahannam’s gates is a moment exegetes have given much thought to. They agree that long fiery metal poles would prove to be most effective in sealing hell’s heat and misery. Muqātīl believed that length would make these poles sturdier (*arsakh*) and more firm (*athbat*) and that they should be as strong as barricading hell’s gates with a rock from the outside!\(^{222}\) Qurṭubī speculated that these gates would be metal so that when closed they immersed the place in total blackness.\(^{223}\) Al-Ḍāḥḥāk believed that once the doors were locked they would vanish by merging into the walls as if they had never existed.\(^{224}\) Ṭabarī thoughtfully remarked that these external long poles are another example of an extreme punishment (*mubālaghah fī ʾl-ʿadhāb*) for had God so chosen, He would not have created gates to begin with; their very mention serves the purpose of intensifying the regret (*ḥasrah*) of sinners when they learn that these gates would no longer there.\(^{225}\)


\(^{223}\) Qurṭubī, *Tadḥkirah*, 1:466; Suddī reads ‘*amad*’ in Q104:8 as pillar and ‘*amd*’ as rope; see Suddī, *Tafsīr*, 480.


linking Jahannam’s external poles to punishment.\textsuperscript{226} Some proposed that these poles had chains attached to sinners who would inadvertently pull the gates shut from the inside!\textsuperscript{227}

It is important for contrast to examine briefly \textit{al-Jannah’s} gates and doors.\textsuperscript{228} Encircled by seven walls, eight bridges (\textit{qanāṭir}) built from precious metals guide believers up to the gates.\textsuperscript{229} Paradise glows a shimmering white (\textit{bayḍā’ tatala’la}) reflecting the light of the Throne.\textsuperscript{230} Its gates are glasslike, crystal clear, opening and closing on command.\textsuperscript{231} The inaugural moment of Muḥammad knocking on its golden handles and being cordially invited in as the first to set foot inside is contrasted to the sudden blasts of heat and pitch-blackness that engulf the unsuspecting sinners.\textsuperscript{232} Doors in heaven symbolize prestige and respectability. Not only do they never need be locked, they are

\textsuperscript{227} Zāmahshārī (d. 528/1133), \textit{al-Kashshāf ‘an ḥaqā’īq al-tanzil wa-‘uyūn al-aqāwīl fi wujūh al-ta’wil} (Beirut: Dā‘r al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1947), 4:796.
\textsuperscript{228} The Qur’ān juxtaposes the gates of heaven and hell; the rebuke given to sinners in Q39:71-2 is followed by the welcoming angelic reception of believers in Q39:73-4.
\textsuperscript{229} Ibn Ḥabīb al-Sulāmī, \textit{Waṣf al-firdaws}, 7. This ḥadīth is related by Asad b. Mūsā and should be considered one of the earliest depictions of paradise. Paradise has eight levels; L. Gardet wrongly assumes that it is Ibn ‘Arabī who had suggested eight levels to Paradise. Later al-Bājūrī (18/19th cent.) in his \textit{Hāshiyah ‘alā jawharat al-tawhīd} attempted a symmetry by depicting paradise as having seven levels like hell; see L. Gardet, “\textit{Dianna},” in \textit{EF} 2:447-52.
\textsuperscript{230} Ibn Qayyīm al-Jawziyyah, \textit{Ḥādīth}, 108.
\textsuperscript{231} abwāb al-jannah yurā zāhiruhā min bāṭinuhā wa-bāṭinuhā min zāhirihā, tatakallam wa-tukallam infatiḥi inghaliqī fa-ta‘āl; see Ibn Ḥabīb, \textit{Waṣf}, 9; see also Majlisī, \textit{Bihār}, 8:97.
\textsuperscript{232} yufā‘i‘hum al-‘adhāb baghtatan fa-hina intahaw ilayhā futiḥat abwābuhā bilā muhlatin fa-inna hādhā sha’n al-jazā’... fa-innahā dār al-ihānah wal-kiži fa-lam yusta’dhan lahum fī dukhūlīhā; see Ibn Qayyīm al-Jawziyyah, \textit{Ḥādīth}, 90.
essential to the etiquette of receiving angelic and ḥūrī visitsations. What better captures a world of abundance and riches than the idea of unlocked doors?  

In our narrative the bolting of hell’s gates represents a moment of abandonment for Jahannam’s inhabitants. Angels show up with fiery nails to hammer in the long poles. Qurṭūbī surmises: “There will not be a pin hole for any soul to enter nor would [Jahannam’s] misery find an outlet. God on His Throne will forget them and the inhabitants of paradise will be preoccupied with their joys. [Sinners] cannot ever supplicate, words end and their only speech is the hoarse sounds of gasping and moaning”. Other texts suggest the impact from a different angle: a dramatic rise in temperatures causing the zabāniyah to lose their tempers, driving sinners even harder than before. 

VIII. Jahannam as Place:

The Qur’ān describes the afterlife as the final abode (dār al-ākhirah) thus giving primacy to place. This is captured by the caliph ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz when he alludes to the afterlife as the manzil (abode, station) to which the grave is only a transition. The creation of the afterlife, in the view of Wensinck, is a

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233 Ibid., 90; 82-4; Ibn Ḥabīb, Waṣf, 16.
235 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘Aẓamah, fol. 46b; Muḥāsibī, Tawāhum, 30-1.
repetition of cosmography. One third of the Qur’anic terms associated with “house” allude to the abodes of the blessed and the damned. This earth is a carpet (bisāf) and a bed (firāsh, mahd, mihād) for mankind. Some terms are used interchangeably; ma’wā, one of the synonyms for paradise, the Qur’ān applies (jannat/jannāt al-ma’wā) three times with reference to paradise in contrast to eighteen times to Jahannam. Other terms associated with Jahannam as place include nuzul, mustaqarr, mathwā, maqām, mihād, and dār al-bawār. Terms exclusive to either domain are revealing: masākin and ghuraf are paradisiacal luxuries; the blessed live in masākin ūbayyibah with magnificent vistas from upper rooms (ghuraf fawqa ghuraf) overlooking flowing rivers. Hell, on the other hand, is a state of siege (ḥaṣīr) whose inhabitants find themselves ambushed amid layers of fire and smoke. Unable to escape, death threatens them at every corner and yet they are unable to die.

241 Q18:102, 56:93, 56:56.
242 Q25:66.
243 Q3:151, 16:29, 29:68, 39:32, 60, 72, 40:76, 41:24, 6:128.Mathwā is used in Q12:23 as a prayer for a better abode in the afterlife; see also Muqātil, Ashbāh, 273, s.v. mathwā.
244 Q25:66.
246 Q14:28.
Incarceration defines Jahannam and ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr described the state of siege or ḥaṣīr in Q17:8 as a fiery prison whose inmates are gagged by flames. Ibn al-Munādī describes a pseudo-prophet who constructed his makeshift Jahannam. Al-Dajjāl al-Akbar of Isfahān built a house of metal sheets (ṣafāʾīh min ḥādīd), with large cauldrons for domes and furnished it with metal beds. A fire from below would get the house to glow red-hot and this is where he would imprison his “apostates”. Scalding waters, which he called ḥamīm, drenched them from the cauldrons above. The Dajjāl supplied his own local “zaqqūm” made of cactus, arsenic (zarnīkh) and saqmūniyā. The choice his inmates had was clear: either death or convert and gain their freedom!

IX. Conclusion:

Topography is the starting point of Jahannam’s narrative. In this thesis I argue that hell is a post-prophetic development that acquired its sharp definition with the generation of Companions and Successors. In less than a century what began with the two short accounts in Malik b. Anas’ Muwatta’ alluding to Jahannam’s heat and darkness grew to a full narrative of the Muslim afterlife. In

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250 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Sīfat al-nār, 43; Ibn Rajab with another variant, Takhwīf, 94.
251 Ibn al-Munādī, Malāḥīm, 99-100; according to Lane, Saqmūniyā/saqmūniyā is a plant that renders a mucilage that is repugnant to the stomach and acts as a laxative; see Lexicon, 4:1384, s.v. saqmūniyā. Ibn Hājar describes it as a gum from a tree in Antioch used as medicine and warns wa-lā yanbaghi li-ahad an yasta’milahu illā ba’da mushāwarat ṭabīb ḥādhiq! Ibn Hājar al-Haytami, al-Fatāwā al-ḥadīthiyāh, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Mar‘ashlî (Karachi: Qadīmī Kutub Khānah, 1990), 44.
fact the material could be given a later date; Wensinck argues that the canonical ḥadīth collections that receive their final form in the third century hijrī cover a period that goes no further back than the beginning of the second century.²⁵² Jahannam evolved in a number of source starting with the Qurʾān as guideline, the initial interpretation appeared in zuhd, tafsīr and ḥadīth. Topography is only one aspect; Jahannam’s landscape included other variables such climate, water, flora and fauna which will be picked up in the following chapter.

As will be shown in the next chapter, hell’s inhabitants are indispensable to the ignition of its fires. Collectively referred to as the ahl al-nār, the detailed and extensive list begins to appear in the fourth/tenth century in works on ethics, kabāʾir (major sins) that built on the existing narrative by providing specific locations or addresses to sinners. The final version of Jahannam’s narrative can be found in the comprehensive afterlife texts of Ghazzālī, Qurṭubī and Suyūṭī. One can plausibly argue that what emerges is an “ethnography” that begins with space and with the idea that the afterlife is an abode much like the dunyā.

An early generation of Western scholars and missionaries believed that Jahannam was either an invention of Muḥammad, or that it was derivative at best. Some complained of its “endless hyperbole” and that the idea of Jahannam

²⁵²This chronological limitation explains the reason why the beginnings of ṣūfīsm were not reflected in ḥadīth; see A. J. Wensinck, Muslim Creed: its genesis and historical development (London: Frank Cass, 1965), 59.
was not clear in the mind of the Prophet, who sometimes portrayed it as a beast or a fantastic animal.\textsuperscript{253} Hell’s speech in the Qur’an (to be discussed in chapter four), and its first appearance with much sound and fury, led many of these early scholars to assume that Muḥammad had no idea what he was describing.\textsuperscript{254} Because the Prophet was presumed as the author, the \textit{mi’rāj} became a primary source for Jahannam. As this chapter hopes to have shown, the eschatological narrative spread across a number of genres of which the \textit{mi’rāj} was a much later addition. These sources call for a revision of the Prophet’s assumed role in Jahannam’s narrative. This chapter has shown that no \textit{athar} links the Prophet to the names designating hell’s levels. That our earliest sources are \textit{zuḥd} texts reveal the role the Companions and the Successors played in the construction of the narrative. Moreover, Jahannam as featured in Ibn Abī al-Dunyā and the ʿAẓamah manuscript is almost free of \textit{ḥadīth} associating the Prophet to the material.

\textsuperscript{253} B. Carra de Vaux, “Djahannam,” in \textit{EI} 1:914-5; the article was updated by A. Abel in \textit{EI} 2:76-7. “Endless hyperbole” is how Islamic literature was generally described. An article on the \textit{qiyāmah} written in 1922 reads like a report card from a headmaster: “Had Mohammed any thought or concern that one day his messages and warnings would be gathered up and published in what has turned out to be the Kor’an, one might imagine that he would have either taken care himself, or at least, would have left instructions with his followers, that his chaos of fragmentary utterances be presented to the reading public in decency and in order. But this Mohammed, because he was Mohammed, did not do, and those coming after him made a very tough job of it. Consequently as a basis for a system of theology, the Kor’an has given commentators no end of trouble, and still remains a jumble quite out of the question to straighten out.” Dalton Galloway, “The Resurrection and Judgement in the Kor’an,” \textit{The Moslem World} 12 (1922): 371.

\textsuperscript{254} Q25:12, 89:23; Ẓabarī, \textit{Jāmi’}, 30:188 to Q89:23; Ibn Kathir, \textit{Tafsir}, 6:289; Qurṭubī, \textit{Jāmi’}, 20:55-6; Zamakhshari, \textit{al-Kashshāf}, 4:752. L. Gardet is correct in his view that the concept of prosopopeia, the personification of the abstract, in this case \textit{tašwir al-jannah}, was little understood then; see “Djanna”, 447.
Qur’anic verses related to the afterlife are known as ʻayāt al-wa’d wal-wa‘īd (verses pertaining to the promise [of paradise] and the warning [against hell]). This chapter explains the creation of Jahannam’s landmarks through selecting key terms associated with the Qur’anic wa‘īd such as fire, pain or divine wrath. Because Qur’anic terms had “premium value”, they were assigned to multiple forms sometimes within the same text (wayl, for example, is a valley, a mountain and a river). Equally important in this survey are the terms exegetes were reluctant to place in hell. The uncertainty on whether to include ‘Aqabah or Mawbiq, for example, goes back to an ambiguity in the Qur’anic context. Apart from zuhd texts, we have what Gilliot termed “narrative Qur’anic exegesis” in the tafsīr of Muqātīl (d. 150/767) and Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) to which we can add an entire supporting body of Qur’anic learning such as Muqātīl’s index (al-ashbāh wal-naẓā‘īr) or the lexicons of unusual Qur’anic words (gharīb al-Qur‘ān) of Zayd b. ‘Alī (d. 123/740) and Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889), and Anbārī’s (d. 328/939) invaluable work on aḍḍād.

This body of work credits the names of the Companions and Successors who mapped out the major landmarks of Jahannam.255 ‘Aţā’ b. Yasār (d.

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255 Humphreys describes the “generation of 800” as follows: “We cannot be quite so confident about how the “generation of 800” went about writing their works. It is certain, however, that they regarded the sources as a plastic material which could be molded into many shapes. They did not see them as a corpus of fixed texts which they were obliged to copy more or less verbatim … It is obvious that the work of the first generation of serious historical collection and editing, between 680 and 720, was subject to wholesale reshaping in the eighth and early ninth centuries.
103/721), for example, gives us the first abstract overview of Jahannam as a place that encloses a total of seventy thousand valleys, ravines and snakes. Ka‘b al-Aḥbār describes the *Falaq* as that fiery well from whose periodic eruptions bystanders flee. Zubayd b. al-Ḥārith (d. 122/739) details the *zamharār* and al-Ḍāḥḥāk (d. 105/723) imagined the gates vanishing into Jahannam’s walls. Two generations removed from the *tābi‘ūn*, we learn of the deep connection Ibn al-Mubārak, an ascetic-scholar of the *thughūr*, had as a student with Abū Ḥanīfah, Sufyān al-Thawrī and Mālik b. Anas. His understanding of the Prophet’s *sunnah* was as a form of *iqtidā’* or imitation and was reflected in how often he wept at the content of his own *zuhd* material.256 We find the Shi‘ītes allocating entire regions to their enemies and setting up their own landmarks. We also find the “generic”, such as the valleys of *sakrān* or *ghaḍbān*, as well as the imported, such as the Zoroastrian *sijn Būlus*.257

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256 Ibn al-Mubārak drew his strength from his asceticism; in his *Kitāb al-jihād*, he urges believers to visit the tombs of martyrs; in fact, his own tomb in Hit was visited often. In his study of the Arab-Byzantine frontier culture, Michael Bonner quotes from Dhahabi’s biographical dictionary that “Ibn al-Mubārak liked to sit in his house, because there he enjoyed the company of the Companions of the Prophet. Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna said that the only advantage which the Companions of the Prophet had over Ibn al-Mubārak was “their companionship with the Prophet and their taking part with him in campaigns.”” His own *zuhd* text would make him “bellow like a bull or a cow being slaughtered”; see “Some Observations concerning the Early Development of Jihad on the Arab-Byzantine Frontier,” *Studia Islamica* 75 (1992): 27-8; J. Robson, “Ibn al-Mubārak,” *EI* 2:879.

257 A similar “generic” simplicity can be found in paradisiacal landmarks; for example, Rajab is the name of a river sweeter than honey, cooler than ice and more fragrant than musk for those who pray for the Prophet during the month of Rajab; see ‘Uthmān Khūbawī (d. 1224/1809), *Durra al-nāṣiḥīn* (Būlāq: n.p., 1863), 43.
Within the literary convention of the single “frame”, these “authors” had an idea how this landscape functioned. Jahannam’s topography was treacherous, illusory and frustrating (the mountain of $\mathcal{S}a\'\ddot{u}\dot{d}$), unpredictable (sudden blasts, reptiles under burrows), and dangerous with its steep slopes and high mountains. Arriving thirsty, sinners catch sight of pools of water only to find themselves falling into hell, having been deceived by a mirage.\footnote{Aynî, *Umduят al-qârî*, 16:162.} Such a scenario is one of many where the landscape repeatedly defeats and betrays its inhabitants. The following chapter will focus on the punitive aspect of its sustainable economy.
Chapter Two: The Sustainable Habitat

I. Introduction: Beyond Geography

The habitat of Jahannam includes components such as heat, vegetation, water and fauna. In structuring a punitive habitat, exegetes came to rely on Qur’ānic narratives of communities which had undergone the wrath of God as useful models.\footnote{259} I would like to argue that Jahannam is in part an extension of these models and in this chapter each element will be examined against this background. Chastisement stories become an established genre by the third/ninth century; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā’s large body of work includes an insightful treatise on divine wrath and collective punishment.\footnote{260} It is clear that this material moves beyond the Qur’ānic exegetical canon to gain popularity with preachers who could describe, in more dramatic mode, the dire scenarios that might ensue should evil acts go unchecked. Stories with such edifying messages were scripted to have a sobering effect on all who banked on God’s infinite mercy. They stood as reminders that a more sweeping version of divine wrath is in the works for all eternity.

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\footnote{259} The term mathānī is used by some scholars to refer to punishment narratives; see Uri Rubin, “Exegetes and Hadīth: the case of the seven Mathānī,” in Approaches to the Qur’ān, ed. G. R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef (London; New York: Routledge, 1993), 141-56; see also Welsh, “al-ur‘ān,” 5:424.

\footnote{260} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, al-‘Uqūbāt al-ilāhiyyah lil-afrād wal-jamā‘āt wal-umam, ed. Muḥammad Khayr Ramaḍān Yūṣuf (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1996); see also Claude Gilliot, “Narratives,” EQ 3:524-5. The idea that the Muslim community had a collective responsibility to put a stop to evil (munkar) and avert collective punishment was relatively early; see Ibn al-Mubārak, Zuhd, 42.
Essentially illustrative, chastisement stories reveal a fast and furious retribution that ruptures cosmic order. In some cases infernal elements are unleashed to execute destruction. These destructive elements are on stand-by — the winds of hell, currently stored in the second earth, known as sīn al-rīḥ, were released to punish ʿĀd and Thamūd for their erring ways.261 Similarly, the punitive, though not infernal, floods that destroyed the luscious gardens of Saba’ left a rich arboreal debris that was later grafted onto the arid landscape of hell.262 Moreover, these examples, as tradition shows, were taken seriously; the Prophet while crossing al-Ḥijr, believed to be the dwellings of the wicked Thamūd, urged his companions to make haste. He prohibited the use of its well lest his followers share the unlucky fate of its former owners.263 Hadith documents Muḥammad’s anxiety at the approach of storms and thunder — divine wrath, unfailing and unpredictable, could strike at any time with stronger force.264

This chapter breaks down the components of Jahannam’s landscape into four sections: the first, dealing with climate, will cover its two principal components: fire and darkness. This is followed by flora — a much-contested subject where exegetes faced the task of designing botanical species compatible with the infernal environment. The third category, that of water, or lack thereof, supports the frugality on offer. Based on an efficient recycling system, water emerges as the most sustainable aspect of the infernal project. Finally, Jahannam’s fauna, from whose assault no sinner is safe, capture the shelterless nature of hell’s landscape. Put together, these elements contribute to a model of ecological functionality that any modern “green” advocate would be proud of.

II. Climate

II. A. Fire

Jahannam’s fires produce heat but no light. Tradition describes everything in hell as black: its people, its trees and its waters. As will be shown, fire introduces discussions on the nature and quality of heat, the sources of fuel and combustion “theories”. The general layout, as discussed in the first chapter, consists of seven fires that increase in intensity with each descending level. It is not difficult to see how a “moral barometer” — correlating depth with

266 Al-Dahḥak, Tafsīr, 2:545; Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 70.
the gravity of sin — could have been a useful rule of thumb. With the worshippers of false gods assigned to the base and Muslim sinners to the top, Jahannam mirrored the polarity of idolatry and monotheism, at least in principle.²⁶⁸

Darkness is a corollary of Jahannam’s fires. Sources explain this blackout as the result of infernal heat reaching its highest index. It is also a product of smog, black clouds and hot winds. This section on fire covers the basics: fuel, combustion and maintenance as well as a review of its progression through seven levels guided by a model suggested by Qurṭubi. Qur’ānic verses dictate much meteoric action revealing the infernal skies to be full of flares, shooting fires, sparks and liquid metal. Exegetes draw on vast semantic resources to capture the nuances of fire: its velocity, its relentless power and its destructive potential. Omitted here, but to be included in a later chapter, are other themes associated with fire such as the igneous garments which will be provided to all sinners, as well as the cooking metaphors used to describe the “processing” of sinners as they undergo the punishments of fire.

II.B. Fuel

Jahannam’s rudimentary operating system is heavily dependent on the human body. The Qur’ān describes hell’s fires (waqūd) as generated and sustained through a composite of man and stone.\textsuperscript{269} sinners are fuel (ḥaṭab)\textsuperscript{270} and along with their false idols they too will be reduced to flint (ḥašab).\textsuperscript{271} False idols not only feed the flames but their hot surfaces are applied to brand their former worshippers.\textsuperscript{272} This symbiotic relationship of man and fire is captured in the numerous Qur’ānic applications of the verb ṣallā — roasting, burning and charring are derivative meanings of this root.\textsuperscript{273} Although brimstone (kibrīt) is not mentioned in the Qur’ān, early commentators considered it a basic element for combustion;\textsuperscript{274} rocks of brimstone, they surmised, will be suspended from the necks of sinners as their faces remain exposed to their heat.\textsuperscript{275}

\textsuperscript{269} Q2:24, 66:6, 3:10.
\textsuperscript{270} Q72:15.
\textsuperscript{271} Q21:98. Another term that appears in Muslim apocalyptic is that of raḍf, which features in a sedition (fitnah) known as al-dahmā’. Raḍf (sing. raḍfah), according to Ibn al-Athir, are hot pebbles. A khabar attributed to Abū Dharr al-Ghīfārī describes hoarders being punished with hot raḍf in hell; see Ibn al-Athir, Nihāyāḥ, 2:231, s.v. raḍf; Zubaydī, Lahn al-‘awāmm, 213. The Qur’ān alludes to the storms of al-ḥāṣib (Q17:68, 29:40, 54:34, 67:17); for a comprehensive commentary, see Rāzī, Mafātīḥ, 5:117 to Q11:82.
\textsuperscript{274} Suddī, Tafsīr, 457 to Q66:6; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Ṣīfāt al-nār, 145.
\textsuperscript{275} Muqātil, Tafsīr, 1:94 to Q2:24 and 4:378 to Q66:6.
Zamakhsharı explains hellfire as a type of fire (naw’an min al-nār) that can only be released through the rubbing together of man and stone. Ibn Kathīr, quoting Mujāhid and Ibn Mas‘ūd, emphasizes stench (more odious than that of a corpse) and size (one boulder is larger than all the mountains of this world) as features inherent in brimstone. The Qur’ān in another context applies ḥaṭāb to one of Muḥammad’s adversaries, Abū Lahab’s wife, by calling her a wood carrier (ḥammālat al-ḥaṭāb). Tafsīr interprets the phrase as an allusion to her excessive gossiping, tantamount to stoking the fires of hate. The endurance of this metaphor is such that ḥaṭāb in all subsequent Muslim dream manuals retains this singular connotation.

Some sources make a distinction between rocks (ḥijārah) and brimstone (kibrīṭ). The assumption that sulphur is integral to Jahannam is made despite the fact that the Qur’ān is silent on the subject. Sulphur was known in Arabia and used ceremonially to conclude political pacts. The kāhin, also known as the muhawwil, presided over the “fire of alliance” or the nār al-ḥilf, casting salt and sulphur into the flames whose crackling sounds contribute to the solemnity of the occasion. Formulaic oaths were then recited in the presence of the nār al-ḥilf.

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277 Ibn Kathir, Tafsīr, 6:59-60.
278 Q111:14; Ibn Qutaybah, Gharib, 541; Sijistāni, Gharib, 227.
279 Ibn Sirin, Tafsīr aḥlām, 252; Nābulusi, Taʿṣir, 115-16, s.v. ḥaṭāb and ḥattāb; Thaʿalibī, Thimār al-qulūb fī l-murdaf wał-manṣūb, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Nahḍah, 1965), 455, s.v. hammad al-ḥaṭāb.
280 Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytami, Zawājir, 2:253; Mundhirī, Tarhib, 4:233; Thaʿlabī, Qīṣaṣ, 5-6; Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 108 and Suyūṭī, Budūr, 444.
also known as the *nār al-hawlah*, or the fire of intimidation.\textsuperscript{281} Arabs distinguished sedimentary and volcanic brimstone.\textsuperscript{282} Infernal *kibrīt* is described as either red or black. Qurṭūbī, who opts for black, expounds five of its superior qualities: it lights quickly, smells terrible, smokes profusely, sticks easily to the flesh and provides a steady blaze.\textsuperscript{283} Tha‘labī, quoting Wahb b. Munabbīh, describes the *kibrīt* that will spark hell’s fires (*tusjar bihi Jahannam*) as large red boulders.\textsuperscript{284} Red brimstone itself provoked debate and many voiced doubt as to its actual existence. Like all rare things, it had spectacular qualities such as a stunning blaze provided it not be moved.\textsuperscript{285} Because of this intrinsic association with hell, a tradition traced to the Prophet prohibited the use of sulphurous waters (*ḥummayāt, ‘uyūn ḥārrah*) for curative treatments.\textsuperscript{286}

**II. C. The Nature of Fire**

Jahannam’s general blackness, we are told, signals the ultimate in temperature, having progressed through three stages from white, to red, to


\textsuperscript{282} According to M. Ullmann brimstone was an important mineral used in bleaching. Mixed with natron, sulphur was applied as treatment for skin diseases like leprosy and was used in cures for a number of ailments: jaundice, deafness, poisonous stings, dropsy and asthma. The curative properties of sulphurous waters were well known. Brimstone was also a central ingredient in talismans and alchemy; see Ullmann, “Kibrīt,” *Ef* 5:88-90.

\textsuperscript{283} Qurṭūbī, *Tadhkirah*, 1:491-3; see also Ibn Rajab, *Takhwiß*, 107; Suyūtī, *Budūr*, 426.


\textsuperscript{285} Although red and yellow sulphur exists in nature, Ullmann suggests that *al-kibrīt al-aḥmar* could have been a pseudonym for an elixir through which silver would be transformed into gold.

black. Hellfire is the prototype (al-nār al-kubrā) whose earthly variant, the “minor fire” (al-nār al-ṣughrā), is seventy times weaker than its original. By analogy, smoke in hell is also seventy times more polluting than its earthly counterpart. This relentless quality to Jahannam's heat is imagined by scholars to be such that if sinners were to experience lower temperatures by being temporarily placed outside hell, they would find the sudden drop in heat conducive to napping!

Commentators also charted the semantic range of words describing fire. The botanist (and respected philologist) Abū Ḥanīfah al-Dinawari (d. 282/895) discusses how the many phases of fire are mirrored in terms such as šabbat, ishta'ālat, ta'ajjamat, tasa‘arat, ta'ajjājat, īqidat, ihtamadat, ḥumiyat, talazzat, taḥarraqat and itlahabat. Qur'ānic verses use variants of waqūd, lazzā/talazzā, su‘irat/sa‘īr/sa‘īran, ḥariq and nāran dhāta lahabin. With

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288 Ibn Kathīr, Nihāyah, 2:286; Majlisi, Biḥār, 8:277; see the Prophet's ḥadīth (inna nārakum hādhāhi juz’ min sab‘īn juz’ min nār Jahannam wa-qad ẓurībat bi ʾl-ḥaṙ marratayn wa-lawlā ḥālika mā ja‘ala Allāh manta‘āt l-r-ḥad), Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 39.

289 Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 71. Note that the Arabic proverb ḥaṣṣa al-dukhān ‘alā al-nār bi-adall min al-ṣāḥib ‘alā al-ṣāḥib roughly translates as the type of company one keeps reveals the nature of a person the same way that smoke reveals the type of fire.

290 Abū Ḥanīfah al-Dinawari (d. 282/895), Kitāb al-nabāt, ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid Allāh (Cairo: al-Ma‘had al-Islāmī al-Faransi lil-Āṯār al-Sharqiyyah, 1973), 140-8. Feeding the flames comes with another set of terms: dhakkat, aḥmashathā and ḥashshathā; see ibid., 150.


292 Q70:15, 92:14.
regard to sounds, Dīnawarī notes three distinct tones: *faḥīḥ*, a hissing associated with the initial release of smoke, *maʾmaʾah*, the sound as the flames gather strength (*idhā ishtadda iltihābuhā*), and *zafīr*, the loudest of the three (*idhā ishtadda ṣawt [al-nār] fi tawahhujihā*).\(^{297}\) The Qurʾān mentions *shahīq* and *zafīr* as sounds released by the fires and their sinners which will come to dominate the infernal landscape.\(^{298}\)

Despite the blackout, fire is also colorful phenomenon and Dīnawarī notes the changes. Though black smoke signals the point of ignition, some elements, we are told, such as stone or metal, release nothing when ignited. In general, the color of the coals and smoke correlates with the cycle of fire. Red coals, for example, register a high peak whereas black smoke signals a reddening of the flames.\(^{299}\) Brimstone, he adds, could release a rainbow of hues ranging from black, to green, yellow, blue and brown.\(^{300}\) Although Dīnawarī’s observations are limited to *al-nār al-ṣughrā*, as we will see, exegetes apply this pattern of color and sound to their description of infernal fires. Modern scholarship adds a footnote. Based on the New Testament book of Revelation which describes hell as a lake of burning brimstone, a group of scientists at the

\(^{296}\) Q111:3.
\(^{300}\) Ibid., 158.
University of Santiago de Compostela in Spain in 1998 calculated that sinners will roast at a temperature of 444.6 degrees centigrade which, as their experiments have proven, is the boiling point of sulphur.\(^{301}\)

Other, much simpler, classifications have also been popular. One typology is based on “appetite” or consuming capacities. The weakest of three such appetites is nār al-ḥummā, “the fire of fevers”, which “eats” and “drinks”: It eats the flesh and drinks the blood. It is followed by our earthly fire, nār al-dunyā, that “eats but does not drink”. The strongest is nār Jahannam that “does not eat or drink” and stands apart in fervor.\(^{302}\) One should note that in pre-Islamic Arabia, the term jamrah — the basic unit of fuel — signified an independent political status and jamarāt al-‘arab were a set of three tribes (‘Abs, Ḍabbah and Numayr) who did not form alliances or join confederacies. Should these tribes change course by confederating, for example, their status would be subsequently reclassified as “extinguished”, employing the verb ʿuфи‘at.\(^{303}\) Jahannam’s fires, as will be seen in the following section, have a rapacious appetite for flesh.

\(^{301}\) BBC, Focus on Faith, a report by Karen Howe, August 13th, 1998.

\(^{302}\) Zamakhsharī, Rabi‘, 1:189; Fahd, “Nār,” 7:959-60. Another classification reverses the order and describes Jahannam as the fire that eats and drinks. Here angels are created from the fire that “eats and does not drink” whereas demons and the sun are created from the fire that “drinks and does not eat”; see Abū al-Shaykh, ‘Aṣma‘ah, 272-3.

\(^{303}\) Zamakhsharī, Rabi‘, 1:187; Tha‘alibi, Thimār, 160, s.v. jamarāt; Lane, Lexicon, 1:452, s.v. jamr; Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān, 2:350-1, s.v. jamr. Fire was central to many pre-Islamic rituals such as making alliances (taḥāluḥ), praying for rain in times of drought (istimār), banishing individuals (tard) and preparing for war and hunting; see Abū Hilāl al-‘Askārī (d. 395/1004), al-Awā‘il, ed. Muhammad al-Sayyid al-Wakil, (Ṭanṭā: Dār al-Bashir, 1987), 35-42. To curse someone with blindness is to say aṭfa‘a Allāhu nārahahu; see Isma‘īl Ibn al-Qāsim al-Qāli (d. 356/966), Dhayl al-amālī wal-nawādir (Būlāq: al-Maṭba‘at al-Kubrā al-Āmiriyah, 1324/1906), 62. The verb ʿuфи‘a is
II. D. Cycles of Fire

Fires are not self-sustaining but have beginnings, middles and ends. Commentators imagined the fires of hell as cyclical; and as all fires undergo a waning phase (*khabat*), a divine pledge is made in Q17:97 to eternally recharge Jahannam’s flames. The initial searing of these flames flays the flesh off sinners’ bodies. The incineration of sinners’ bodies marks the conclusion of each cycle—al-Ḍaḥḥāk, for example, interprets the fact that hell wanes (*khabat*) as a signal that the flesh is charred; Muqāṭil describes it as the moment when “only skeletons remain” (*idhā akalathum al-nār fa-lam yabqa minhum ghayr al-‘izām wa-ṣārū faḥman sakinat al-nār wa-huwa al-khabat*). A new cycle begins when sinners are given “new skin” (*buddilū julūdan ghayrahā jududan fı ‘l-nār fa-tas’ar ‘alayhim*). Muqāṭil estimates a total of seven cycles a day, which is a lower estimate than most. Al-Ḍaḥḥāk calculates seventy, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī

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also used to mean “expire” as in taking one’s last breath; Ibn Qutaybah uses it in this sense in the story of a man who, on the undertaker’s table, had temporarily come back to life and, after delivering his message, expired (*ṭufi‘a*); see Ibn Qutaybah, ‘*Uyūn al-akhbār*, ed. Yūsuf ‘Alī al-Ṭawil (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1986), 2:341-4.

Qamar al-Hudā singles out *laḥm* as the only Qur’ānic term that refers to human flesh, and describes it as used in two distinct ways: literally as in Q23:14 to describe how flesh protects the bones and metaphorically in Q49:12 to allude to gossiping. The Qur’ān applies *jild/julūd* to mean flesh and skin, see Q22:20, 4:56, 41:20-1, 39:23 and 16:80; Qamar al-Hudā, “Anatomy,” *EQ* 1:79-84.

Q4:56; Muqāṭil, *Tafsīr*, 2:552.

Ibid., 1:380.

seventy thousand,\footnote{Ibn Abi al-Dunyā, Şifat al-nār, 83, 161. Zamakhsharı attributes to al-Hasan al-Baṣrī the estimate of seventy new skins a day and raises a Mu'tazilite concern, namely, what is the justification for subjecting “new flesh” — free of sin — to torment? Zamakhsharı is uncomfortable with these blanket statements and maintains that punishment is meted out deservedly (lā yu’adhhab illā bi’-adl man yastahiqquhu); see al-Kashšāf, 1:522 to Q4:56; for Ŧabarī’s extended argument, see Jāmi’, 5:142-3.} Mu‘ādh b. Jabal one hundred times an hour and Ka‘b al-Aḥbār one hundred-twenty times an hour.\footnote{Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 135-6; Suyūṭī, Budūr, 451.} These high figures reveal how the momentum must have been imagined as a series of rapid combustions. The fires of hell for those who argue that hell already exists, on the other hand, currently re-kindle at the pace of once a day with the exception of Fridays.\footnote{Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, 1:284; Qurṭūbī, Tadhkīrah, 1:462-3; Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 76-7; Iṣbahānī, Ḥilyat al-awliyā’, 5:188.}

Although \textit{khabat} indicates a weakening of the flames, it need not necessarily imply a decrease in temperature.\footnote{According to Ibn Rajab al-lahab yaskun wal-jamr ya’mal, Takhwīf, 79.} Dīnawārī differentiates between \textit{khabat}, \textit{khamadat} and \textit{hamadat}; so whereas \textit{humūd} is the final stage when a fire dies out completely (in English a “cold fire”),\footnote{Samargandī, Tafsīr, 2:284 to Q17:97. Q22:5 contains the only Qur’ānic application of \textit{humūd} alluding to barren land as \textit{arḍ hāmidah}; see Heidi Toelle, “Earth,” 2:3.} \textit{khamadat} and \textit{khabat} mark the absence of visible indicators such as flames and smoke without any decrease in the intensity of the heat.\footnote{Dīnawārī, Nabāt, 151-2; ‘Aynī, ‘Umdat al-qārī, 15:161.} A linguist like Anbārī lists \textit{khabat} as one of the \textit{aḍdād}, transferring the smoldering onto the object burned which in this case is the flesh. Like Dīnawārī, he is at pains to emphasize that there is no decrease in temperature, which is the reason he lists the term among the \textit{aḍdād} in the first
Love poetry takes up the fires of hell, their cycles and infernal imagery in a totally different register. Overriding all physical horror, poets liken their hearts to fuel amid endless cycles of fiery torment and pain to represent the experience of genuine desire.

II. E. Combustion Theories

Wells, often located at the lowest level, are the fuel depots from which periodic eruptions re-ignite hell’s waning flames. What might appear as spontaneous combustion is essentially driven by divine wrath. The wells of *habhab/hibhāb*, from *habba* (to burst),

*al-falaq* located at the bottom of hell (*fi qa‘r Jahannam*) are two craters whose periodic eruptions generate intense heat waves. Other fires in Jahannam appear to do the same — the inimitable *nār al-anyār* (the fire of fires) in a well known as *jubb al-ahzān*; or the fire of *sa‘īr* (Q17:97). Ibn al-Jawzī, who maintains that the flames of *hibhāb* flare up

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as fast as the blink of an eye, describes this generator as a capped well whose lid is firmly held in place with a brimstone rock.\textsuperscript{322}

The primary source of Jahannam’s infinite energy supply is divine anger (\textit{ghaḍab}).\textsuperscript{323} Punishment with fire was, above all, a prerogative that God reserved for Himself — the \textit{qiyāmah} is depicted as an event spurred by divine anger.\textsuperscript{325}

The initial act of ignition, \textit{sa’r} (Q81:12), according to the exegete Qatādah, is caused by man’s sins to which God responds with retaliatory wrath.\textsuperscript{326} In the \textit{qiyāmah}, as will be shown in the section on justice, hell functions as a surrogate for that anger (the term \textit{taghayyūz} is used).\textsuperscript{327} Moreover, secondary meanings of key terms such as \textit{laẓā}, \textit{zamharīr} and \textit{ḥuṭamah} also imply wrath.\textsuperscript{328} Ibn Rajab comments on how the sins of man impact on the conditions of Jahannam by increasing its temperature in the same way that the good deeds of the faithful

\textsuperscript{322} Ibn al-Jawzī, \textit{Bustān}, 81.

\textsuperscript{323} The verses where anger (\textit{ghaḍab}) is mentioned in relation to punishment narratives are Q5:60, 3:112, 2:61, 7:152, 20:86 which includes the Jews. Other verses that highlight God’s \textit{ghadab} for specific actions include Q4:93, 5:60, 48:6, 58:14, 2:90, 42:16, 16:106, 8:16.

\textsuperscript{324} Branding animals was regarded as usurping a divine prerogative, hence the prohibition against the practice; Jāḥiẓ comments: \textit{wa-qad nuḥīnā ‘an ihraq al-hawāmm wa-qīlā lānā lā tu’adhhibī bi-’adhāb Allāh wa-khaṭayān; see} \textit{Ḥayawān}, 1:161.

\textsuperscript{325} The Prophet allegedly declared \textit{lā taqūm al-sā’ah illā min ghaḍbatin yaghḍabuhā Allāh rabbukum lam yaghḍab mithlihā; see Ibn Ḥabīb al-Sulami, \textit{Ashrāf al-sā‘ah wa-dhahāb al-akhyār wa-baqā‘ al-ashhrār}, ed. ‘Abd Allāh al-Mu’min al-Ghumārī al-Ḥasanī (Riyad: Aḏwā’ al-Salaf, 2005), 96; see also Q44:16.

\textsuperscript{326} Ṭabarî, \textit{Jāmī‘}, 30:47 (‘an Qatādah qāla sa’‘araḥā ghadab Allāh wa-khaṭayāb bānī ādām).

\textsuperscript{327} Q25:12, 67:8. Divine anger will be discussed at great length in the section on justice and the \textit{qiyāmah}; however, one should note that Rāzī makes a clear distinction between \textit{ghadab} and \textit{ightiyāz}, the latter being a “furious reaction” which humans acknowledge as anger whereas \textit{ghadab} is an attribute of God; see Ismail AlBayrak, “Isrā’i’iyyāt and Classical Exegetes’ Comments on the Calf with a Hollow Sound Q20:83-98/7:147-55 with special reference to Ibn ‘Atiya,” \textit{Journal of Semitic Studies}, 47(2002): 47 and Shahzad Bashīr, “Anger,” \textit{EQ} 1:92-3.

\textsuperscript{328} Ibn Manẓūr, \textit{Lisān}, 12:286-7, s.v. \textit{laẓā}. 

enhance the lush vegetation and the beauty of the heavenly consorts awaiting them in paradise. Bluntly put, torture instruments (ālāt al-ʿadhāb) plug directly into God’s anger. In the ‘Aẓamah, the knives of the zamharīr operate through this energy principle (khuliqat min ghaḍab al-raḥmān) as do the special grinding stones (raḥā yudiruḥā ghaḍab al-raḥmān) reserved for wayward scholars (‘ulamā’ al-sū).  

The inaugural moment of combustion is apocalyptic and is connected to the destruction of the world. The earth becomes the firmament of hell as the ocean beds dry up and begin to burn with the help of the sun and southern winds. Ghazzālī, for whom hell is still dormant, maintains that this dramatic combustion will be triggered from a well in Saqar. Another (more literal) position schedules the ignition at the point when sinners will have rocks of brimstone suspended from their necks, thus ensuring that the initial infernal spark is released through the friction of flesh against stone. These futuristic scenarios represent the position of one set of scholars. Those who maintain that

329 Ibn Rajab, Takhwil, 78.
331 The eighth verbal form, ishta’ala, is used in Q19:4 as a metaphor for the graying hair of Zachariah which began to resemble a head on fire. Bayḍāwī points out that, metaphor apart, aging is an uncontrollable imitation of the velocity of fire and that the rhetorical trope seeks to highlight this similarity; see Nābulusi, al-‘Ajwībah ‘alā al-mi’at wāḥid wa-sittūn su‘ālan, ed. Imtīthāl al-Ṣagharī (Damascus: Dār al-Farābī, 2001), 176-7.
332 Balkhī, Bad‘, 1:195.
333 Ghazzālī, Durrāh, 40.
the infernal fires are currently lit cite the ḥadīth where a pallid Gabriel informs the Prophet that the bellows of hell (manāfikh al-nār) had just been ordered to operate. Many mi'rāj versions depict Mālik, the head warden, already stoking the infernal fires.

II. F. The Seven Fires

With the exception of the first and last levels, there are several variants to the order of the seven fires. As mentioned earlier, levels with names like laẓā, saʿīr or saqar convey specific images on the nature of their fires. In general there was an absence of consensus on the order of hell's seven levels; Qurṭubī used the human body, or burn damage, to reflect the marked increase in the heat index. As we will see, this “body barometer” works up to a point. The infernal fires incinerate the human form midway so that the remaining levels would appear as if too hot for human habitation.

1. As the first and mildest of all fires, Jahannam, a term applied to a level, to all of hell and to a type of fire, burns the faces of its inhabitants. Qurṭubī begins with this premise which inadvertently contradicts a general position that the un tarnished faces of Muslim sinners — believed to inhabit this level — will be

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336 Ibn Rajab, Ṭakhwil, 77; Samarqandi, Ṭanbih, 22.
337 Qurṭubī, Tadhkirah, 1:465; see also Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān, 2:404, s.v. jaham. The fact that the word was indeclinable led philologists to consider that Jahannam was a foreign word; some argued for a Persian origin but many where aware of its Hebrew roots. Some Western scholars suggested an Ethiopic source; see Jeffery, Foreign Vocabulary, 105-6, s.v. Jahannam.
their identifying mark in the afterlife. The fires of hell, according to ḥadīth, are incapable of branding any forehead that touches the prayer mat.\footnote{\textit{an Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh qāla: qāla Rasūl Allāh (ṣ): yadkhul qawm al-nār min hādhihi al-ummah fa-taḥniquhum al-nār illā dārāt wujūbihim wa-yakhrujūn min al-nār; see Ibn Mandah, īmān, 2:829 whereas Qurṭubi has another variant fa-ya’rifūnahum fī ‘l-nār bi-athar al-sujūd ta’kul al-nār ibn ādam illā athar al-sujūd; see Tadhkirah, 1:426; also Bayhaqī, Ba’th, 99. See also Q48:29 where the ummah of Muhammad are recognized by markings on their faces from prayer.} The assumption that the inhabitants of hell’s top level are always Muslim encouraged the proliferation of forged ḥadīth such as the one where the Prophet allegedly describes the effects of the relatively mild heat of 
\textit{Jahannam} on his community as similar to that of a sauna.\footnote{Suyūṭī, Budūr, 460 (\textit{innamā ḥarr Jahannam ‘alā ummati ka-ḥarr al-ḥammām}).}

2. \textit{Laẓā}, described in the Qur’ān as a blazing fire that scalps (\textit{nazzā’ah lil-shawā}), inspires an exegete like al-Ḍāḥḥāk to envision the paring of flesh from bone (\textit{tabrī al-laḥm wal-jild ‘an al-‘ażm}).\footnote{Q70:15-7; al-Ḍāḥḥāk, \textit{Tafsīr}, 2:896.} Among linguists, Dīnawārī classifies \textit{laẓā} as a healthy fire with vibrant flames,\footnote{Dinawari, Nabāṭ, 146.} while Ibn Manẓūr describes it as pure flame (\textit{al-lahab al-khālīṣ}): a \textit{nār tatalaẓẓā} is one that crackles with life and force (\textit{tatawahhaj wa-tatawqqad}).\footnote{Ibn Manẓūr, \textit{Lisān}, 12:286-7, s.v. \textit{laẓā}.} In Qurṭubi’s list this fire proceeds to burn the extremities: the hands and feet.\footnote{Qurṭubi, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:465.} Other readings are more literal: Zamakhshāri and Ibn Kathīr read \textit{shawā} as the plural of \textit{shawāt}, which is the scalp (\textit{jildat al-ra’ṣ}), confining the damage to the head.\footnote{Zamakhshāri, \textit{Kashshāf}, 4:610; Ibn Kathīr, \textit{Tafsīr}, 7:115-16. Thābit al-Bunānī limits the burning to the face (\textit{makārim wajh ibn ādam}); see also Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, \textit{Ṣīfāt al-nār}, 93, 150.} Muqātil maintains that \textit{laẓā} flays
(tanza’) the scalp as well as the extremities (al-āṭrāf). Some commentators, emboldened by the graphic references in Q70:15-17, lump together all the above and then add more body parts: laẓā burns the flesh, the scalp, the brain, the sinews, the legs and feet or obliterates the features of the face.

3. Described as a fire that spares nothing, saqar is an experience all of its own. The faces of sinners will sear on contact (dhūqū massa saqara). According to Qurṭubī’s model this fire ravages the human body, reducing it to its skeletal form. Other exegetes emphasize the velocity of saqar; one singe from its fires leaves the flesh as black as night. In Hannād b. al-Sarī’s view, Q74:28 (lawwāhatan lil-bashar) can only be understood as a reference to charred flesh.

4. Due to the wide semantic range of its root, al-ḥuṭamah as the next fire is supplemented by several graphic images. In the mi’rāj, Muḥammad describes

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345 Muqātil, Tafsīr, 4:437.
347 Q74:26-9. Here Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah explains his method. While mā adrāka in the Qur’ān precedes what God then proceeds to describe as in Q69:3, 74:27, 77:14, 82:17-18, 83:8, 19, 86:2, 90:12, 97:2, 101:3, 8-9, 104:5, wa-mā yudrika is always left ambivalent; see Qurṭubī, Tadhkirah, 1:491.
348 Q54:48.
349 Qurṭubī, Tadhkirah, 1:465.
351 Samarqandi, Tafsīr, 3:422; Suyūṭī, Budūr, 453.
his first glimpse of Jahannam as a fire of crushing magnitude (ra’aytu Jahannam yuḥaṭṭimu ba’duhā ba’ḍan). A derivative of the root ḥ-t-m, to crush or to smash, would lead a commentator like al-Rāzī to interpret al-ḥuṭamah as the level where the bones of its sinners are first snapped in half before being thrown to the flames as additional fuel.\(^{352}\) Qurṭubi’s ḥuṭamah is a fire that burns the sinner in an upward motion consuming his feet before reaching the heart, then soaring upward and outside the body only to descend again onto the face, burning it along with the hands and the upper torso.\(^{353}\) Al-ḥuṭamah also connotes barren land; Ibn Manẓūr notes that the term describes relentless cycles of drought. So strong is its association with coarseness, cruelty and ruthlessness that its derivative ḥuṭamun/ḥuṭmatun describes a shepherd who shows no mercy to his flock.\(^{354}\)

5. In order to depict the magnitude of jaḫīm, Ibn Manẓūr estimates a single unit of fire (jaḥamah) to be the size of one large fiery gorge;\(^{355}\) Dinawari agrees that

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\(^{353}\) Qurṭubi, Tadhkirah, 465. Qurṭubi is less certain in his tafsīr on where al-ḥuṭamah is located, relying on the opinion of others who place it on many levels; six, two or four. It is a fire that breaks, crushes and grinds (tukassir kull mā yulqā fihā wa-tuḥṭṭīmuwa wa-tuhashshīmuwa), see Jāmi’, 20:184. Muqāṭill describes al-ḥuṭamah as a fire that breaks bones, eats flesh and consumes the heart, see Tafsīr, 4:837.

\(^{354}\) Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān, 1:664-65, s.v. ḥuṭam; Lane adds other derivatives such as overcrowding, throngs pressing and pushing against one another, see Lane, Lexicon, 2:594, s.v. ḥuṭam.

\(^{355}\) Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān, 2:189-90, s.v. jaham (al-jahīm ism min asmā’ al-nār wa-kull nārin ‘ażumat fi mahwātin fa-hiya jaḥīm …wa-ašluhu mā ishtadda lahabahu min al-nār).
rhetorically speaking the part here represents the whole.\textsuperscript{356} It is at this point that Qurṭubī, having exhausted the damage done to the human body, focuses on the fire, explaining that \textit{al-jaḥīm} is composed of large boulders each bigger than the entire world.\textsuperscript{357}

6. \textit{Al-Sa'īr} for Qurṭubī is an undying fire. He does not elaborate further.\textsuperscript{358} Ibn Manẓūr notes its philological associations such as extreme thirst, hunger and madness.\textsuperscript{359}

7. Finally, the bedrock of \textit{al-hāwiyah} is the only term free from any semantic connections to fire and it is here that Qurṭubī gets practical and identifies the well of \textit{habhab} as the source for re-igniting the waning fires of the entire crucible. He grimaces at the doom of sinners so deep down and despairs of their release.\textsuperscript{360}

It is important to note that texts describe the bodies of sinners as gigantic to emphasize their ability to endure the magnitude of hell’s fires. By maintaining these fires as a composite of man and stone, the human form is placed at the heart of the action. This pairing, if not bonding, of sinner and fire is illustrated in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{356} Dinawarī, \textit{Nabāt}, 149.
\item \textsuperscript{357} Qurṭubī, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:465.
\item \textsuperscript{358} \textit{Ibid.}, 1:465.
\item \textsuperscript{359} Ibn Manẓūr, \textit{Lisān}, 6:266-7, s.v. \textit{sa’ara} (\textit{wa-yyuqāl su‘ira al-rajul fa-huwa mas‘ūr idhā ishtadda jaw’uḥu wa-‘atashuḥu \ldots al-su‘ur wal-su‘ur al-junūn wa-bihi fassara al-Fārisi qawlahu ta‘ālā [Q52:24] \ldots wa-qāla al-Farrā\'\ldots huwa al-‘anā‘ wal-‘adhāb}).
\item \textsuperscript{360} Qurṭubī, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:446.
\end{itemize}
one of the concluding scenarios when the sounds of zafir, intrinsic to fire cycles, blend with the exhalations of its inhabitants. A magnificent image emerges of Jahannam engulfed in blackness as the laborious breathing of its inhabitants becomes, like a pulse, indistinguishable from the pounding of its flames.  

II. G. Dialectic of Body and Fire

The effect of fire on the human body, as we have seen, oscillated between the quick blast and the slow roast. With the Qur‘ān as guide, a variety of culinary techniques emerges in the terminology: šalā (to roast, broil or fry) tops the list at twenty-three usages, followed by shawā (to roast), qalā (to fry) and ghalā (to boil). Cooking utensils, however, are limited to tannūrs (ovens) and qudūr (cauldrons). The Qur‘ān applies the verb naḏaja (to roast to perfection) in relation to the flesh of sinners. Sound illustrates culinary skills best — the sizzling (nashīsh) of the sinner’s soul being wrapped around an infernal coal as it is packed off to Sijjīn is one example. In the qiyāmah, the heat of the sun

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361 This will be dealt with at length in another chapter as the concluding act of dialogue and speech in hell.
363 Q18:29, 70:16.
364 Q9:93.
365 Q44:45-6.
366 Q11:40, 23:27. Cauldrons are mentioned in Noah’s story as a metaphor for the globe. One mi‘rāj image describes adulterors confined to tanānīr. David Waines notes other Qur‘ānic techniques unrelated to hell such as ḥanadhā (Q11:69) which is to roast meat in a hole covered by embers, and ramaqta (as in Ramadān Q2:185) which is cooking an animal in its skin in the same manner as ḥanadhā; see Waines, “Food and Drink,” EQ 2:128-19.
367 Q4:56.
368 Qurṭubī, Tadhkirah, 1:74; Suyūtī, Sharḥ al-ṣudūr, 27.
cooks the *kuffār* (*taṭbukhum ṭabkhan*) until a bubbling “*ghaq, ghaq*” can be heard from their insides.\(^{369}\) The implication of *ṣalā* was not lost on Rāzī who believed that the comparison with sheep was intentional; the *sarābīl* are bits of meat whose even cooking in ensured by regular basting with *qaṭīrān*.\(^{370}\) Sinners strung on the infernal chain are roasted “like locusts” until “only the souls remain hanging [on the chain]”.\(^{371}\) Believers getting a glimpse of hell can observe skulls boiling (*jamājīm al-qawm taghīl*) from their lofty rooms.\(^{372}\)

II. H. On Sparks and Flames

The Qur’ān depicts Jahannam’s atmosphere as one choked with flames (*lahab*),\(^{373}\) shooting fires (*shuwāż/shiwarz*),\(^{374}\) sparks (*sharān*)\(^{375}\) blazing through thick smog (*yaḥmūm*)\(^{376}\) and black clouds (*zulah*).\(^{377}\) The momentum is captured in a cluster of Qur’ānic verses that attempt to convey the swiftness of this meteoric action. Such clustering is a literary technique, as Neuwirth demonstrates in her study of Qur’ānic oaths, that can be traced to pre-Islamic poetry where a juxtaposition of consecutive frames attempts to impart rapid

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\(^{369}\) Qurṭūbī, *Tadhkirah*, 1:288.
\(^{373}\) Q33:31, 111:3.
\(^{374}\) Q55:35. Muqātilī, *Tafsīr*, 4:200 (*ya’ni lahab al-nār laysa lahu dukhān*). Lane provides a range that includes: flame with no smoke, pure flame, heat and smoke, smokeless fire; see Lane, *Lexicon*, 1:1619, s.v. *shuwāż*.
\(^{375}\) Q77:32.
\(^{376}\) Q56:43.
\(^{377}\) Q77:30-1.
rhythm to a poem. Noticeably absent from our meteoric scene is any mention of *ramād* (ashes), *habā‘* (sparks that come to nothing on reaching ground) or even the *shihāb* (shooting star) which in the Qur‘ān is used to punish the unruly *jinn* in this world. The imagery here addresses the shelterless nature of the infernal biosphere.

Mighty sparks (*sharār*) thunder through thick smog that moves at the speed of large camels (*jimālat ṣufr*). The volume of the billowing smoke resembles towering castles, fortresses or cities; Quraţī (d. 108/726) interprets this moving blackness to be the color of pitch (*lawn al-qār*). Another reading compares the size of sparks to the width of tree trunks (a *qašr* being a unit of three feet). This simile is variously explained; some exegetes focus on the yellowish-black tone of the moving herd. Anbārī treats ṣufr (yellow) as a semi-

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379 Q15:18, 37:10, 72:8-9. Q14:18 likens the deeds of the misguided to ashes (*ramād*) on a stormy day. Mustansir Mir is correct in asserting that the verse is part of a larger theme portrayed across several clusters of Qur‘ānic verses (25:23, 24:39, 2:264 and 3:117) with variant images that characterize the deeds of the misguided on Judgment Day; see Mir, “Ashes,” *EQ* 1:184-5; also Suyūṭī, *Budūr*, 108. The *shihāb* is mentioned in connection with restraining the *jinn* who attempt to interfere with the revelation.
380 Q77:29-33.
384 Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘*, 29:147. Yellow in the feminine singular is used in Q2:69 to describe Moses’ golden cow (*baqaratun ṣafra‘*). Samarqandi notes that most exegetes agree that the cow was indeed yellow and that those who maintain that it was black refer to Q77:33 to support their argument (*li-anī al-sawād al-shadi‘i ẓafrīb ilā al-ṣufrāh*); see *Tafsīr*, 1:127. In three other verses the form *muṣfarran* is applied to describe wilting vegetation (Q30:51; 39:21; 57:20); see
explaining that the rhetorical purpose of the contrast is to highlight the intensity of the blackness in question.  

Sparks (ṣhiwāẓ/shuwāẓ) spatter fire and metal (nār wa-nuḥās). Dīnawarī has a clear idea on the specifics of these fireworks: “shuwāẓ is pure flame and nuḥās is smoke of a lighter hue”. There was considerable uncertainty over the root of nuḥās and exegetes parse this straightforward pyrotechnic scene by loading its terms with many possibilities; shuwāẓ could allude to flame, smoke, flickering green flames, smokeless fire or a stream of fire (ṣayl min nār). The offshoot of these sparks, the nuḥās, is read as an alloy of copper or brass or could refer to red sparks that fly out from hammering metal known as ṣufr. Samarqandi, who reads ṣufr as molten metal, describes the clothes of hell’s inhabitants as fashioned from this material. Muqātil, perhaps drawing on Zoroastrian eschatological imagery of rivers of metal, maintains that one of the five rivers beneath the Throne is liquid metal (nuḥās al-ṣufr al-dhā’īb). Al-Ḍaḥḥāk applies the term nuḥās to describe a stream (ṣayl) of hot metal which angels direct at runaway sinners the way a modern police force

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385 Ḍidd, Anbārī, Aḍḍād, 104-5.
386 Q55:35.
388 Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, 6:492-3.
389 Lane, Lexicon, 1:1697, 1:2775, s.vv. ṣufr, naḥās; Jeffery, Foreign Vocabulary, 277-8, s.v. nuḥās; Samarqandi, Tafsīr, 3:308-9.
390 Muqātil, Tafsīr, 4:200, 4:564, 2:482-3; Qurṭubi, Jāmi‘, 17:172.
would manage mob control with water hoses.\textsuperscript{391} The wicked, on emerging from their graves, would be driven to the site of Judgment Day through the force of \textit{shuwāẓ (sāqahum shuwāž ilā al-maḥšar).}\textsuperscript{392} It is important to draw attention to the fact that commentary also elicits a judicious seal of approval on the part of its authors — ‘Aynī believed that the brass in the above verses would be of a grade superior (\textit{al-nuḥās al-jayyid}) to that from which solid pots are made.\textsuperscript{393}

In concluding this section one needs to look into dream manuals to see how these infernal signifiers were read. Ibn Sirīn includes a chapter entitled “On Seeing the Fire and Jahannam” (\textit{ru’yat al-nār wa-Jahannam}) and Nābulūsī’s manual has entries for \textit{nār, Jahannam, ḥaṭāb, ḥaṭṭāb} and \textit{jamrah}. Interpretation, in the most obvious cases, is guided by explicit Qur’ānic verses as with the term \textit{ḥaṭāb} mentioned earlier in the case of Abū Jahl’s wife.\textsuperscript{394} All infernal signifiers are portentous signs warning of war, disease, plague, sorrow, poverty, leprosy and sedition.\textsuperscript{395} For Nābulūsī, the rule is simple: the more vivid a fire is, with sparks (\textit{lahā sharar wa-lahab}) and clamor (\textit{lahā šawt wa-jalabah}), the clearer are its warnings as harbingers of sedition (\textit{fitnah}), war, plague or death in the bigger

\textsuperscript{391} Ibn Kathīr, \textit{Tafsīr}, 6:493.
\textsuperscript{393} ‘Aynī, ‘\textit{Umdat al-qārī}, 15:162.
\textsuperscript{394} Q111:4.
\textsuperscript{395} Ibn Buhlūl (d. c. 10\textsuperscript{th} cent.), \textit{K. al-dalā‘īl}, ed. Yūsuf Ḥabbī and Muḥammad Abū Rīdah (Kuwait: Ma’had al-Makhtūṭāt al-‘Arabīyyah, 1987), 414-15.
picture and of diseases and other calamities (ḥawādith) in the minor cases. These dreams are straightforward; their clarity is such that they need not be subject to allegorical embellishments.

III. The Darkness

The idea of a blackout in Jahannam has been attributed to the Companion Salmān al-Farīsī (d. 32/652) and later in Qur’ānic commentary to al-Ḍahḥāk (d. 105/723). Although texts explain the absence of light as symptomatic of soaring temperatures, darkness, such as nighttime, is regarded in Arabic as a state of clouding (wa-sawād al-layl kulluh žīl). Allegorically, darkness (žulumāt) is equated with error; this plural is mentioned in the Qur’ān twenty-three times. The term itself always precedes light. Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1327), in his commentary on the isti‘ādah verses, equates darkness with all forms of evil and mischief. Numerous junctures in the Muslim apocalyptic

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396 Nābulusī, ʿAntir, 427-8, s.vv. nār, 114-15, ḥaṣṣā; 115, ḥaṣṣā al-jamarāt and ḥaṭab; see also Ibn Sirīn, Tafsīr ahlām, 250.
397 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Ṣifat al-nār, 28.
398 Al-Ḍahḥāk, Tafsīr, 2:545; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā’s version is linked to Abū Śāliḥ (Dhakwān al-Zayyāt al-Madani; d. 101/719); see the footnote in Ṣifat al-nār, 51.
399 Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, 8:259-63, s.v. žīl.
400 In the Qur’ān place always precedes time; see al-Qāḍī, “Literature and the Qur’ān,” 3:207. While right guidance is consistently designated in the singular, the wily ways of deviance are many — hence the plural antonym; see Ahmet Karamustafa, “Darkness,” EQ 1:492-3 and also Muqāṭil’s classification in al-Ashbāḥ, 116-17.
401 Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1327), Tafsīr al-mu‘awwidhatayn (Cairo: Dār al-Maṭba’ah al-Salafiyah, 1974), 6-7 (wal-layl al-muzlim tantashir fihi shayāṭīn al-ins wal-jinn mā lā tantashir bi-l-nahār wa-yajrī fihi min anwā’ al-shurūr mā lā yajrī bil-nahār min anwā’ al-kufr wal-fusūq wal-ʾiṣyān wal-sihr wal-sariqah wal-khiyānah wal-fawāḥish wa-ghayr dhālika fāl-sharr dā’īman maqrūn bi-l-zulmah). This is not an idiosyncratic Ibn Taymiyyah quirk. In his treatise on the jinn, al-Shibli maintains that the black dog is the shayāṭīn of dogs and that jinn choose this form in the same way as they choose black cats because the color, more than any other, collects demonic energy and its heat
narrative illustrate these polarities of light and darkness. The darkness at the end of time after the sun rises in the West is to remain for one hundred and twenty years.\textsuperscript{402} During the perilous crossing of the \textit{şirāf} bridge the last to make it across, we are told, will be a man whose painstakingly slow progress through the blackout is guided by a blinking light as small as his toe.\textsuperscript{403}

Darkness, like fire, is a complex phenomenon. Not only does Arabic offer numerous gradations of darkness, weather variables, such as clouds and winds also contribute to this overall state of “clouding”. Tempestuous gales and storms are expressions of divine displeasure; the Qur‘ān’s ‘Ād and Thamūd experience the force of such winds in what is known as ‘\textit{adhāb yawm al-ţullah}’ (torment of the day of the clouds).\textsuperscript{404} Exegetes import this technique, with slight alterations, into Jahannam, demonstrating a readiness to graft material from chastisement stories onto the infernal landscape.

Black has enormous semantic potential in Arabic. Twelve terms, for example, delineate degrees of darkness for every hour of the night.\textsuperscript{405} \textit{Abyaad} and

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\textsuperscript{402} Dānī, \textit{Fitan}, 248.
\textsuperscript{403} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, \textit{Şifat al-jannah}, 65; Suyūtī, \textit{Budūr}, 335-6.
\textsuperscript{404} Q26:189.
\end{flushright}
aswad are classified as aḍḍād, as a substantive (al-aswad) is a synonym for a range of terms such as snakes, scorpions and dates. Morabia, who worked extensively on colors, considered aswad a non-color in the sense that the term refers essentially to tone. This view is illustrated by the Qur’ānic allusion to the two gardens of Paradise as black (mudhāmmatān) or, in other words, of a green so deep and rich as to be almost black. Tone as a feature of color appears to work in the reverse as well: the yellow in jimālat ṣufr is intended to highlight the blackness, or the intensity of tone, in the coats of camels. Jāḥiz suggests that this tone in black can be achieved by blending certain colors so that deep yellow and red can achieve the same mutual receptivity that green has to black. Under this cover of darkness, the ẓullah of Jahannam embodies many forms of torment; its clouds and hot winds will prove to be as punishing as its fires.

III.A. Clouds

Pollution is, without doubt, a major contributor to Jahannam’s ẓullah; smoke emissions, as mentioned earlier, are seventy times higher than their

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406 Anbārī, Aḍḍād, 21.
407 Both A. Morabia and Andrew Rippin have overlooked the dual form as applied to colors where al-aswadān, for example, refers to snakes and scorpions or to water and dates.
408 Morabia provides another list of words that describe black: baghs, mutahṭan, jawn, aḥtam, ḥundūb, hindas, ḥulbah, ḥālik, aḥamm, aḥwāz, aḥwā, adbas, adjan, adʾaj, adkan, adlam, adham, ašḥam, asfaʾ, muẓlim, ghudāf, ghirbīb, qātin, qāḥim and akḥal to just name a sample; see “Lawn,” EI² 5:700.
409 Q55:64. ʿAynī mentions the mutual receptivity of green and black (li-anna al-khudraḥ idhā isḥaddat qarubat ilā al-sawād wal-duhmah al-sawād al-ghālīb); see ‘Umdat al-qārī, 15:151. The opposite is also true; according to Ibn al-Athir, black could be referred to as green; see Nihāyah, 2:42, s.v. khuḍr; see also Rippin, “Colors,” EQ 1:362.
411 Jāḥiz, Ḥayawān, 5:58.
Earthly counterpart. Exegetes describe the volume of smoke to be of such magnitude that it appears to take the silhouette of large herds on the move. Although dukhān (smoke) is cited in the Qur’ān as a catalyst in the qiyāmah, the term is not used in the infernal context although some commentators interpret nuḥās to mean smoke. Infernal clouds, known as yaḥmūm, contribute to the general blackout and here exegetes labor on the tone of these clouds. Muqāṭil portrays them as smog circling Jahannam’s outer circumference causing violent nausea to all waiting to enter.

Clouds in Jahannam offer no shade, shelter, breeze or rain. One should compare these unforgiving features to their counterparts in heaven. As a symbol of divine blessing, paradisiacal shade is described as long

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413 Q41:11, 44:10. Sūra 44 is called al-Dukhān. Qurṭubī explains the effects of the dukhān on Judgment Day, penetrating the noses of unbelievers, piercing their ears and asphyxiating their breath. Believers, on the other hand, will experience its effects as if it were a cold (mithl al-zukām), see Tadhkirah, 2:828; al-Daḥḥāk, Tafsīr, 1:749-50; Dānī, Fītan, 202-9. Dukhān is also used to refer to drought, hunger or evil; see Ibn Qutaybah, Gharib, 401. In cosmology, dukhān separates the seven heavens; see Q41:11; Neuwirth, “Cosmosology,” EQ 1:442; Wensinck, “The Ocean,” 8-11.
415 Q39:16, 56:43.
416 Mujāhid, Tafsīr, 643; Suddī, Tafsīr, 449; Zayd b. ‘All, Gharīb, 406; Qurṭubī, Jāmi‘, 17:213; Bayhaqi, Bahth, 298. Also see Tabarî, Jāmi‘, 27:110-11 (al-yaḥmūm zill min dukhān shadīd al-sawād wa-l‘arab taqīl li-kull shay’ waṣafathu bi-shiddat al-sawād yaḥmūm).
417 Muqāṭil, Tafsīr, 4:220 to Q56:41-3.
418 Q77:31, 56:44.
419 In dreams clouds (saḥāb) reflect this duality; generally they are interpreted as wisdom (ḥikmāh) and whoever dreams of riding above a cloud should expect to rise in stature and knowledge. Any black streaks, darkness or atmospheric disturbance portend an impending punishment, see Baghawi, Sharḥ al-sunnah, 7:159.
(mamdūd),\textsuperscript{420} gentle,\textsuperscript{421} and full of promise.\textsuperscript{422} Meritorious acts such as reciting the Qur‘ān metamorphose into protective clouds on Judgment Day.\textsuperscript{423} Muslim texts on paradise highlight this asymmetry. The commonplace trust placed in clouds as a source of relief underlies the deception associated with how the infernal “torment of the clouds” (‘adhāb yawm al-ẓullah) is played out. There are several variants to yawm al-ẓullah. The prophet Shu‘ayb’s people, known as aṣḥāb al-aykah (People of the Thicket), were the first to undergo the torment;\textsuperscript{424} the geographer al-Ḥimyarī notes in his entry on Madyan how a scorching heat took their breath away before clouds sent down a fire that burned them to a crisp “like locusts in a frying pan”.\textsuperscript{425} The wicked ‘Ad, after three years of drought, send a delegation to Mecca to pray for rain. Three clouds appear: red, white and black and one member is elected to choose. After he picks the black as the most promising, a terrible storm destroys them all.\textsuperscript{426} Similarly, in the story of Jonah, the prophet sits on a nearby hill observing the punishment of his own people as Mālik, the head warden of hell, releases an infernal spark from al-ḥuṭamah that

\textsuperscript{420} Q56:30, 43; 77:30. The mamdūd in al-Sulами’s estimate is seventy thousand dhirā‘ long; see Waṣf al-Firdaws, 91.

\textsuperscript{421} Q76:14.


\textsuperscript{423} ‘Ayyāšī, Tafsīr, 1:161.

\textsuperscript{424} Q26:189; Sijistānī, Gharīb, 141; Zayd b. ‘Alī, Gharīb, 302; Muqāṭil, Tafsīr, 2:434-5; al-Ḍaḥḥāk, Tafsīr, 2:638.

\textsuperscript{425} Hismyari, Rawd, 525-6; Muqāṭil, Tafsīr, 2:435; ‘Aynī, ‘Umdat al-qārī, 15:312.

\textsuperscript{426} Ṭabarī, Tāriḵh, 1:238-39; Wensinck, “Hūd,” EI² 3:327-8; Sijistānī, Gharīb, 141.
takes the form of dark clouds. Lest they be harbingers of doom, the gathering of thick clouds gave the Prophet much anguish.

Jahannam’s narrative imports ‘Ād’s ‘adhāb al-ẓullah wholesale. The sight of large black clouds promises relief and reminds sinners of cooler days. Asked about their wishes, they express a yearning for a break only to have clouds shower them with more chains and shackles. For those who interpreted yahmūm as a mountain, sinners rush to it only to find that its shade (ẓilluhu) offers no relief. Some exegetes exhibit a bit of initiative; Samarqandi’s red and black clouds “drench” sinners with large scorpions and snakes; or the pleas of a thirsty shārib al-khamr are met with a drizzle of smelly sweat (‘araqan muntinan). In sharp contrast to the clouds of hell, those of paradise ask their inhabitants what their deepest wishes are, to which they respond by praying for more ḥūris (amṭirna ḥawrā’/amṭirīnā kawā‘ib atrāb)!

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427 Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 110/728), Kitāb al-iṭāf fi mulūk ḥimyar (Hyderabad: n.p., 1928), 298; Rāżī, Mafāṭīḥ, 5:42 to Q10:98. Rāżī describes the repentance of Jonah’s people as so extreme that a man would pull down his house to return the stolen foundation to its owner!

428 ḥawālaynā wa-lā ‘alaynā is the prayer Muḥammad recited on seeing dark clouds; see Muslim, Ṣāḥīḥ, 2:616-7; Ibn Mājah, Sunan, 1:404-5; Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, 3:104, 187, 194, 261, 271; Tha’alibī, Qīṣaṣ, 92; see also Ian Richard Netton, “Nature as Signs,” 3:529-30.


430 This is the scenario that explains Q56:44; see Qurṭubī, Tadhkirah, 1:484-5; Majlisī, Bīḥār, 8: 268-9.

431 Samarqandi, Tanbīḥ, 22.

432 Samarqandi, Qurrat al-ʿuyūn, 13.

H. T. Norris was one of the first scholars to discuss the unity of theme and detail in Islamic punishment narratives.\footnote{H. T. Norris, “Qiṣaṣ Elements in the Qur’ān,” in Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period, 249-50. See also Andrew Rippin, “Colors,” 1:361-5.} The tri-color scheme (black, red, white) has strong eschatological resonance. Seditions heralding the end of the world are synonyms of black (\textit{al-aḥlās} and \textit{al-duhaymā}),\footnote{‘Abd al-Qādir Mansūr, \textit{Mawsū‘at ‘alāmāt al-sā‘ah} (Aleppo: Dār al-Qalam al-‘Arabī and Dār al-Rifā‘ī lil-Nashr, 2005), 126-33; Abū Dāwūd, \textit{Sunan}, 4:94. Ibn al-Athīr points out that the diminutive (\textit{al-tasghīr}) in \textit{duhaymā} is a rhetorical trope that seeks to emphasize its opposite, in other words the gravity of the event (\textit{ta’ẓīm}). \\textit{Duḥaym} is a synonym for calamity (\textit{dāḥiyah}) and lore personifies the term as a camel which returned to its tribe carrying the bodies of seven murdered brothers who had set out for a raid; see Ibn al-Athīr, \textit{Nihāyah}, 2:146, s.v. \textit{duhaymā}; Abū Dāwūd, \textit{Sunan}, 4:94.} as well as an increase in red (bloodshed)\footnote{\textit{Khaṭṭābī}, \textit{Gharīb}, 3:67-8; Anbārī, \textit{Ẓāhir}, 1:496, s.v. \textit{al-mawt al-աha}\textit{mar}; Ibn al-Athīr, \textit{Nihāyah}, 3:337, 1:172-3, s.vv. \textit{ghabara}, \textit{bid}.} and white deaths (sudden death or \textit{mawt al-faj‘ah}).\footnote{\textit{Dānī}, \textit{Fitan}, 147; Mansūr, \textit{Mawsū‘at ‘alāmāt al-sā‘ah}, 82-3. The Prophet prayed to be spared a sudden death; see Ibn Hanbal, \textit{Musnad}, 2:171; 4:204; Abū Dāwūd, \textit{Sunan}, 3:188. The \textit{ṣūfīs} classify death in four colors: white for hunger, black for putting up with the mistreatment of others, red for the labor of love and green as their own type of death associated with the patches of mendicant ascetics; see Qushayrī, \textit{Risālah}, 20-1.} This color scheme is applied in the infernal narrative to specific contexts: to the degrees of heat, to the brimstone, to clouds and wind.\footnote{In \textit{I‘dwi‘} (d. 1303/1885) popular work, the sun when rising from the west will alternate between red, white, black and yellow; see \textit{Mashā‘ir al-Anwār} (Būlāq: s.n., 1275/1859), 210; also Habīb al-Sulami, \textit{Fitan}, 117.} This consistency demonstrates how the infernal narrative is a continuation of the punishment genre.\footnote{Karamustafa draws our attention to two powerful similes in Q2:17-22 where hypocritical dissenters are likened to those sitting around a lit fire that dies out and leaves them in a total blackout as well as those caught during a night storm unable to move without the glimmer of the lightning of which they are terrified; see “ Darkness,” 492; also note additional verses Q6:122, 10:27, 24:39-40, 39:16.} One must also bear in mind the persuasive force of Qur’ānic imagery where two verses pair blackness with annihilation; in one, sinners are trapped
amid fire (ṣulal min nān)\(^{440}\) and in the second they are drowning amid stormy billows so thick that a man is unable to see his own hand.\(^{441}\) It is in this fear of disorientation and annihilation that blackness delivers its most compelling threat.

III. B. The Winds of Hell

Cosmographic texts divide the winds between good and bad; the winds associated with punishment are al-‘aqīm\(^{442}\) and ṣarṣar\(^{443}\) (earth winds) in addition to al-‘aṣif\(^{444}\) and al-qāṣif\(^{445}\) (sea winds). A connection to Jahannam is claimed; the northern winds originate in hell and their passage through heaven modulates their force before reaching earth.\(^{446}\) In another section of Abū al-Shaykh’s cosmography, al-riḥ al-‘aqīm, an exclusive feature of Jahannam, is currently trapped in the second layer of the earth.\(^{447}\) The notion that we undergo

\(^{440}\) Q39:16; see Zayd b. ‘Ali, Gharīb, 322; Muqātil, Tafsīr, 3:673.

\(^{441}\) Q24:39-40; see Muqātil, Tafsīr, 3:673 to Q39:16. In Q36:43 the screams of the drowned go unheard. Qurṭubī compares the dead to drowning men in need of prayers to save them; see Tadhkīrah, 1:102-2.

\(^{442}\) Q51:41.

\(^{443}\) Q69:6, 54:19, 41:16.

\(^{444}\) Q10:22, 21:81.

\(^{445}\) Q17:69.

\(^{446}\) Abū al-Shaykh, ‘Azamah, 336. The categories cited by Abū al-Shaykh are those of Ibn ‘Umar (d. 73/693): the winds of mercy are al-nāshīrāt, al-mubashshīrāt, al-mursalāt and al-dhāriyāt; also see Johns, “Air and Wind,” EQ 1:53.

\(^{447}\) One should point out that a Prophetic ḥadīth prohibits the cursing of winds since they are from the breath of God (nafas al-rāmūn). Aware of this anthropomorphism, Ghazzāli maintains that all the winds (al-riyāḥ al-haffāfah: al-‘aṣīlah, al-‘aqīm, al-janūb, al-shimāl, al-ṣabā and al-dabbūr) are created with the exception of one type of wind that is of the divine essence. Ibn al-Jawzī rejects this ḥadīth outright. The ḥadīth is: ‘an Jābir ‘an al-nabī (ṣ) annahu qāla idhā ra’aytum al-riḥ fa-lā tasubūḥā fa-innāhā min nafas al-raḥmān ta’ti bil-raḥmah wa-ta’ti bi l-‘adhāb fa-s’alū Allāh khayrahā wa-ista’idhū min sharrihā. Ibn al-Jawzī comments qultu ‘ala man ya’taqid hādhā al-la’nah li-annahu yuthbit jasadan makhlūqan wa-mā ha’ulā’ bi-muslimīn; see Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Bāz al-ashhab al-munqaḍ ‘alā mukhālifī al-madhhab, ed. Muḥammad Munīr al-Īmān (Beirut: Dār al-Jiinān, 1987), 140-1.
modulated versions of a prototype located in Jahannam is endorsed in a ḥadīth that describes the coldest and hottest gusts on earth as infernal “breaths” released in order to prevent Jahannam from overheating or overcooling.\textsuperscript{448} The ḥadīth is a reminder that hell is composed of both — the \textit{samūm} (hot) and the \textit{zamharīr} (cold) are the principal terms.\textsuperscript{449} \textit{Samūm} for some exegetes was another synonym for hell.\textsuperscript{450} In \textit{Masā’il ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām} two types of wind are associated with divine wrath: the first, \textit{al-a‘qīm}, is a black tempestuous storm that played havoc with the people of ‘Ād and which God will re-deploy in hell, and the second is a red wind (note the color) reserved for the \textit{kuffār} on Judgment Day. A protective wind, ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām tells us, shields the earth from the sun’s heat.\textsuperscript{451}

The \textit{samūm} is incorporated into the punishment of the grave. Those who fail to satisfy the interrogating angels are subjected to infernal gusts.\textsuperscript{452} In \textit{Jahannam} the clouds in ‘\textit{adhāb al-ẓullah} are driven by hot \textit{samūm}. Dictionaries, however, differentiate between \textit{samūm} (pl. \textit{samā‘im}) and ḥarīr in Q35:21 — the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[\textsuperscript{449}]\textit{Zamharīr} is also connected with anger and \textit{muzmahir} is the look of anger; Ibn Manṣūr explains that \textit{zamharat ‘aynatāh wa-izmamarratā iḥmarratā min al-ghaḍab ... al-muzmahir al-shadīd al-ghaḍab ... wal-izmihār fī ‘l-‘ayn ‘inda al-ghaḍab wal-shiddah}; see \textit{Lisān}, 2:48, s.v. \textit{zamharīr}.
\item[\textsuperscript{451}]\textit{Masā’il ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām}, 122; see also Tirmidhī, \textit{Sunan}, 6:364 and Ibn Ḥanbal, \textit{Musnad}, 1:384-5, 435; Dānī, \textit{Fītān}, 111. According to an earlier version quoted by Ibn Ḥabīb al-Sulāmī, it is the red wind that captures the souls of the good; see \textit{al-Fītān}, 89, 117.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
samūm blow at night. Generally, they are sand storms particular to the Arabian Gulf; we must keep in mind though that as one of the proposed names of hell, samūm are blasts that penetrate the pores of sinners’ flesh, causing much pain.

Chastisement stories illustrate best the destructive capacities of these winds, especially that of al-‘aqīm. Šaršar, described by Muqātil as a howling cold wind (al-riḥ al-bāridah allatī laḥā ṣawtī), is depicted in the ‘Aẓamah as a feature of the cold zamharīr (the term here is used for a zone) where it lifts and transports — like air travel — the inhabitants back and forth from Jahannam to the Zamharīr. The relevance of al-‘aqīm to hell is that it mirrors the desolation of the wasteland beneath; these clouds are barren (lā tulqiḥ al-shajar) and ineffectual (wa-lā tuthīr al-saḥāb). Jazā’irī describes al-‘aqīm as pregnant with torment (talaqaḥḥat bi ’l-‘adḥāb) and devoid of mercy (ta’aqqamat ‘an al-

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453 Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān, 6:373, s.v. sumām; Wensinck, “Samūm,” 8:1056. The jinn in Q15:26 are created from nār al-samūm and their death, according to Lane, who translated the Arabian Nights, is made visible by large dust bombs. This is because fire, not blood, circulates in their bodies so that when one receives a mortal wound, this fire burns the jinnī to ashes; see Lane, Arabian society in the Middle Ages: studies from The Thousand and One Nights, ed. Stanley Lane-Poole (London: Curzon Press, 1987), 33.
454 Jāḥiẓ notes how the inhabitants of al-Ḥirah pack away their precious curtains during the summer months lest the scorching samūm burn them: Kitāb al-buldān, ed. Sāliḥ Aḥmad al-‘Alīyy (Baghdad: Maṭba’at al-Ḥukūmah, 1970), 506.
456 Tha’labī, Qiṣaṣ, 55; Jazā’irī, Qiṣaṣ, 110-11; Masā’il ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām, 122; Ṭabarī, Tārikh al-rusul, 1:243-4. Ṭabarī links al-‘aqīm and šarṣar to ‘Ād.
457 Muqātil, Tafsīr, 3:738; Zayd b. ‘All agrees, see Gharīb, 398. Muqātil links šarṣar with al-ṣayḥah and al-dabbūr; see Ashbāḥ, 139-40; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘Aẓamah, fol. 33a.
458 Muqātil, Tafsīr, 4:132 to Q51:40.
One should note that the term ‘aqīm is also applied to the qiyāmah as the day with no other day to second it (idhā kāna yawman lā layl ba’da majī‘ihī). Subject to God’s will, the winds are not only an agent of divine wrath but are tied to Jahannam’s ecological devastation.

**IV. Flora**

Aridity in the Qur’ān is synonymous with death. That Jahannam’s inhabitants are described as a “barren lot” (qawman būran) had exegetes regard the desolate infernal environment (diyāran mu‘attalah kharāb) as an extension of them. Infernal flora, however, emerges as one of the most contentious aspects of hell when Quraysh challenge the Prophet on the logic of trees existing amid the flames. The “curse of the land”, illustrated in several chastisement stories, offers exegetes precedents and stark illustrations of divine wrath. The Qur’ān describes the men of ‘Ād as resembling hollow palm trees (ka-annahum a‘jāzu nakhlin khāwiyah/ka-annahum a‘jāzu nakhlin munqa‘i‘irin). Violent storms

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459 Jazā‘īrī, Qiṣas, 111.
460 Ṭabarî, Tārikh, 1:22; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, Gharīb, 265. I would like to point out that the term laqāḥ, similar to jamrah, is another pre-Islamic political concept that describes a tribe that does not submit to kings, has never been governed by them and has not been subject to taxation; see Lane, Lexicon, 7:2668, s.v. l-q-b; Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, 12:307-11, s.v. laqāḥ.
462 Q48:12, 25:18; Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, 1:353-6, s.v. bawara; see also Ibn Qutaybah, Gharīb, 412. It is relevant here to point out that the term kāfir describes someone engaged in covering the seed and was used in that sense in the Qur’ān. Sinners become those who deliberately conceal the blessings of God; see Samarqandī, Tafsīr, 3:254 to Q48:12; Qurṭubī, Jāmi‘, 16:269 to Q48:12 and 13:11 to Q25:18.
ravaged their harvest (fa-tarāhu muşfarran thumma yakūn ḥuṭāman) scattering broken roots to the winds (fa-aşbah hashīman tadhrūhu al-riḥ). In two Qur’ānic parables, the gardens of the arrogant are also destroyed overnight; the aftermath is described in similar images.

A partial list of key terms mentioned so far in this chapter reveals how ecological distress is “built into” Jahannam’s eco-system. Al-Ḥuṭamah, for example, connotes repetitive cycles of drought whose derivative, ḥuṭām, refers to debris and dry vegetation. Arid land, which the Qur’ānic parable in 18:40 alludes to as ša’ıdan zalaq, is recycled by exegetes to become the slippery, non-germinating surface of the infernal mountain of Ša‘ūd. Moreover, smoke (dukhān) is a synonym for both drought (jadb) and hunger (jū) — extreme conditions of deprivation that can induce, as Ibn Qutaybah explains, mirages of smoke. Fire consumes all; the Qur’ān correlates ashes (ramād) with perdition (ḥalāk) — the deeds of unbelievers on Judgment Day are likened to ashes blown away in a gale. Cycles of drought are known as al-ghabrā, the most famous being the “year of dust” (‘ām al-ramādah) during caliph ‘Umar’s rule. Everything

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464 Q68:17-33, 18:32-44. I would like to acknowledge Patricia Crone’s citation of these parables; see her discussion in “How did the quranic pagans make a living?” BSOAS 68 (2005): 389-90.
466 Ibn Qutaybah, Gharib, 402.
467 Q14:18, 24:39.
acquired an ashen pallor: the earth, the trees and the people. One can say that hell parallels this reality whose trees and people are scorched and blackened to the core.

The “curse of the land” is a punishment for primal fratricide. Not long after the bloodshed, Cain witnesses the first bitter harvest: thorns and nettles appear, water becomes salty and fruits sour. According to Jāḥiẓ the earth itself was penalized for soaking up Cain’s blood so that in addition to the thorns and salty waters, it is condemned to being violated by oceans (the term used is “penetrated”, kharaqa fihā al-biḥār) and filled with deserts, becoming the repository of Jahannam, the refuge of the accursed Iblīs; it is subjected to humiliation by being stomped upon with hooves and feet. Geographical dictionaries cite some of the extreme cases: Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī describes the small village (bulayd) of Dirwān as an accursed valley (wādī malʿūn) where a fire lasting three thousand years created a devastation so extreme that birds have long abandoned it and a terrain whose rock formations resemble the fangs of

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469 Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān, 5:311-12, s.v. ramada. Šaʿālik, thieves and the homeless in general are referred to as banū al-ghabrāʾ; see Thaʿālibī, Thimār, 270. I would like to draw attention to the repetition of the color pattern in Abū Misḥal’s comprehensive list of drought names that include: armal, aqshaf, abrash, arsham, ramlāʾ, barshāʾ, hamrāʾ, sawdāʾ, baydāʾ, shahbāʾ, ḥasṣāʾ and ramshāʾ; see Abū Misḥal al-ʿArabi (d. c. 3rd. cent. hijrī), Kitāb al-nawādir, ed. ‘Azzah Ḥasan (Damascus: Matbaʿat Majmaʿ al-Lughah al-ʿArabiyyah bi-Dimashq, 1961), 1:60, 80, 192.

470 Damīrī (d. 808/1405), Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān al-kubrā (Qumm: Manṣūrāt al-Raḍī, 1985), 1:107, s.v. al-awiz.

471 wa-ʿuqbat al-ard ḥina sharibat dam ibn Ādam bi-ʿashr kḥiṣāl; see Jāḥiẓ, al-Ḥayawān, 4:201.
dogs.\textsuperscript{472} That Đırwăn is located in the south is no accident; the chastisement of the people of Saba’, the once famous \textit{Arabia Felix}, took a toll on the land when God destroyed their legendary gardens, leaving a wasteland marked by a few tamarisk bushes (\textit{athl}), stunted lote-trees (\textit{sidr}) and bitter fruit.\textsuperscript{473} Bitter harvest, a punishment associated with the south, spread north and other sour species were introduced such as \textit{ḥanţal} (colocynth) and ‘\textit{ushar} (ascleias gigantea) — the bitterness of the \textit{colocynth} attaining proverbial stature.\textsuperscript{474} All this becomes part of another moral tale and grafted onto myths associated with the Year of the Elephant and the southern king Abraha’s doomed attempt to destroy the Meccan sanctuary.\textsuperscript{475}

This background frames the discussion of the infernal flora. The botanical guidelines are clear — stunted, bitter and spiky plants dominate hell’s landscape and provide food for its inhabitants. A Prophetic medical treatise quotes the \textit{ḥadith} where Muḥammad compares the hypocrite to a \textit{ḥanţal} (colocynth) plant as having no odor and a bitter taste.\textsuperscript{476} Flora are central to the afterlife; the \textit{zaqqûm}’s counterpart \textit{ṭūbā} tower as if they were mascots of their domains. The

\textsuperscript{472} Yaqût, \textit{Mu'jam}, 3:518-19, s.v. \textit{Đırwăn}. Desolation will also afflict Medina; it will be abandoned and its fruit will be consumed by birds and wild beasts (\textit{al-\'awâlî}); see Dání, \textit{Fitan}, 157-8.
\textsuperscript{473} Q34:15-6.
\textsuperscript{474} \textit{yuḏrab mathalän li-mā yūṣaf bi \textit{\textquoteleft}marârah wal-kârâha li-anâna al-ḥanţal amar shay\textquoteleft\ wa-akrahu\textquoteleft}; see Tha‘âlibi, \textit{Thimâr}, 594, s.v. \textit{naqî\textquoteleft} al-ḥanţal; see also Ibn Kathîr, \textit{Bidâyah}, 1:36.
\textsuperscript{476} The believer who reads the Qur‘ān is compared to an \textit{utrajah}, a citrus fruit, that smells and tastes good; see Dhahabî, \textit{Tibb}, 138.
symbolism behind the dearth, or the abundance, essentially signals the presence, or absence of water.

IV. A. The Zaqqūm tree

The zaqqūm is a unique feature of Jahannam. Virtually indestructible, it is a tree the Qurʾān depicts as germinating from hell’s bedrock and blooming into a crop of devil heads.477 The Qurʾān refers to the zaqqūm as the “accursed tree” and Abū Jahl challenged Muḥammad on the logic of trees existing amid flames.478 He also challenged him on linguistic grounds; the term “zaqqūm” describes the act of consuming dates with fresh butter, after which he ordered his slave girl to fetch some and mockingly dared Quraysh to join him.479 Lexicons bear out the facts of Abū Jahl’s argument: the fifth intransitive form (tafaʿala/tazaqqama) describes a person who gulps large quantities of milk.480 Exegetes concede the point explaining it away as a linguistic coincidence; in Ethiopic the Qurʾān’s zaqqūm is a type of food.481 Some of Muḥammad’s followers abandoned their new faith after the isrāʾ vision and the zaqqūm

478 Q17:60. According to Ibn al-Mullaqin, al-malʿūnah is a reference to the fruit’s foul taste (kull taʿam makrūh madhmūm); see Gharib, 220.
480 Bosworth cites Richard Bell’s view that a parallel exists in the Syriac zkwm/zākōmā meaning “the hogbeam”. The first is something dried in front of a fire before eating, probably a Greek equivalent of lentils; see C. E. Bosworth, “Zaʿūm,” EI² 11:425-6; see also Zamakhshāri, Asās al-balāgḥah (Beirut: Dār Beirut, 1992), 272, s.v. zaqqama; Khaṭṭābī, Gharib, 1:486-7; Lane, Lexicon, 3:1238-9, s.v., z-q-m.
481 Though Jeffery does not include an entry for zaqqūm, the introduction by Böwering and McAuliffe maintains that Arabia had close contacts with Abyssinia and that Meccan merchants employed Ḥbāsh troops; see Foreign Vocabulary, 13.
verses.\textsuperscript{482} The novelty of the \textit{zaqqūm} as a botanical species needed to be established and the exegetes were now faced with the task of describing what it actually was.

The \textit{zaqqūm} adapts well to its environment; its fiery substance (\textit{min jawhar al-nār}) derives nourishment from hell’s igneous rock.\textsuperscript{483} Some scholars suggest that it is fashioned out of lead or silver capable of preserving its form and sap amid the flames.\textsuperscript{484} Allegorical readings proffer other options: one Shi‘ite interpretation identifies \textit{al-shajarah al-mal‘ūnah} as no other than the wretched lineage of the Banū Umayyah.\textsuperscript{485} Later interpretations of the \textit{isrā‘} depict a functional \textit{zaqqūm} emerging on the \textit{sirāt} as sinners cling to its branches before descending into Jahannam — a version of a modern lift — and being dropped off at their assigned levels.\textsuperscript{486} Zamakhshārī puts forward one variant where the \textit{zaqqūm} is classified as a zone, similar to the \textit{zamharır}, to which sinners on one of their many collective trips are driven, like sheep, to graze before being returned to their \textit{darakāt}.\textsuperscript{487}

\textsuperscript{482} Ţabārī, \textit{Jāmi‘}; 15:113-15.
\textsuperscript{484} Ţabārī, \textit{Jāmi‘}; 23:40-2 to Q37:62-5.
\textsuperscript{485} ‘Ayyāshī, \textit{Tafsīr}, 2:297.
\textsuperscript{486} Majlīsī, \textit{Bihār}, 8:168.
\textsuperscript{487} Zamakhshārī, \textit{al-Kaṣhshāf}, 4:47.
For our purposes, of most interest is the tree’s diabolical crop which would have been familiar to Muḥammad’s audience. The association of demons (shayāṭīn) with trees existed in pre-Islamic Arabia; the goddess al-‘Uzzā was said to be a shayṭānah who resided in three gum-acacia groves (samarāt). The detail emerges in another sinister context; de-hexing the spell which Labid b. al-A’şam had cast on the Prophet uncovered a form in the well of Dhirwān that was said to resemble ru’ūs al-shayāṭīn. Ṭabarī, for whom the semantics of a word is a solid guide, notes that the Arabs apply the term shayṭān to anything perceived as profoundly hideous. These heads, ru’ūs, were imagined by commentators as miniature demons with manes that stood straight up; or they took the form of large snakes with crowns (a’rāf). The zaqqūm is also interactive and aggressive: for every bite of its fruit, it retaliates by biting back — the scratched faces of sinners bear the telltale signs of recent contact!

Others attempt to place the zaqqūm within a credible botanical framework. In expanding the definition of shayṭān to include snakes, the zaqqūm, like the fig tree, is classified as a genus associated with reptiles. An analogy is drawn with the


489 Ibn Sa’d, Ṭabaqāt, 2:4-5.

490 Ṭabarī, Jāmi’, 23:64; Tha‘ālibī, Thimār, 77-8, s.v. ru’ūs al-shayāṭīn.

491 Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, 6:17-18; Majlisī, Biḥār, 8:257-8; 63:190.

492 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Šifat al-nār, 56; Ṭabarī, Jāmi’, 17:100-1; Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, 6:18; Sha’rānī, Mukhtasār, 111(qāla Ja’far b. Sulaymān: samʿu’u Abā ‘Umrān al-Jawnī yaqūl balaghānā annahu lā yanhish minhā nahshah illā nahashat minhu nahshah); see also Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 113.

493 Jāḥiz makes a reference to shayṭān al-Humātah, a tree similar to the fig tree also associated with snakes; see al-Ḥayawān, 1:153; also Anbārī, al-Zāhir, 1:170.
“scorpion tree”, *shajarat al-`aqrab*, whose fruit resembles an arachnid. Not only does Bedouin lore maintain that the *zaqqūm* exists in the Tihāmah, the narrow strip of lowland in the west of Arabia, but a treatise on Prophetic medicine alleges its existence in the Ḥijāz, with healing properties including relieving arthritic pain and reducing inflammation.

Afterlife texts give the infernal *zaqqūm* a striking presence. Breaking out of a smooth rock (*ṣakhrah mumallasah*), it scales seven levels extending out its seventy thousand fiery branches, each yielding an equal number of ugly, foul smelling demon-shaped fruit. The *zaqqūm* could appear deceptively beautiful; each fruit, though, is infested with thousands of fiery worms in the same way that each leaf is swarming with hundreds of demons (*shayṭāns*). The tree has also been depicted as spiky and stripped of foliage; thorns pierce the eyes, ears, cheeks and noses of hungry eaters. When sinners bite into the fruit, worms stick

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494 Dinarwari, *Nabāt*, 63.
495 Ja’far b. Ḥasan al-Barzanji (d. 1178/1764), *Ṭāj al-ibtihāj ʿalā al-nūr al-wahhāj fī ʾ-īsraʾ wal-miʿrāj* (Cairo: s.n., 1896), 47. Lane, in his entry on *zaqqūm*, reports the Bedouin claims that the plant does exist: ‘... on the authority of an Arab of the desert, of Azd al-Sarah...the *zaqqūm* is a dust-coloured tree; having small leaves, without thorns, having a pungent odour, having knots in its stems, many in number, and a small very weak flower ... and the heads of its leaves are very foul and ugly”; see *Lexicon*, 3:1238-9, s.v. *zaqm*.
496 Dhahabi, *Ṭibb*, 152.
497 Majlisi, *Biḥār*, 8:257; 321. One proverb that compares bad company to trees in hell repeatedly burning one another might suggest that they undergo cycles of fire similar to those of the human body (*ikhwān al-sū* ʾa-shajari al-nār yaḥriq baʾduhu baʾdan); see Thaʿalibi, *Ṭaḥṣīn al-qabīḥ wa-taqbīḥ al-ḥasan*, ed. ʿAlāʾ Abd al-Wahhab Muḥammad (Cairo: Dār al-Faḍlih, 1995), 78.
498 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *ʿAzamah*, fols. 17b-18a. It is not clear whether the *shayṭān* here is a snake or a demon. In another segment of the manuscript, the *shayṭān* is a demon; *ibid.*, 21a.
to their teeth and cut their lips. Later wa'z and tarhib works, like Ibn al-Jawzi's 
*Bustān*, would exaggerate the wormy aspect of the fruit.

The Qur'an makes explicit the fact that hell's inhabitants will be provided 
for and that the zaqqūm would be on the menu (*ta'am*) of the evildoer (*al-athīm*). 
Some believed that Abū Jahl was the sinner in question. Faced with meager options, sinners fill their bellies (*fa-māli'ūn minhā al-buṭūn*) with prickly regimen 
(*ta'am dhā ghuṣṣah*) which contains no caloric value (*lā yusminu*) nor is it 
nutritionally capable of relieving their hunger (*lā yughnī min jū*). Such a diet 
inflicts severe eating disorders such as choking, difficulty in swallowing or 
coughing up its thorny texture (*shawk ya'khudh fī 'l-ḥalq fa-lā yadkhul wa-lā 
yakhru*). The roughness of this regimen can be heard in the rumbling of bellies 
whose fiery substance causes sinners' entrails to collapse onto their feet.

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499 Ibid., 30a.
500 Ibn al-Jawzi, *Bustān*, 276. In Ka'b al-Aḥbār's version of the stories of “Jesus and the Skull”, the black worms are one hundred cubits (*dhirā'*) long; see Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-
awliyāʾ*, 6:11.
IV. B. Other Species (ḍarī', ghislīn, sa’dān):

The Qur’ān adds ḍarī' and ghislīn to this menu. The limited selection led some to surmise that the infernal fare alternates between these three options. Unlike the zaqqūm, the ḍarī' is botanically identifiable in the Ḥijāz as the greener phase of a plant called al-shibriq. Sometimes the sequence is reversed (the shibriq being the dry phase of the plant). A sub-species of cactus, shibriq indicates poor pasture. Ibn Manzūr describes it as a worthless foul smelling shrub with long thistles which people discard into the sea. Others regard it as highly toxic. In our infernal narrative the ḍarī' is described as a plant with fiery spikes, more bitter than cacti, smellier than rotten carrion and hotter than the fires of hell. Ghislīn, on the other hand, was botanically untraceable and was often interchangeable with the ḍarī'. Opinions, nonetheless, vary: al-Ḍahḥāk

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505 Q88:6-7, 69:36.
506 Majlisi, Biḥār, 7:84 (wa-qīla anna ahl al-nār ṭabaqāt fa-minhum ṭaʿāмуhu ghislīn wa-minhum ṭaʿāмуhu al-zaqqūm wa-minhum ṭaʿāμuhu al-ḍarī').
507 Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, 3:374; Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, 7:17-8, s.v., shibriq; Ibn al-Athīr, Nihāyah, 2:440, s.v. shibriq. Ibn al-Athīr notes how one of the Prophet's detractors, al-ʿĀṣ b. Wāʿil, died as a result of stepping on a shibriqah; the account is repeated by Majlisi, Biḥār, 18:48. In Thaʿalibī's version, he got bitten by a snake, see ʿAṭāʾīf, 93-4.
508 Ibn Qutaybah, Gharīb, 525; Dinawarī, Nabāt, 100-1, s.v. ẓāri'.
509 ṣan al-Zaḥīj: al-shibriq naw' min al-shawk; see Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, 4:2185, s.v. ẓāri'.
511 nabāt akhḍār muntin khafīf yurūm bīhī fī ʿl-bahīr wa-lahū jawf qāla Ibn al-Athīr huwa nabāt bi ʿl-Hijāz lahu shawk kibār; see Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, 4:2581, s.v. shabraq.
512 Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, 3:374; Dhahabi, ʿIbb, 164.
513 Ṭabārī, Jāmi', 30:103; Ibn Kathīr, Nihāyah, 2:301. Although the ḥadīth is traced to al-Ḍahḥāk on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās to the Prophet (marfuʿan), Ibn Kathīr adds that it is, nonetheless, a strange ḥadīth (wa-hāḍīth ḥadīth gharīb jiddan).
514 Majlisi, Biḥār, 7:84.
describes it as edible trees (*shajar ya’kulhu ahl al-nār*); Ibn al-Mulaqqin thought the term referred to the fruit of the ʿḍarī’, maintaining that both the *zaqqūm* and the *ghislin* have no earthly equivalent. In fact, *ghislin*, as derivative of *ghusālah* (what is washed off of the flesh and blood of hell’s inhabitants), is often listed as an infernal beverage.

One should also mention another type of cactus, the ḥasak al-sa’dān, that litters the ʿṣirāf bridge. Fairly common in Najd, Ibn Manẓūr describes it as spiky part of a palm tree whose thistles (*shawk/ḥasak*) are proverbial for their coarseness (*yuṭraḥ bihi al-mathl fi ʿl-khushūnah*). Cacti are a legacy of the agricultural disaster of Saba’ that introduced into Arabia the species of *khamṭ*. It is a telling sign that Ibn Manẓūr treats *khamṭ* as a broad botanical category that includes all inedible bitter plants, a tree with lots of thorns, a poisonous tree, any tree with little yield, and finally, a worthless fruit commonly known as the “hyena’s fart” that crumbles in the hand.

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516 Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Gharīb*, 491, 549. The opinion that the *ghislin* is the ʿḍarī’ is attributed to Al-Dahḥāk; see Ibn Abī al-Dunya, *Ṣifat al-nār*, 64.
517 Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘*, 29:64-5; Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb*, 484. *Ghislīn* has also been described as a composite of sweat and secretions from the genitals of adulterors (ʿaraq ahl al-nār wa-mā yakhrūj min furūj al-zawānī); see Majlisī, *Bīḥar*, 8:295.
518 Ibn Mandah, Ṭāmān, 2:801.
Both David Waines and Patricia Crone have challenged the pervasive position that Quraysh had limited knowledge of agriculture with an economy primarily based on trade. Crone notes the numerous Qur’anic references to cultivated plants and fruits, to gardens, to cattle and rituals that essentially describe an agrarian Meccan community. One can interpret the Qur’anic descriptions of ecological distress transferred onto the afterlife as reflecting the anxieties of an agrarian community instead of mirroring a nomadic, or non-agrarian, reality.\(^5\) One should note the frequency with which the date palm is evoked in both hell and heaven. \textit{Masad}, the fibres growing at the roots of palm branches used in rope making, is used in the Qur’ān to describe the necklace of Abū Jahl’s wife in hell,\(^2\) and \textit{ṭal‘}, the spandix of the palm, is cited in the case of the \textit{zaqqūm} and its diabolical fruit.\(^3\) The punishing winds of \textit{ṣarṣar} devastate the people of ‘Ād so they resemble the felled trunks (\textit{a‘jāz}) of palm trees.\(^4\) More interesting are the \textit{akmām}, the calyx of flowers of the date bud, from which all the beautiful garments of paradise emerge.\(^5\) God’s justice is such that He would not transgress the measure of a thread or a spot on a date stone.\(^6\) These references, with the exception of \textit{ḥasak al-sa‘dān}, are Qur’ānic; the much

\(^2\) Q111:5.
\(^3\) Q37:65; Waines does not mention this verse but quotes Q50:10 instead.
\(^4\) Q54:20; 69:7.
\(^6\) Q4:49; 4:124 and also see 35:13 – \textit{fatilān}, \textit{naqīran} and \textit{qiṭmīrin}. I would like to acknowledge Ali El-Meguini’s site \textit{Fawā'id Lughawiyyah wa-naḥwiyyah} on Facebook for its many interesting leads.
appreciated palm tree, true to common practice, is put to full use in the afterlife.\textsuperscript{527}

One should conclude by pointing out that if Jahannam’s flora was scripted with realism in mind, paradise’s counterpart is devoid of any color scheme a botanist could recognize. Here the ground is as soft as white flour (\textit{darmakah baydā’}), its topsoil dusted with saffron and its pebbles fashioned of pearls and sapphire.\textsuperscript{528} In this landscape, \textit{tūbā} parallels the \textit{zaqqūm}’s centrality emerging from the Prophet’s abode and branching into all the dwellings in paradise.\textsuperscript{529} Unlike its aggressive and hideous counterpart, \textit{tūbā} is protective, gentle and nurturing; endowed with bovine udders (\textit{lahā’durū’ ka-ďurū’ al-baqarah}), it suckles Muslim stillborns until Judgement Day.\textsuperscript{530}

\textsuperscript{527} A prophetic \textit{ḥadīth} exhorts Muslims to respect the palm tree for being fashioned from the same clay as Adam; see Dhahabi, \textit{Tībb al-Nabawī}, 165-6. The fondness for the palm tree continues to the present day. Riverbend, an Iraqi blogger, writes about her first horror at the American destruction of palm trees: “Every bit of a palm is an investment. The fronds and leaves are dried and used to make beautiful, pale-yellow baskets, brooms, mats, bags, hats, wall hangings and even used for roofing. The fronds are often composed of thick, heavy wood at their ends and are used to make lovely, seemingly-delicate furniture … the low quality dates and the date pits are used as animal feed for cows and sheep. Some of the date pits are the source of a sort of “date oil” that can be used for cooking. The palm itself, should it be cut down, is used as firewood, or for building … The death of a palm tree is taken very seriously. Farmers consider it devastating and take the loss very personally. Each tree is so unique, it feels like a member of the family … I remember watching scenes from the war a couple of days after the bombing began — one image that stuck in my mind was that of a palm tree broken in half, the majestic fronds wilting and dragging on the ground. The sight affected me almost as much as the corpses.” See Riverbend, \textit{Baghdad Burning: Girl Blog from Iraq} (NY: The Feminist Press from the City University of New York, 2005), 104-5.


\textsuperscript{529} Majlisī, \textit{Bihār}, 18:303-4.

\textsuperscript{530} Ibn Ḥabīb, \textit{Wasf}, 32-3; Suyūṭi, \textit{Sharḥ al-ṣudūr}, 97. In one Shi’ite version of the \textit{mi’rāj}, Abraham attends to the youngest of this community adjusting nipples which flow with milk fortified with all the fruits of paradise; see Majlisī, \textit{Bihār}, 18:303-4.
Arabic texts on paradise dedicate much space to its flora. Apart from the heavenly consorts, flora is a major “selling point” (to use an advertising term) for paradise. The fronds (saf') of palm trees and the calyx (akmäm) of tūbā outfit believers in magnificent garments and jewelry.\(^{531}\) Musical trees are an early motif; Ibn Ḥabīb al-Sulami, for example, mentions al-fayḍ (abundance) as a tree that releases sound so beautiful no one has ever heard its like before.\(^{532}\) Samarqandi imagined slave girls or boys emerging from the pits of fruit with the names of their owners tattooed on their cheeks.\(^{533}\) Such arboreal anthropomorphism is echoed in marvel literature (‘ajā‘ib al-makhlūqāt). The fabled trees of the islands of wāq al-wāq had fruit that resembled women complete with eyes, hands, legs and vaginas screeching “wāq wāq” on sensing sun or wind, thus describing a nature, like that of paradise, that offers sensual satisfaction on every level.\(^{534}\)

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\(^{531}\) Ibn Katḥīr, Nihāyah, 2:275; Bayḥaḳī, Baṭḥ, 190. Asked whether paradisiacal garments are created or woven, the Prophet described a fruit that cracks open to display seventy types of outfits in all colors and hues (alwānān ba‘da alwānin). Once an item is selected, the fruit reseals itself (thumma ta‘nfaq tarji‘ kamā kāna); see Ibn al-Qayyim, Ḥāḍī, 203; Ibn Katḥīr, Nihāyah, 2:375.

\(^{532}\) Ibn Ḥabīb, Waṣf, 64. Samarqandi dresses the paradisiacal branches with musical instruments (mazāmīr). Believers, on golden chairs, sway to the beat until all swoon with emotion; see Qurrat al-‘uyūn, 60-1.

\(^{533}\) Such tattoos are more endearing to the eye of the beholder than any beauty spot (shāmah); see Samarqandi, ibid., 73-4.

Extensive license lies at the core of *targhib* — a genre that embellishes paradisiacal delights as an incentive for believers to stay on the straight and narrow path. Caliphs sought to replicate such gilded luxuries; under the entry for *dār al-shajarah*, Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī describes the palace of the ‘Abbāsid al-Muqtadir (r. 908-932) whose trees of silver and gold displayed fruits and birds carved from precious stones. Gusts of wind would elicit unusually beautiful melodies from automaton birds against the sounds of waterfalls. These showcases of opulence do not only make *targhib* appear all the more credible but entertain the possibility that at one point it would be within reach of all good believers.

V. Water

Fresh clear water has strong emotional resonance in medieval Arab culture. The Prophet described it as the best beverage in this world and the next. Al-Ma‘mūn (r. 813-833) sums up three of water’s attributes: it has good taste (*yaladhdh*), acts as a superb digestive and induces sincere gratitude.

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535 Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu’jam*, 2:480-81, s.v. *dār al-shajarah*. Even the most sober of scholars have been taken with the comparison of Baghdad to paradise; Mujāhid had a dream-vision where the deceased Abū ‘Amr b. al-‘Alā’ declared that “whoever lives in Baghdad and dies a Sunnī moves from one Paradise to another”. Baghdadi palaces with associations with heaven include *al-Khuld* (eternity), *al-Qarār* (permanence), and *Firdaws*; see Michael Cooperson, “Baghdad in Rhetoric and Narrative,” *Muqarnas* 13 (1996): 101.


537 Zamakhsharī, *Rabi‘ al-abrār*, 1:223. A woman’s beauty, whiteness and calmness can be similar to the waters of the heavens (*mā‘ al-samā‘*); as an example, the Lakhmid ruler was eulogized as Mundhir ibn Mā‘ al-Samā‘. The *salsabil* in paradise was said to derive its name
Treatises on Prophetic medicine cite clarity, absence of odor, taste and density as criteria for exceptional water quality.\(^538\) Such attributes will be denied to hell’s inhabitants; they arrive in their new domain thirsty and remain unsated.\(^539\)

That Jahannam has no shortage of hot water is made obvious from Qur’anic allusions to ġamīm, ghassāq, muhl, ghislīn and šadīd — terms that establish the coarseness of what is on offer.\(^540\) The Qur’ān mentions a hot spring (‘aynin ṣāniyah) and a ġamīm ṣānin — the adjective ṣānin means scalding hot.\(^541\) The verb to boil (gh-l-y) is used to refer to both food and water: indigestible zaqqūm rumbles inside bellies as if it were boiling muhl and ġamīm.\(^542\) The semantics here are complex: a term like ġamīm is applied in various contexts — in some verses it alludes to space,\(^543\) or to temperature,\(^544\) or appears as an infernal beverage,\(^545\) or as a torment (‘adhāb al-ġamīm).\(^546\)

\(^{538}\) Dhahābi, Tibb, 195-8.
\(^{539}\) Q19:86, 56:55; Ghazzālī, ḥyā‘, 4:515.
\(^{541}\) Q88:5, 55:44; see also Asad b. Mūsā, Zuhd, 62; Ṭabarī, Jāmi‘, 30:101-3; for ṣānin as waters that moan (ṣānin) from the intensity of its heat, see Majlisi, Bihār, 8:314. Another term is ḥarīr in Q35:21, which also describes the ultimate in heat but not in relation to hell; see H. Anthony Johns, “Hot and Cold,” EQ 2:455-6.
\(^{542}\) Q44:45-6.
\(^{543}\) Q56:93, 40:71-2, 56:41-2.
\(^{544}\) Q55:44, 47:15, 88:5.
\(^{545}\) Q37:66-7, 56:53-6, 78:24-5, 38:57, 6:70, 47:15.
\(^{546}\) Q22:19-20, 44:48.
Infernal waters are a thick black sludge of oil, blood and pus (al-qīn wal-dam), tears, and discharge from lesions. Nor are the waters clear of worms (da‘āmīṣ). The ḏārī is a beverage of “sweat and what else comes out of the genitals of prostitutes” (ʿaraq ahl al-nār wa-mā yakhruj min furūj al-zawānī). In some versions venom is added to the brew; the toxic discharge of snakes and scorpions has the corroding effect of acid. It was suggested that al-ghassāq is a spring suffused with toxic waste. All these local ingredients are collected in large cauldrons (qudūr), cisterns (ṣahārij) or pools (ḥiyāḏ). Infernal valleys such as Sa‘īr, Saqar and Mūbaq are tributaries of pus. Blood as an element is absent although it is often mentioned as a correlative of pus. In one image sinners leashed with chains (salāsil bi-aydī al-khazanah aṭrāfuḥā) are dragged across fiery gorges many times (muqbilīn wa-mudbirīn) dripping their bodily excretions into these pits. The twin wells of Ghayy and Āthām at the bottom of

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549 Suddi, Tafsīr, 415 to Q38:57.
550 mā‘uhā ka-durdī al-zayt kādir ghaliẓ kathīr al-da‘āmīṣ; see Muqṭātil, Tafsīr, 6:677-8 to Q88:5. Da‘āmīṣ are black worms, some with two heads and can often be seen in pools left by torrents. The ḥadīth where the children in paradise are compared to da‘āmīṣ hopes to capture their speed and agility; see Lane, Lexicon, 3:883, s.v. du‘mūṣ.
551 Majlisi, Biḥār, 8:295.
552 al-ghassāq ‘ayn fi jahannam yasil ilayhā ḥimah kull dhāt ḥimah fa-tastanqīl; see Qurṭubi, Tadhkirah, 1:503; Mundhirī, Tarhib, 4:235; Ibn Ḥajar al-Ḥaytamī, Kaba‘īr, 2:253; Majlisi, Biḥār, 8:259; Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 118.
553 Siijistānī, Gharib, 197, 208; Majlisi, Biḥār, 8:244; ‘Aynī, ‘Umduṭ al-qāri‘, 7:263, 15:160; Sha‘rānī, Mukhtaṣar, 106. Sha‘rānī uses the word masil, from sayl, to mean a stream.
554 Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 92; Jazā‘irī, Qīṣaṣ, 133; Majlisi, Biḥār, 7:148.
555 The Prophet in one isrā‘ version witnesses the usurer swimming upstream in a river of blood; see Barzanjī, Ibīthāj, 49-50.
556 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Šīfat al-nār, 87.
hell function as water depots. That two wells act as tributary for hell demonstrates a scarcity when one compares it to a paradise that, literally or metaphorically, floats on rivers (tajrī min taṭtihā al-anhār).\textsuperscript{557}

The waters of Jahannam are coarse; the ḥamīm acts as a dissolving agent (yuṣharu bihi mā fi buṭūnīhim wal-julūd)\textsuperscript{558} and the muhl has a texture, according to Ibn al-Mubārak, of scalding oil (muhl zayt yaʾnī aḥarrahu).\textsuperscript{559} Others described muhl as a glutinous mixture of pus and black blood.\textsuperscript{560} Appearances could be deceptive; the waters of ṣādid might look clear but taste of pus,\textsuperscript{561} and ghassāq, a mixture of yellow pus and/or tears, does not offer a more enticing alternative.\textsuperscript{562} As seem in the previous section, ghislān was envisioned as a food; a derivative of ghusūlah, it was flesh and blood extracted from tormented sinners (muʿadhḥabūn) along with whatever else gets washed off their bodies.\textsuperscript{563}

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\textsuperscript{557} Asad b. Mūsā, 
\textsuperscript{558} Q22:20; Muqātīl, 
\textsuperscript{559} Ibn al-Mubārak, 
\textsuperscript{560} Ibn al-Mulaqqin, 
\textsuperscript{561} Ibn Qutaybah, 
\textsuperscript{562} Ibn al-Mulaqqin, 
\textsuperscript{563} Ibn Qutaybah,
exegetes, however, agree on the loathsome taste and the overpowering stench of rot.\textsuperscript{564}

Water in *Jahannam* plays a dual role: apart from being a beverage it acts as a punitive agent that shares with fire the capacity to burn. The early text of Muḥāsibī captures this duality: *ḥamīm* appears as if it were a cool spring only to peel off a sinner’s flesh (*taslukh min qarnika ilā qadamika*). Drinking is a torturous ordeal; a boiling cup is handed out (no free will here) whose heat sears the extended palm causing it to suppurate (*nashshat, tafassakhat*). As the hapless sinner brings the cup closer to his lips, the water roasts his face. A single gulp peels the throat before the scalding liquid rips the intestines (*sallakha, qaṭṭa’ā*). Memories of cool water only make matters worse. Desperate sinners beseech their families in paradise for relief.\textsuperscript{565}

Apart from the occasional tin cup (another stark contrast to paradise), no mention is made of drinking vessels in hell.\textsuperscript{566} Drinking is also subject to a cultural code. On being told on a hot day to drink up (*tajarra*), al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī reprimanded the speaker by saying that only the inhabitants of hell gulp down

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{565} Muḥāsibī, *Tawahhum*, 29-32.
  \item \textsuperscript{566} See Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “Cups and Vessels,” in *EQ* 1:489-91; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Waṣf*, 21-6. Dhahabi comments on the superiority of glass over cups made of precious stone or gold for not only would a wash make the vessel look new but one can recognize any particles of dirt or foreign matter such as poison; see *Ṭībb al-nabawī*, 82.
\end{itemize}
their beverage.\textsuperscript{567} Indeed, the Qur'\textasciitilde{n} compares sinners’ frenzied drinking to camels suffering from the insatiable thirst of \textit{haym} — a condition believed to be contagious.\textsuperscript{568} Sinners experience the acute pain of thirst twice a day.\textsuperscript{569} To the exegete al-R\textae{z}\textbar{i} \textit{shurb al-haym} evokes delirious sinners within reach of a mirage (\textit{shay’ m\textae{r}i}) gulping furiously their own boiling pus (\textit{\textit{	extdegree}adıahum al-maghl\textbar{i}}).\textsuperscript{570}

Infernal waters have a corrosive effect on the human body. Zab\textacuted{n}iyah administer the scalding \textit{\textdegree}am\textacuted{m} as they pour it through the skull causing all internal organs to dissolve as it slips out through the feet (\textit{yamruq/yuslat min qadamayhi thumma ya\textacute{u}d kam\textae{r} k\textae{n}})\textsuperscript{571} — burning gums, eroding teeth, cooking hearts and boiling stomachs in endless cycles.\textsuperscript{572} Mu\textae{h}ammad b. Ka\textbar{b} al-Qura\textae{z}\textbar{i} illustrates this process of \textit{\textdegree}ahr, or melting of the flesh, as a quick dip into the \textit{\textdegree}am\textacuted{m} for a skeleton to emerge with a pair of eyes staring out of its skull.\textsuperscript{573} The image of an angel hammering a skull, pouring \textit{\textdegree}am\textacuted{m} and causing the brain to spatter over the sinner’s body becomes a standard motif in all descriptions of

\textsuperscript{567} Q14:17. Interestingly, \textit{tajarra}' is listed as one of the \textit{add\textbar{d}} so that it could also mean to sip slowly. A similar parallel exists in \textit{nahl} which applies to both thirst and satiety; the first draught of any drink is known as \textit{nahl}; see Ibn al-Ath\textbar{i}, \textit{Nih\textae{y}ah}, 1:261, s.v. \textit{nahl}; Anb\textae{r}i, \textit{Add\textbar{d}}, 75-7. ‘Abb, on the other hand, connotes gulping down large quantities of water (\textit{wal-\textit{\textdegree}abbu jar’ al-m\textae{r} an kabiran}); see Dhahabi, \textit{Tibb}, 80.

\textsuperscript{568} Suddi, \textit{Tafs\textbar{r}}, 449 to Q56:55; \textbar{t}abari, \textit{J\textae{m}i'}, 27:112-13; Ibn Kath\textae{r}, \textit{Tafs\textbar{r}}, 6:530-1; Zamakhshari, \textit{al-Kashsh\textae{f}}, 4:463-4; Ibn Qutaybah, \textit{Gharib}, 444; Kha\textae{t}\textae{t}\textae{b}i, \textit{Gharib}, 2:466. Hiy\textae{m} applies to a grainy terrain incapable of retaining water; the proverb \textit{ashrab min al-him} captures the condition of permanent thirst; see ‘Askari, \textit{Jamh\textae{r}at al-amth\textae{l}}, 1:566.

\textsuperscript{569} Muq\textae{til}, \textit{Tafs\textbar{r}}, 4:222.

\textsuperscript{570} R\textae{z}i, \textit{Maf\textae{t}\textbar{a}l}, 8:39 to 55:44.

\textsuperscript{571} Ibn al-Mub\textae{r}ak, \textit{Zuhd}, 89; Ibn Ab\textbar{i} al-Duny\textae{a}, \textit{\textit{\textdegree}ift al-n\textae{r}}, 60; Tirmidh\textbar{i}, \textit{Sunan}, 7:252.

\textsuperscript{572} Muq\textae{til}, \textit{Tafs\textbar{r}}, 6:677-8 to Q88:5.

\textsuperscript{573} \textit{yu’khadh al-\textit{\textdegree}ab} fa-yuharrak bi-n\textae{n}siyatih\textbar{i} fi dh\textae{l}\textae{k}a\textbar{i} al-hamim \textit{hatt\textae{a} yadh\textbar{u}b al-lam} \textit{wa-yabqa al-\textit{a}zm} \textit{wal-\textit{\textdegree}yn\textae{n} fi l-ra’s}; see Ibn Kath\textae{r}, \textit{Tafs\textbar{r}}, 6:496.
infernal waters. Eventually *tarhib* custom-tailors the material and, as can be expected, the *shārib al-khamr* is particularly vulnerable. *Waʿz* material is relentless in its use of imagery; Ibn al-Jawzī in one of his popular sermons does not refrain from maintaining that *ghislin* is to be the food of all who do not perform their ablutions (*ghusl*) correctly. In dream manuals, excretions and suppurations of all kinds symbolize mouths (that have falsely accused others) or genitals, thus projecting their connection to the sources of water in hell.

VI. Fauna

VI. A. Snakes

Afterlife texts assign a separate chapter to Jahannam’s snakes and scorpions. Fauna developed outside Qur’ānic guidelines, its compelling threat based on a primal fear of reptiles whose ubiquity is such that they can be found beneath every stone and burrow. In Jahannam scorpions breed in abundance — the mouth of every snake teems with thousands of arachnids. Arabic groups both species under the dual and *ḥadīth* licenses the interruption of prayer

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577 Nābulusī, *Taʾīr*, 363, s.v. *qīh*.
578 Q16:88 and 7:38 warn of an increase in torment (*dífanʿ/ʿadhāban fawqa ʿadhāb*) which is explained by Ibn Abī al-Dunyā as alluding to snakes and scorpions; see *Ṣīfat al-nār*, 71-2.
in order to kill them.\textsuperscript{581} An extensive lore bears witness to this fear of snakes; Jāḥiẓ reports seeing a work on reptiles of more than ten parts out of which only one volume and half could be considered factual.\textsuperscript{582}

Virtually indestructable, reptiles are so well adapted to their environment that they are known to outlive other species.\textsuperscript{583} Their forms have an amazing capacity to regenerate,\textsuperscript{584} and their amphibious nature allows them to navigate water and earth effortlessly.\textsuperscript{585} Undeterred, they elicit fear, which reinforces their territorial advantage.\textsuperscript{586} Their ability to withstand high temperatures make them ideal for Jahannam.\textsuperscript{587} Snakes are feared for their wide mouths and voracious appetites.\textsuperscript{588} Disagreement arose as to whether they have two tongues or a single bifurcated tongue or two separate heads with a mouth in each. A bedouin offers some insight by saying that snakes have supper with the first head and lunch with the second but when it comes to the act of biting their victim, they

\textsuperscript{581}Damīrī, Ḥayawān, 1:38, s.v. al-aswad al-sālīkh; Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, 2:233.
\textsuperscript{582}wa-qad ra‘aytu ‘inda Dāwūd b. Muḥammad al-Ḥāshimī kitābān fī ‘l-hayyāt akthar min ‘asharat ajlād mā yaṣīḥū minhā miqār jīld wa-niṣf; see Jāḥiẓ, Ḥayawān, 4:181.
\textsuperscript{583}Damīrī, Ḥayawān, 1:392, s.v. al-hayyah. The fact that killing a snake was the only means to find one dead encouraged the belief that they are partly demonic or that their forms were hosts to people who have undergone metamorphosis (wa-taqūl al-a‘rāb anna al-ḥayyāt āṭwal ‘umran min al-nisr wa-anna al-nās lam yajid ḥayyāt qad mātat ḥatt anfihā ... wa-daḥālika li-umūr minhā qawlūhum anna fiḥā Shayāṭīn wa-anna fiḥā man musikha); see Jāḥiẓ, Ḥayawān, 4:157.
\textsuperscript{584}wa-kull shay‘ mamsūḥ al-badan laysa bi-dhi aydīn wa-lā arjūl fa-innahu yakūn shadīd al-badan kal-samakah waḥ-hayyah; see al-Jāḥiẓ, ibid., 4:178, 111, 114, 5:329 and Damīrī, Ḥayawān, 1:605, s.v. al-shamsiyāyah.
\textsuperscript{585}Jāḥiẓ, Ḥayawān, 4:169; 5:119.
\textsuperscript{586}Tha‘ālibī, Thīmār, 426, s.v. zuila al-hayyah.
\textsuperscript{587}al-aṣlah... ḥayyah kabīrat al-ra‘s qaṣīrat al-jism... wa-qāla al-Jāḥiẓ al-‘arab taqūl innahā lā tamūr bi-shay‘in i’llā aḥraqathu; see Damīrī, Ḥayāt, 1:39, s.v. al-aṣlah.
\textsuperscript{588}Jāḥiẓ, Ḥayawān, 4:153; 5:351. Action verbs such as ‘add, nahasha, nashat, nakaz reflect the complications of being bitten by a snake; see Damīrī, Ḥayawān, 1:39, s.v. al-‘aqrab.
accomplish that with the two heads simultaneously!\textsuperscript{589} Although it is not clear why black is associated with snakes and scorpions as in the term \textit{al-aswadān}, one must bear in mind that Jāḥīz correlates color with threat: the darker the animal, the greater its fortitude, the less fortunate the fate of whoever encounters it.\textsuperscript{590}

Popular lore describes infernal snakes as currently dormant, like “coiled rope”, in the fifth layer of the earth.\textsuperscript{591} Texts exaggerate their serpentine proportions, equating their girth with the necks of camels or their fangs with large palm trees.\textsuperscript{592} Jahannam itself begs God never to release the most dangerous serpent from its dungeon.\textsuperscript{593} In popular lore snakes symbolize the onset of the underworld.\textsuperscript{594}

\textsuperscript{589} Jāḥīz says that there is some confusion with regard to the bifurcated tongue where some assume that snakes have two tongues (\textit{wa-za’ama ba’thum anna li-ba’da al-ḥayyāt lisānayn wa-hādāh ‘indi khalq wa-azunn annahu lamāna ra’ā iftīḍaq taram al-lisān qadā bi-anna lahu lisānayn); 4:164; see also 4:156. On the lore surrounding snakes, see al ‘Askārī, \textit{Awā’il}, 66; Kisā‘i, \textit{Qiṣaṣ}, 44. A bifurcated tongue is a metaphor for the duality of speech which is illustrated in the story of Adam’s Fall; see Abd al-Fattāḥ Kilito, \textit{Lisān ‘Adam}, trans. ‘Abd al-Kabīr al-Sharqāwī (Dār al-Baydā’: Dār Tubqāl lil-Nashr, 1995), 10.

\textsuperscript{590} \textit{wa-kull shay’} min al-ḥayawān idhā kāna aswād sha’ruhu aw jilduhu kāna aqwā li-badanīhī wa-lam takun ma’rifatuhu bi-maḥmūdah; Jāḥīz, \textit{Hayawān}, 2:79. In another section of the work, he issues another alert: \textit{fa-ammā al-aswād fa-innahu yahqīd wa-yuṭālib wa-yakmun fi ‘l-matāḥ hattā yudrik bi-ṭā’ ilatihi wa-lahu zamān yaqṭul fihi kull shay’ nahashahu; 4:212.


\textsuperscript{593} wa-inna fi ‘l-jubb la-ḥayyah inna Jahannam wal-wādī wa-dhālika al-jubb yata‘awwadhūn bi-l-lāh ‘azza wa-jalla min sharr tilka al-ḥayyah sab‘at marrāt; see Asad b. Mūsā, \textit{Zuhd}, 59-60.

\textsuperscript{594} Wensinck, \textit{Ocean}, 5.
aqra’ are two species associated with the punishment of the grave. Like jinn, infernal snakes were featured in popular adab; the story of “Bulūqiyyah and the Queen of the Serpents” in the Arabian Nights draws on infernal lore as well as elements ultimately deriving from the Gilgamesh epic.595

Snakes in graveyard stories are omens of hardship. Undertakers relate, for example, the difficulties they encounter in the burial of a governor as a black snake materializes in every grave making their only option to inter the body with it.596 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, who was fond of collecting such tales, includes the unusual case of an adulteress whose body was ripped to pieces by snakes as punishment for two sins: for sexual transgression and for the infanticide with which she concealed her initial crime.597

Scholars describe the grave as a place designed to keep the sinner in a permanent state of discomfort. One of its torments involves snakes gnawing at

597 There are two versions to this story; in the second, the snake whistles and a whole valley-full of reptiles picks the corpse of the woman clean (fa-nahashathā ḥattā baqiyat ‘izāman); see Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘Uqūbāt, 200-2.
both ends of a sinner’s body,\textsuperscript{598} thus creating the condition of intermittent
discomfort suffered by someone recently stung (\textit{al-manhūs}). The \textit{tinnin} — a
hydra composed of ninety-nine snakes each forking into seven or nine heads —
ceaselessly lacerates (\textit{khadsh}), licks (\textit{lahs}) and blows (\textit{nafkh}) on the sinner until
Judgment Day.\textsuperscript{599} The number is interpreted allegorically — in the opinion of
Ghazzālī, the snakes represent the sins and moral defects of jealousy, envy, arrogance and so on.\textsuperscript{600} Damīrī in his bestiary describes one \textit{tinnin} as a gigantic
reptile with a huge threatening mouth, long sharp spear-like fangs and blood-shot
eyes. The \textit{tinnin} in bestiaries possesses an amphibious dexterity that terrifies all
creatures on earth and sea alike. At the end of time, this \textit{tinnīn} will be cast into
hell.\textsuperscript{601}

The second reptile associated with the grave is the \textit{shujā‘ al-aqra‘} who
shares features similar to the interrogating angels, Munkar and Nakīr: the fiery
eyes, long metal claws, and thunderous voice. This snake is assigned to sinners

\textsuperscript{598} Ibn Rajab, \textit{Ahwāl}, 95-8; Suyūtī, \textit{Sharḥ al-ṣudūr}, 71; (nawmat al-manhūs...qāla ahl al-lughah
al-manhūs... al-malsū‘ bahasathu al-ḥayyah... wal-manhūs al-malsū‘ bahasathu al-ḥayyah..
almanhūs marratan yantabih li-shiddat al-alam ‘alayhi wa-marratan yanām ka ‘l-mughmā ‘alayhi);
see Qurṭubī, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:169-70.


\textsuperscript{600} Ghazzālī, \textit{Ihya‘ ‘ulūm al-dīn} (Cairo: n.p., 1965), 4:500.

\textsuperscript{601} Damīrī, \textit{Hayawān}, 1:233; s.v. tinnin; Mas‘ūdī, \textit{Murūj al-dhahab wa-ma‘ādin al-jawhar fi ‘l-tārikh}
(Cairo: al-Maṭba‘ah al-Bahiyyah al-Miṣriyyah, 1346h), 1:74. Dragons are also tinnin; Jāḥiẓ
records a sighting in Antioch of a creature two \textit{parsangs} long, with large fins with the head of a
man and long ears whose tail knocked the lighthouse down. The more skeptical argued that it
was a fiery tornado (\textit{iṣār fihi nār yakhruj min qibal al-baḥr}) that caused the damage; \textit{Hayawān},
7:105-6; 4:154.
who were lax with their prayers. 

Bestiaries explain that the term *shujā‘* is a synonym for reptile and that *qara‘* (baldness) is a condition brought about by the potency of its venom (eradicating hair growth). In the *qiyyāmah*, the snake attaches himself to another sinner; this time it is the miser who has evaded paying the *zakāh*. With fiery eyes, he pursues him demanding to eat his right arm before switching to the left. Homiletic literature captures the details of the pursuit and the screaming until the miser is delivered bound and armless to God!

Slithering snakes *en masse* becomes a standard motif associated with infernal fauna. Usurers emerge from their graves with enlarged and transparent bellies crawling with snakes. Similarly, worms crawl — as loud “as galloping asses” — beneath sinners’ skin. Tubular and strong, reptiles are ideal for bondage — swaddling sinners, crushing bones and blowing fire into their faces. The ‘*Aẓamah* manuscript acknowledges these abilities: adulterers parade in chain-gang fashion as thousands of black snakes encircle their

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602 Samarqandī, *Qurrat al-‘uyūn*, 4-5.
603 For legends about the strength and destructive capacities of the desert *shujā‘*; see Damīrī, *Hayawān*, 1:592-3, s.v. *al-shāh*.
enlarged genitals. Snakes ambush men who have kissed young boys devouring their mouths in a re-enactment of their sexual sin as well as punishing women by clawing (\textit{lil-hayyāt makhālib}) their wombs and brains.\textsuperscript{608} Like everything else in Jahannam, snakes are agents of divine wrath; the term \textit{talazzā}, such as in a crackling fire, is applied to the spitting of venom in the same way that a person spits out his anger.\textsuperscript{609} Readers are spared no detail — as the snake proceeds to squeeze its victim, we are told how it smacks its lips (\textit{yatalammez fa-yuṭawwiq bihi}) in eager relish against much screaming.\textsuperscript{610}

\textbf{VI. B. Scorpions}

Although storytellers like to elaborate on a natural alliance between infernal snakes and scorpions,\textsuperscript{611} Jāḥīẓ observes that the two species make odd bedfellows.\textsuperscript{612} Scorpions do not move fast; they are incapable of navigating water and lack the amphibious dexterity of their infernal partners.\textsuperscript{613} They do have in common, as bestiaries point out, an innate aggression illustrated through the manner of their birth where myriads of tiny scorpions eat their way out of their mother’s shell. This instinct for survival is sustained through the sharp and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[608] \textit{Ibid.}, fols. 27 a-b; 31a; 32a.
\item[609] Zamakhshari, \textit{Asās}, 566.
\item[610] Ibn Hajar al-Haytamî, \textit{Kabā’ir}, 1:187; Majlisî quotes another variant where the snake eats the brain, see \textit{Biḥār}, 7:183.
\item[611] In the \textit{Arabian Nights}, the progenitors are Khīlīt and Millīt who are transgendered in the modern sense of the term; Khīlīt, the female, takes the form of a lion with a masculine “tail” that resembles a tortoise and Millīt, the male, takes the form of a wolf whose “tail” resembles a vagina (\‘alā \textit{sūrat al-unthā}), see \textit{Alif Laylāh}, 2:607.
\item[613] \textit{Ibid.}, 5:119.
\end{footnotes}
unpredictable speed with which they assault their victim. Even a dead scorpion is not safe: its toxic tail can inject venom into any foot that has the bad luck of stepping on it.\textsuperscript{614}

The tail of a scorpion acts as its poison pouch; as an injecting tool it is referred to in Arabic as the “prong”.\textsuperscript{615} The infernal variety, on the other hand, is armed with an arsenal of seventy poisonous nibs as “long as palm trees”.\textsuperscript{616} Tha'labî gets technical: each tail contains a hefty dose of three hundred and sixty cartilages of poison, each cartilage has the injecting capacity of three hundred and sixty pricks.\textsuperscript{617} Jāḥiz remarks that these stings result in blood coagulation that affects the nervous system.\textsuperscript{618} Ghazzālī is clear that the torment associated with scorpion bites goes beyond the initial sting to include the lengthy period of toxicity — a \textit{hadith} describes the heat (\textit{ḥumūwatuhā}) of these infernal stings as lasting forty years.\textsuperscript{620} The ordeal of a scorpion’s sting is proverbial: \textit{laylat al-‘aqrab} refers to one long endless night of pain.\textsuperscript{621}

\textsuperscript{614} \textit{Ibid.}, 5:358. The deadliest varieties existed in the eastern provinces of the Muslim empire as Tha’ālībî notes: \textit{afā’ī Sijistān ma’ tha’ālib Miṣr wa-jarārāt al-Ahwāz wa-‘aqārib Shahrūz}; he also adds that if God created anything more evil than snakes and scorpions, al-Ahwāz would be capable of cloning it (\textit{tulāqqihahu wa-tuwallidahu}); see \textit{Laṭā‘if al-ma‘ārif}, 112-3; 176.

\textsuperscript{615} \textit{wa-qad tusammi al-‘arab ibrat al-‘aqrab shawkah}; Jāḥiz, \textit{Ḥayawān}, 112-3; 176.


\textsuperscript{617} Tha’ālībî, \textit{Qiṣas}, 6.

\textsuperscript{618} Jāḥiz, \textit{Ḥayawān}, 4:219-20. Jāḥiz mentions an experiment to test the fighting powers of scorpions and mice. They were placed in a glass jar and the contest ended with suffering mice and fatigued scorpions!; see \textit{ibid.}, 2:248.

\textsuperscript{619} Ghazzālī, \textit{Iḥyā’}, 4:500.

\textsuperscript{620} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, \textit{Ṣīlat al-nār}, 70.

\textsuperscript{621} Tha’ālībî, \textit{Thimār}, 430.
Afterlife texts magnify the scale and highlight the aggressive streak of these arachnids. The valley of *khusr* in the ‘Azama manuscript teems with thousands of scorpions herded by the *zabāniyah* the way a shepherd tends his flock. In one version of the image human flesh swarms with scorpions instead of worms, and skin tissue has layers of scorpions attacking one another. Often the punishment is precise: in the same manuscript, a scorpion is “administered” to an abdomen, poisoning and affecting all the internal organs simultaneously. In other cases, sinners are subjected to alternative “treatments”; one sinner in Samarqandi’s homiletic is first bitten by a snake causing his blood to bubble, then injected by scorpions thus releasing large amounts of pus. One can observe here a dialectic economy where the venom injected into the body produces the pus that is recycled back into Jahannam as drinking water.

In dreams *al-aswadān* are harbingers of enmity. A revealing dream (*ru’yā*) was related to Ibn Sirīn of a woman who dreamt of two snakes being milked. After noting that snakes do not produce milk but poison, Ibn Sirīn concluded that two Khārijites (*rajulān min ru’ūs al-khawārij*) were asking her to curse Abū Bakr

623 Ibid., fol. 29a.
624 *fa-talzaq [al-‘aqrab] bi-hashishat baṭnīhi ... fa-yāṣil al-summ ilā kābdīhi wa-fu‘ādihi wa-am‘āshihi fa-yakhruj ḍhālikā min dubrihi lā yafnā ākhiruh ḥattā yarji’ makānahu kābid wa-ṭīḥāḥ*; see *ibid.*, fol. 19b.
and ‘Umar. Tinnîn in dreams symbolize a despotic ruler — the more heads, the more ruthless. Nor did scorpions offer any consolation; they signified gossip, anal sex, pederasty and wayward offspring!

VI. C. The Dogs of Hell

The earliest reference to infernal canines goes back to a questionable ḥadîth traced to Ḥudhayfah b. al-Yamān (d. 36/656) describing a clamorous scene where fiery lions and dogs attack the inhabitants of hell. Sinners are strung up like sheep and angels proceed to hack them limb from limb, throwing their body parts to the pack. In the ‘Aẓamah rabid dogs populate the cold zamharîr (kilāb min zamharîr) and team up with angels in attacking the terrified, frozen and naked sinners. Tarḥīb texts have interpreted al-nāshiṭât nasḥtan in Q79:2 as dogs of fire set to tear meat from bone. Initially these references were not tagged to any sect and the term kalb encompasses both lions and dogs. This lack of precision is demonstrated when the Prophet curses one of his adversaries, ‘Utbah b. Abī Lahab, and asks God to let loose one of his dogs on him. ‘Utbah was said to have been subsequently attacked by a lion in Syria.

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626 Ibn Sîrîn, Tafsîr, 180; also see a shorter version of the dream in Jāḥîz, Hayawān, 4:269. Both Abū Bakr and ‘Umar were regarded by the Khârijites as rightly guided, see Crone, Medieval Islamic Political Thought (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 56.
627 Nābulusi, Taṭīr, 72, s.v. tinnîn.
629 Ibn Abî al-Dunyâ, Šifât al-nâr, 86.
631 Mundhirî, Tarḥīb, 1:39.
632 The texts do not make it clear whether it was ‘Utbah or his brother ‘Utaybah who was mauled by a lion. ‘Utbah converted after the conquest of Mecca; see Ghayṭî, Qissât al-mîrâj, 17-18.
Bestiaries apply *kalb* to other animals such as otters and sea lions (*kalb al-bahṛ*). Damīrī explains in his entry on lions that they are paired with dogs because of the manner with which they relieve themselves.

Dogs acquire a pejorative connotation: Jāḥīz allegedly described Khārijites and professional women mourners as the dogs of hell, or in another reading, the dogs of the inhabitants of hell. Ghazzālī believes that the punishment of the Khārijites in the grave, which involves being attacked by dogs, is the source of the pejorative epithet “dogs of hell.” Another variant explains it as the result of the Khārijites’ treacherous behavior (*kalibū*) against their Muslim brothers.

Fragments of this position can be found in *adab* works. In a dream the sister of the Khārijite Bilāl b. Mirdās, sees him as a dog with wet eyes informing her that they have all been transformed (*ḫuwwilnā*) into the dogs of the inhabitants of hell. However, metamorphosis (*maskh*) as punishment is absent in the Muslim afterlife. *Tarthīb*, nonetheless, transfers barking sounds to sinners; Samarqandi’s women wailers (*al-nāʾīḥāf*) stand on the gate of hell lamenting the fate of all

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634 Damīrī, *Ḥayawān*, 1:8, s.v. *al-asad*.
637 Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir*, 54-5. *Kalab* is a madness that affects dogs who can transmit it to the human should they get bitten; see Dhahabi, *al-Ṭibb al-nabawī*, 259-60.
incomers with loud barks and howls.⁶³⁹ In popular lore barking sounds, if translated, are said to bewail the fate of hell’s inhabitants.⁶⁴⁰

Animals make an appearance in the punishment of the grave. Apart from snakes and the enigmatic dābbah (beast) found in ḥadīth, later barzakh lore adds pigs, dogs and monkeys. The clairvoyant abilities (kashf) claimed by later šūfīs revealed graves full of puppies (jirw) and piglets (khinnawṣ)! The punishment lies in the discomfort of being confined with what the dead feared most.⁶⁴¹ Popular quṣṣāṣ compile a longer list of unfavourable animals; an apocryphal text attributed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib lists twenty-four categories of blighted mamsūkhīn that includes scorpions, snakes, turtles, spiders, bears, rabbits, elephants, beetles, foxes, dogs, mice, and two types of crows among others.⁶⁴²

VI. D. Insects

Referred to as the army of God, jund Allāh, insects earn the solid respect of Jāhiz.⁶⁴³ In Jahannam they terrify and torment their inhabitants.⁶⁴⁴ The term dhubāb, for flies, is a generic category that includes butterflies, bees, fleas, ants

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⁶³⁹ Samarqandi, Qurrat al-ʿuyūn, 32-3; Suyūṭī, Budūr, 431.
⁶⁴² Ibn Ishāq, Alf rāḥib, 72-81.
⁶⁴⁴ Thaʿālibī, Thīmār, 586-7, s.v. farāsh al-nār.
and wasps. Arabs, according to Jāḥiz, regarded some variants of stingers as a bad omen and as a recurrent evil (šharr dāʾīm). Flies and fleas were known as dhawāt al-kharāṭīm, or trunk owners, whose proboscis can penetrate the thickest surfaces. Locusts were the superstars of the insect world with the logo “the grand forces of God” (jund Allāh al-aʿzām) believed to be stamped on their wings. The ḥadīth which stated that all flies (except bees) are destined for hell was rejected by Ibn al-Jawzī. Many Muslims came to believe that a species would be created solely for hell’s environment drawing on the analogy to the “cold fire of Abraham” in order to explain its ability to withstand high temperatures.

The moral world of prophetic fables pits the mighty tyrant against these tiny robust forces of jund Allāh. Jāḥiz exhorts his readers to take heed of the many examples where a swarm of fleas or locusts, or a single mouse or ant can

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645 wal-ʿarab taʿal al-farāṣh wal-naḥl wal-zanābīr wal-dabr min al-dhibbān; see Jāḥiz, Ḥayawān, 3:305; also Ibn al-Athīr, Nihāyah, 2:152, s.v. dhubāb.
646 wal-dhubbān wa-l-baʿūḍ min dhawāt al-kharāṭīm wa-li-dhālika ishtadda ʿaddūhā wa-qawiyat ʿalā khārq al-julūd al-ghilāz; see Jāḥiz, Ḥayawān, 3:316. The trunk of an elephant is technically a proboscis so Arabic is not off the mark.
647 Damīrī, Ḥayawān, 1:266, s.v. al-jaṯād; also see KisāʾĪ, Qiṣṣas, 54. Lore attributed extraordinary abilities to the jaṯād; al-Dīmashqī’s (d. 727/1327) composite locust has the face of a horse, the eye of an elephant, the neck of a bull, the chest of a lion, the belly of a scorpion, the wings of an eagle, the thigh of a camel and the tail of a snake among other features; see Nūkhbat al-dahr fī ʿajāʾīb al-barr wa-baḥr, ed. A. F. Mehren (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1923), 216.
648 The maṭn of the ḥadīth is as follows: al-dhubāb kulluḥu fī l-nāʾr illā al-naḥḥ; see Dāmīrī, Ḥayawān, 1:501, s.v. al-dhubāb; al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, Nawādir, 132; Jāḥiz, Ḥayawān, 3:392; Ibn al-Jawzī, Mawḍūʿāt, 3:601.
649 Jāḥiz, Ḥayawān, 3:393; also Thāʿalibī, Thimār, 586-7. The reference here is to Q21:69 when the fire that Abraham was cast into did not harm him.
cause nations to buckle and perish. In apocalyptic narrative, locusts are the canary in the coal mine — once they perish, the rest of God’s nations will follow. Many 

tarihīb stories illustrate the destructive force of this divine air power: Ibn Abī al-Dunyā records how a man who would not cease from cursing Abū Bakr and ‘Umar was attacked by a swarm of bees, who mysteriously disappeared after tearing him apart and picking his bones clean. Although texts offer no detail on insect torment in hell, Damīrī believes that their annoyance will remain the same. Insects in dream manuals signify enemies.

The chief of the tribe of Tamīm, al-Aḥnaf b. Qays (d. 72/691), in a spirit of patronage found one good reason for honoring the masses (ghawghā’) and the ignorant: they “carry the burden of shame and hell-fire in order to free you from it”. The term ghawghā’ applies to both the masses and to locusts and flees. That the collective is compared to insects can be paralleled in a hadīth parable where the Prophet compares himself to a man who, after lighting a fire, stands

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650 Jāhiz, Hayawān, 3:303-4. The tyrant Nimrod who defied God in the story of the tower of Babel was brought down by a flea that tormented his brain; see Tha’labī, Qiṣaṣ, 85.
651 Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād (d. 229/844), Kitāb al-Fītal (Mecca: al-Maktabah al-Tijāriyyah, 1991), 138. Fried locusts were commonly consumed and the Prophet’s wives would exchange them as gifts. Eating too many locusts can induce emaciation (huzāḥ); see Dhahābī, Tibb, 129.
653 Damīrī, Hayawān, 1:501, s.v. dhubāb.
654 Ibn Buhlīl, Dalā’il, 429.
655 wa-kānā al-Aḥnaf yaqūl akrimū al-ghawghā’ wal-sufahā’ fa-innahum yaktūnākum al-‘ār wal-nār; Tha’ālibī, Taḥṣīn al-qabīl, 41.
656 Damīrī, Hayawān, 2:129, s.v. ghawghā’. Other terms include ḥatl, qazam, qamash, qarmish, qarbishūsh, ḥuthālah, hamaj and khushārah; see Abū Misḥal, Nawādir, 1:81.
powerless as flies \((farāsh)\) fall into the flames.\(^657\) The term \(hamaj\) (fleas) also carries the same association.\(^658\) To Jāḥiẓ flies are synomymous with dirt, foulness, sweat and bad odor; armies are always trailed by swarms of them which move with them from one camp to the next.\(^659\) Al-Aḥnaf’s statement supports the implied elitism: the \(ghawghā’\), nameless and faceless, are sacrificed, so that privilege is maintained. As we will see in the next chapter, as the ‘\(ulamā’\) focus on defining who sinners are, that collective acquires many faces and bodies.

**VII. Conclusion**

Sustainability in Jahannam is born out of its frugality and poverty. Its terrain offers little beyond heat, darkness, scarce water resources and meager vegetation. Tradition describes all of Jahannam as black: its fires, its people and its trees. Fire and darkness constitute one unit: \(al-nār al-kubrā\) (the prototype of all fires) provides heat but no light. Scholars worked out the details: its nature, the sources of fuel, combustion, velocity and maintenance. Darkness is not only a result of Jahannam’s intense heat; smog, clouds and hot winds contribute to the blackout of Jahannam. Our far from friendly infernal skies are choked with flames and shooting fires. Infernal clouds offer no shade, shelter, breeze or rain.


\(^659\) *amīr al-dhibbān*; see Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, 3:331-2, 342, 347.
Winds bring no relief except push to barren clouds that mirror the desolation of the wasteland below. Such desolation mirrors the nature of Jahannam’s inhabitants whom the Qur’ān describes as a “barren lot”. Hell’s vegetation is stunted, bitter and spiky. The zaqqūm, much ridiculed by the Prophet’s adversaries, derives its nourishment from hell’s igneous rock. The roughness of such a regimen can be heard in rumbling bellies. Infernal waters offer little relief. A thick, black sludge of oil, pus and tears — the waters in hell are as hot as they are corrosive.

Nothing in Jahannam’s landscape is forgiving, it offers no comfort, no shade and no respite. Snakes and scorpions make survival more arduous. Its hostility is masked — the fruits of the zaqqūm look beautiful but turn out wormy, the clouds promise relief only to pour shackles or sweat, the waters of the šadīd look clear but taste of pus and snakes lurk beneath every rock.

It is clear that such wa‘īd is constructed with wa‘d (promises) in mind. Deprivation is contrasted against the abundance of paradise. The absence of fire in paradise, however, posed a dilemma for those who extolled the delectable featherless and boneless fowl — succulent as butter and sweet as honey. Some suggested that the cooking be done outside paradise and the dishes brought in or that the bird’s flesh is cooked by the body’s heat as it is being digested! In the
end, it might be best to leave matters to God; the cooking could be done inside
paradise by means only known to the Almighty.\footnote{Ibn al-Jawzī, \textit{Bustān}, 142; Zād al-masīḥ, 7:326 to Q 56:21; Ibn Ḥabīb al-Sulami, \textit{Waṣf al-
fidaws}, 31; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, \textit{Ḥādi}, 193-4. Cooking was not the only activity that
required fire in paradise. Incense burners (\textit{majāmīr}) that perfum \textit{ḥūrī} braids were another which
Majlisi cites as being accomplished by means known only to God (\textit{bi-qudrat al-Jabbār}); see \textit{Biḥār},
8:175.}

Jahannam’s habitat was assembled with the idea that its inhabitants were
a differentiated population. As this chapter has shown, the human body is
integral to the ignition and maintenance of hell’s fires. Before the doomed
became sinners, they were a collective of the large bodied whose lips sagged
down to their navels. Their flesh was charred, their bellies large (\textit{hubn}), blue-
eyed and hideous.\footnote{Ibn al-Mubārak, \textit{Zuhd}, 84.} The initial heat wave (\textit{lafṭa}) in Q23:104 stretched their flesh
(\textit{kalaḥa}) curling the top lip to the middle of their faces while the bottom lip sagged
to their navels.\footnote{Ibid., 84; Zayd b. ‘Alī, \textit{Gharib}, 288; Bayhaqī, \textit{Ba‘th}, 298; Qurṭubi, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:508; Ibn Kathīr,
\textit{Niḥāyah}, 2:309.} Scholars debated the particulars: which was more severe — the
\textit{lafṭah} (the heat blast) or the \textit{kalaḥa} (the curling of the lips like roasted
sheep)?\footnote{Ibn al-Jawzī adds \textit{nafaḥa} to describe windburn from cold blasts; see Zād al-masīḥ, 5:256.} The initial blast causes flesh to fall off like a garment so that sinners
find their movements constrained as they drag their flayed skin at the tendons
(‘\textit{arāqīb}).\footnote{Ibn al-Kharrāṭ, \textit{‘Aqībah}, 296; Bayhaqī, \textit{Ba‘th}, 289; Suyūṭī, \textit{Budūr}, 453; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī,
\textit{Kabā‘ir}, 2:254.} These are the generic images of Jahannam’s inhabitants before they
became “sinners”. The \textit{wa‘īd} offers a new identity — as we will see in the next
chapter, the sinner comes with a warning label for others not to do the same.

\footnote{Ibn al-Jawzī, \textit{Bustān}, 142; Zād al-masīḥ, 7:326 to Q 56:21; Ibn Ḥabīb al-Sulami, \textit{Waṣf al-
fidaws}, 31; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, \textit{Ḥādi}, 193-4. Cooking was not the only activity that
required fire in paradise. Incense burners (\textit{majāmīr}) that perfum \textit{ḥūrī} braids were another which
Majlisi cites as being accomplished by means known only to God (\textit{bi-qudrat al-Jabbār}); see \textit{Biḥār},
8:175.}
I. Introduction

The status of the Muslim sinner dominated early theological debate. Initially afterlife texts referred to sinners as *ahl al-nār* (the inhabitants of hell); such spatial association can be traced to the Qurʾān where they are described as *aṣḥāb al-nār,*665 *aṣḥāb al-jahīm,*666 *aṣḥāb al-sāʾir,*667 *aṣḥāb al-mashʿamaḥ,*668 and *aṣḥāb al-shimāl.*669 To belong to the Muslim community implied an adherence to the Qurʾān and the *sunnah.* With God as the Divine Legislator acts were divided into permissible (*al-ḥalāl*) and prohibited (*al-ḥarām*) with the latter seen as unjust by virtue of the fact they were forbidden.670 Adherence to divine law guaranteed the welfare of the Muslim community; those who committed prohibited acts were seen as challenging this ethical framework.671 The debates on sin, known as

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665 Q2:81, 89, 117, 257, 275, 3:116, 7:36, 44, 47, 50, 10:27, 13:5, 39:8, 40:43, 58:17, 59:20, 64:10. In verse 74:31 the angels of hell are referred to as *aṣḥāb al-nār.* The Qurʾān does not refer to hell's inhabitants as *ahl al-nār,* the only *ahl* sinners have are the ones they are separated from by being in hell; see Q39:15, 42:45.
668 Q56:9, 90:19.
669 Q56:41.
671 The Muslim community is often described as a theocracy; Majid Khadduri prefers the term “Divine nomocracy”, arguing that a theocracy implies a direct exercise of authority by God as in
*mas'alat al-kabîrah* (the issue of major sin), questioned whether a sinner was not, in effect, forfeiting his membership of the community. Some Muslim groups adopted hard-line positions labeling the grave sinner as *kâfir* (unbeliever), *fâsiq* (impious person who commits a major sin) or *munâfiq* (hypocrite) while others, such as the Murji’ah, argued that sin did not compromise a Muslim’s faith or his status as a believer. These debates were to have an impact on the afterlife narrative by transforming *așhâb al-nâr* into a population of offenders serving sentences for breaking the laws of God.⁶⁷²

Whereas for almost two centuries the *așhâb al-nâr* lacked differentiation, afterlife texts begin to allude to them as a population of adulterers, drunks, usurers, tyrants, killers, corrupt ‘ulamâ’ and so on. On Judgment Day deformed bodies and contorted faces advertize their various transgressions — in fact, the *așhâb al-nâr* emerge from their graves as marked men and women. The body of the sinner became central to the infernal narrative. To differentiate sinners according to the mandates they had broken marks a change in Islamic *wa’id*

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⁶⁷² Not all scholars endorsed applying the principles of the ḥadd to afterlife punishment. The Mu’tazilite qâdi ‘Abd al-Jabbâr (d. 414/1023) considered a ḥadd a punishment from God that is given in this world and not extended to hell; see Margaretha T. Heemskerk, *Suffering in Mu’tazilite Theology: ‘Abd al-Jabbâr’s Teaching on Pain and Divine Justice* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2000), 154.
where the body of the sinner became a billboard warning others against following a similar course.

II. Sin and the Afterlife:

II. A. Texts on Sin

Moral defects impact a man’s probity (‘adl) as seen in early works on ethics that focus on the codes of proper conduct. Treatises on virtues and vices were based on the simple premise that poor morals (sū’ al-khulq) were incompatible with true belief. Establishment of his probity (ta’dîl) permitted a man to stand up and be counted among the upright members of his community. With the principle of “commanding right and forbidding wrong” becoming a collective obligation, texts on virtues and vices brought into public discourse a sharpened awareness of all aspects relating to moral standing — as Michael Cook puts it “there was nothing narrow to the concept of duty”.

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675 M. Cook, “al-Nazy ‘an al-Munkar,” EI² Suppl. 12:644-6 and “Virtues and Vices,” EQ 5:438. In listing the pillars of faith such as prayer and zâkāh, it is clear that the way of paradise, as Wensick maintains, is the way of service of the one God; see Muslim Creed, 20.
Many of the ḥadīths quoted in homiletic works listed not only categories of transgressions but also principles of punishment. Jurists composed popular tracts; as mentioned in the first chapter, the Ḥanafī jurist Samarqandi’s text *Qurrat al-ʿuyūn* is as much about afterlife justice as it is about sin. Injured parties — such as indignant mothers or abused children — appear to testify and accuse. Sin, in Samarqandi’s view, is often committed on more than one level. Professional women wailers do not only break a prohibition against excessive demonstrations of grief but also in effect bear false witness (*shahādat al-zūr*) by not experiencing the loss they so loudly proclaim. Similarly, evading *zakāh* is not only about shirking a requirement of the faith but is evidence of avarice — a trait much abhorred by the Prophet. In this way a *zakāh* evader falls short of the ideal code of Muslim conduct. The bodies of Samarqandi’s sinners advertize their transgressions, whether it be the malodorous genitals of adulterers or the enlarged bellies of usurers. In these texts sin assaults the senses and acquires a physical dimension — a face and a body it did not have in earlier works. One

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676 When it was mentioned to the Prophet that an observant woman, *imra’ah muta’abbidah*, was stingy (*bakhilah*) his rhetorical response was to question what good there was in her (*fa-mā khayruhā idhan?*); see *Wakī‘ b. al-Jarrāh*, *Zuhd*, 2:661.

677 Michel Foucault reminds us how the body of the condemned was central to the spectacle of justice: “[justice] must mark the victim: it is intended either by the scar it leaves on the body, or by the spectacle that accompanies it, to brand the victim with infamy… in any case men will remember the public exhibition, the pillory, torture and pain duly observed. And from the point of view of the law that imposes it, public torture and execution must be spectacular, it must be seen by all as a triumph. The very excess of violence employed is one of the elements of its glory: the fact that the guilty man should moan and cry under the blows is not a shameful side effect, is the very ceremonial of justice being expressed in all its force.”; see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prisons*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 34.
must here point out that the *mi'rāj* in Samarqandi’s text was apocryphal, suggesting the uses the genre (and format) was put to.

The variety on the docket was impressive. Jahannam inhabitants emerge from their graves as monkeys, pigs, dogs and deformed humans — deaf, mute or blind they cling to one another. Unsteady on their feet, pus oozes out of their mouths and fiery scabs blight their bodies; some are bound and others have their tongues pulled out from the nape of their necks. Another list describes torsos with no limbs, large bellies filled with snakes, sagging lips, bloated bodies, tongueless faces, slit throats, lepers — this rag-tag army was no match for believers with faces like “full moons” speeding across the *ṣīrāt*. Whoever doubts the merits (faḍl) of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalib will be resurrected, in one Shi‘ite passage, with a fiery collar of three thousand scowling, spitting demons.

II. B. Sin: A Classification

Apart from polytheism (*shirk*), which the Qur‘ān unequivocal ranks as the gravest of all sins (*ithm ‘azīm*), the list of Muslim sins extends anywhere from

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680 man shakka fi faḍl ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalib fa-innahu yub’ath yawm al-qiyāmah min qabrīhi wa-fi ‘unqihi ʿawq min nār dhū thalāthimi’at shu’bah wa-fi kull shu’bah Shayṭān yakshiru fi wajhihi ʿābisan wa-yafufu fi wajhihi; *ibid.*, 58.
681 Q4:48; 5:72.
three to seven hundred. A famous tradition of Abū Hurayrah lists the seven deadly sins (al-mūbiqāt/al-muhlikāt) as polytheism, sorcery, murder, usurping the property of orphans, usury, fleeing from battle and slandering the reputation of good women. Ibn ‘Abbās defines a major sin (kabīrah) as every act the Qur’ān describes as meriting God’s displeasure, His curse or the punishment of fire. The magnitude of the taste of sorting through Qur’ānic verse can be appreciated when one considers that the total body of legal verses exceeds five hundred in addition to verses where impermissibility is not always clear. Some scholars sought to limit sins to those mentioned in the first thirty verses of sūrah 4 (al-Nisā’). The ṣūfī Abū Ṭalib al-Makkī (d. 386/996) sums up seventeen grave sins or kabā‘īr: four in the heart (idolatry, persistence in disobedience, despair of the mercy of God, false sense of security from His wrath); four in the tongue (slander, perjury, sorcery, and depriving another of his rights under oath); three in the stomach (coveting an orphan’s allowance, usury and drinking wine); two in the genitals (adultery and pederasty), two in the hand (theft and murder), one in the legs (fleeing from battle) and one in the entire body (‘uqūq or disobedience to

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683 Qualitatively speaking the legal material in the Qur’ān could be indeed larger if one factors in repetition. Terms such as ḥarrama (prohibit) and its counterpart ḥalla provide clear directives especially in food prohibitions; see Wael Hallaq, “Forbidden,” in *EQ* 2:223-6, “Law and the Qur’ān,” *ibid.*, 3:150 and Joseph E. Lowry, “Lawful and Unlawful,” *ibid.*, 3:174-5.

Muḥāsibī separates sins into two groups: sins such as those itemized by Abū Ṭālib al-Makki (dhunūb al-jawāriḥ) and moral sins related to conscience (dhunūb al-ḍamīr) such as arrogance, envy, hypocrisy and so on. In addition to using ḥudūd or legal punishments as benchmarks for kabaʾir, some scholars defined sins as those acts whose gravity cannot be atoned for through penalties, such as polytheism or murder. One single sin or omission can cast a long shadow; the caliph ‘Umar was the first to maintain that he who neglects prayer has no part in Islām (lā islām li-man taraka al-ṣalāh). In fact, the tārik al-ṣalāh is the first sinner on Samarqandī’s list.

Scholars also resorted to pairing sin in major/minor categories; polytheism is described as al-shirk al-akbar while hypocrisy is al-shirk al-aṣghar, thus upgrading hypocrisy to a serious transgression. Another type of pairing is by listing two items as part of a category; for example, women’s perdition is

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685 Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Kabāʾir, 1:12. Most exegetes agree that the reference to julūd in Q41:20 is a metaphor for the genitals and that the first to speak is the right thigh giving adultery a lead “voice” over other sins. The kuffār inevitably deny their own record. Ṭabīʿī points out that the anthropomorphism involved in nutq al-jawāriḥ was, understandably, very difficult for the Muʿtazilites to accept; see Mafātīḥ, 7:364-6; also see others on nutq al-jawāriḥ, Ṭabarī, Jāmiʿ, 24: 106-8; Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, 6:168-70; Zamakhshārī, al-Kaṣḥāf, 4:195-6.

686 Tawahhum, 11. Muḥāsibī, after all, takes his sobriquet from regularly monitoring his own acts (muhāṣabat al-nafs). Ibn Abī al-Dunyā relates how a descendant of Talḥa b. ‘Ubayd Allāh named Tawbah b. al-Ṣimmah calculated that if he committed one sin a day, he would meet his Maker with a total of twenty-one thousand sins, at which point he fainted and expired; see Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Ighāṣah, 83.


688 Qur’ānic verses that include the term ḥudūd are prescriptive as with Q2:187, 2:229-30, 58:4 and 65:1. Two tarqīḥ verses promise the faithful who recognize their ḥudūd paradise and threaten those who transgress with hell; see Q4:13-14, 9:112.
attributed to a weakness for the “two reds” (\textit{al-\text{"a}hmar\text{"a}n}) — perfume and jewelry.\footnote{Lane, Lexicon, 2:642, s.v. \textit{\text{"u}mr}. Men are also susceptible to \textit{al-\text{"a}hmar\text{"a}n}; Ab\text{"u} Misha\text{"a}l attributes men’s perdition to flesh and wine or the plural \textit{ah\text{"a}mirah} if one adds fragrance; see \textit{Naw\text{"a}dir}, 1:372.}

The first transgressor is Iblis who refused to obey God’s command.\footnote{The \textit{aw\text{"a}’il} genre was far from uniform; the earliest compilations consulted for this thesis are Ab\text{"u} Bakr Ibn Abi ‘Âsim (d. 287/900), \textit{al-Aw\text{"a}’il}, ed. Ab\text{"u} Hâjir Basuyunî Zaghlûl (Beirut: Dûr al-Kutub al-’Ilmiyyah, 1987); Ab\text{"u} al-Qâsim al-Tabarâni, \textit{K. al-aw\text{"a}’il}, ed. Marwân al-’Atjiyyah and Shaykh al-Râshid (Beirut: Dûr al-Jil, 1992); Abû Hilâl al-’Askari, \textit{al-Aw\text{"a}’il}; Abû Bakr al-Jarrâ’î (d. 883/1478), \textit{al-Aw\text{"a}’il}, ed. ’Âdil al-Furayjât (Beirut: Dûr al-Imân, 1988) and Suyûtî, \textit{al-Wasâ’il fi musâmarat al-aw\text{"a}’il}, cf 171. See also Rosenthal, “Aw\text{"a}’il,” \textit{EI} 2:1758-9. The \textit{dh"{i}q"{a}ns} can be roughly understood as gentry and were either urban absentee landlords or lived in villages forming a link between the countryside and the central government. They were the basis of Sassanian power and kept their influence after the Islamic conquest. Not all were Persians, some were Arameans or Arabs. Many administrators as late as the third century hijri were from the \textit{dh"{i}q"{a}n} families of Iraq; see Hugh Kennedy, \textit{The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphat\text{'es: the Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century} (Harlow: Longman, 2004), 11.}

\footnote{Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, \textit{Kab\text{"a}’ir}, 1:57. European confessors’ manuals catalogued sins according to social class; to each estate its own vices. “On a flyleaf of a thirteenth century Florentine manuscript … we read: The devil has nine daughters whom he has married off: simony to the secular clerks, hypocrisy to the monks, rapine to the knights, sacrilege to the peasants, feint to the sergeants, fraud to the merchants, usury to the burgesses, worldly pomp to the matrons and luxury which he did not marry to anyone but whom he offers to all as a common whore”; see Jacques Le Goff, \textit{Medieval Civilization 400-1500}, trans. Julia Barrow (Oxford, New York: B. Blackwell, 1988), 263-4, 277-8.} Stereotypes soon attribute defects to social groups. One \textit{\text{"u}dith} maintains that six types will end up in hell: the princes for their oppression (\textit{jawr}), the nomads for their tribal chauvinism (\textit{\text{"a}şabiyyah}), the Persian gentry (\textit{dihqa\text{"a}ns}) for their arrogance (\textit{takabbur}),\footnote{The dihqa\text{"a}ns can be roughly understood as gentry and were either urban absentee landlords or lived in villages forming a link between the countryside and the central government. They were the basis of Sassanian power and kept their influence after the Islamic conquest. Not all were Persians, some were Arameans or Arabs. Many administrators as late as the third century hijri were from the dihqa\text{"a}n families of Iraq; see Hugh Kennedy, \textit{The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphat\text{'es: the Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century} (Harlow: Longman, 2004), 11.} merchants for their cheating (\textit{kiy\text{"a}nah}), peasants (\textit{ahl al-rust\text{"a}q}) for their boorishness (\textit{jah\text{"a}lah}) and scholars for their envy (\textit{\text{"a}sad}).\footnote{Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, \textit{Kab\text{"a}’ir}, 1:57. European confessors’ manuals catalogued sins according to social class; to each estate its own vices. “On a flyleaf of a thirteenth century Florentine manuscript … we read: The devil has nine daughters whom he has married off: simony to the secular clerks, hypocrisy to the monks, rapine to the knights, sacrilege to the peasants, feint to the sergeants, fraud to the merchants, usury to the burgesses, worldly pomp to the matrons and luxury which he did not marry to anyone but whom he offers to all as a common whore”; see Jacques Le Goff, \textit{Medieval Civilization 400-1500}, trans. Julia Barrow (Oxford, New York: B. Blackwell, 1988), 263-4, 277-8.} It is interesting that all of the above would fall under Mu\text{"a}sibî’s category of \textit{dhun\text{"u}b al-\text{"a}dami\text{"i}} or moral defects. The Qur’ân applies this form of collective branding to
the nomads (al-a‘rāb) who are described as ungrateful, hypocritical and incapable of observing the ḥudūd Allāh.\textsuperscript{693} Akhbār would come to label those who adopted contrarian dogmas (ahl al-ahwā‘), so the qadarīs, for example, are designated the Zoroastrians of this ummah, and so on.\textsuperscript{694}

Generic sinners in ḥadīth are an unrefined bunch.\textsuperscript{695} Apart from the oppressors (jabbārūn) and the arrogant (mutakabbirūn), the list includes the coarse (qa‘barī sometimes rendered as ja‘barī to mean stocky),\textsuperscript{696} the thickset (jawwāz … al-kathīr al-lāḥm al-ghaliẓ al-ḍakhm); the short-tempered impatient types (ji‘zān), the wrong-headedly argumentative (‘utul),\textsuperscript{697} the one who hastens to those in power with evil (qallā‘ or daybūb); qallā‘ also applies to the liar, the

\textsuperscript{693} Q9:97; see also Zamakhshari’s explanation of the terms ‘urb and ta‘rib, see Rabi‘, 2:156.

\textsuperscript{694} Ibn al-Athīr, Nihāyah, 4:255, s.v. majasa. According to Wensinck the reasoning behind the association of qadarīs and Mu‘tazilites with dualism is their position that man as author of his acts makes him comparable to being a second creator; see Muslim Creed, 62. Ibn al-Jawzī refutes the authenticity of this ḥadīth; see Mawḍū‘āt, 1:451; Zamakhsharī, Rabi‘, 1:454-5.

\textsuperscript{695} That tyrants and the arrogant constitute the rank and file of Jahannam is mentioned in the ḥadīth where hell and paradise protest (iḥtajjat) to God; hell complains of the dominance of the two groups cited here while paradise objects to having the majority of the poor; see Nawawī, al-Aḥādīth al-qudsīyyah, ed. Muṣṭafā Āshūr (Cairo: Maktabat al-i‘tiṣām, 1978), 4:9.

\textsuperscript{696} Ibn al-Athīr, Nihāyah, 4:86, s.v. qa‘bar. These are unusual words; Zamakhshari calls the difficult man (shādīd fāḥish) a ‘abqārī and al-Azhari admits not knowing the term; see Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, 2:292, s.v. ja‘bar. Some versions read ja‘zārī, see Ibn ‘Imrān al-Mawsīlī, Zuhd, 223; Kharā’īti, Masāwi’ al-akhlāq wa-madhīmūnah, ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā (Beirut: Mu‘assisat al-Kutub al-Tujāriyyah, 1993), 235.

\textsuperscript{697} Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, 3:362; Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 4:2190; Tirmidhī, Sunan, 7:266; Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, 4:175; Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, 2:420, s.v. jawwāz.
grave digger, and the procurer, and finally the morally lax husband who offers his wife to other men (dayyūth).

II. C. Principles of Punishment

As will be seen, the main principle of punishment in the Muslim afterlife is based on principle of qīsāṣ (lex talionis). Painters will be asked to breathe life into the images they depicted; in one version they do indeed come to life and proceed to torment them. Severity is contingent upon many factors such as seniority and knowledge so that transgressions committed by the old are punished more severely than those committed by the clueless young. As will be shown here, ḥadd penalties are applied with greater harshness in the afterlife. Crucifixion, which in the Islamic legal system is restricted to highway robbery, is punishment for drinking wine, pederasty, illegal gains and ‘uqūq. The visibility of

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698 li-annahu yaqla’ al-mutamakkin min qalb al-amīr fa-yużiluhu ‘an rutbatihī kamā yaqla’ al-nabāṭ min al-arḍ; Ibn al-Athīr, Nihāyah, 4:102, s.v. qala’.
699 Anbārī, Zāhir, 2:144. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s (d. 852/1449) list of ten is a complete one: al-qallā’ (one who associates with princes), al-ḥayyūf (the gravedigger), al-qattāt (the gossipier), al-dayyūth (the cuckold), al-qurṭabah (the drummer), šāhīb al-kūb (the ṭānīr player); al-‘utul (who commits all sins), al-żānim (the unemployed bastard) and the famous ‘aqq al-wālidayn; see his Isti’dād li-yawm al-mī‘ād, ed. ‘Ādil Abū al-Ma‘āṭī (Cairo: Dār al-Bašīr lil-Ṭibā‘ah wal-Našr, 1960), 113-14.
700 Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 3:1671; Tirmidhī, Sunan, 6:67; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Kabā‘ir, 2:32; Mundhīrī, Tarḥīb, 4:54; ‘Aynī, ‘Umdah, 2:70, 76.
701 Nasā‘ī (d. 303/915), Sunan, ed. Hasan Muḥammad al-Mas‘ūdī (Cairo: al-Maṭba‘ah al-Miṣrīyyah bi l’-Azhar, 1930), 8:214-6; Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 3:1670-1. Dhahābī offers a helpful suggestion that if artists must draw they should depict trees and objects that have “no soul”; see Kabā‘ir, 182.
punishment, such as being nailed to a pole, is part of this homiletic message.\textsuperscript{703} Leprosy (judhām) is mentioned frequently as a blight that affects the entire body or certain parts with texts explaining the connection behind the affliction and the sin in question.\textsuperscript{704} One important principle of punishment needs to be mentioned with regard to the Prophet’s wives: because of their special status in the community, the Qur‘ān makes clear that these women would either be doubly rewarded or doubly punished in the afterlife.\textsuperscript{705}

The rest of this chapter focuses on ten categories of sinners beginning with Muslim scholars. The remaining nine cover prayer, blood matters, breaking the prohibition on wine, sins of the tongue, sins related to money, transgressions committed by women, and ‘uqūq or disobedience to parents. This trail concludes with the last group to enter hell — professional women wailers. These categories, as will be shown, are not mutually exclusive. Other sins, such as the practice of sorcery, are not discussed in the texts consulted.

\textsuperscript{703} F. E. Vogel, “Ṣalīb,” \textit{EI²} 8:935-6; Wensinck and D. Thomas, “Ṣalīb,” \textit{ibid.}, 8:980-1.

\textsuperscript{704} A ḥadīth maintains that whoever forgets the Qur‘ān meets God as a leper (ajdham). The assumption is that this sinner will have no hands which led Ibn Qutaybah to conclude that there is an error (ghalat) here in that not every leper has no hands and that a hand has nothing to do with forgetfulness. Others have suggested that the missing hands are a metaphor for appearing in front of God with no goodness (khayr); see Khaṭṭābī, \textit{Gharīb},1:309-12.

\textsuperscript{705} Q33:28-31.
III. Sinners:

III. A. Scholars: the qurrā’, ‘ulamā’, quṣṣāṣ and quḍāḥ

The prominent position given to the ‘ulamā’ in ḥadīth reflects the high value placed on religious knowledge.706 Despite their distinguished status as witnesses and intercessors at the qiyyāmah, the Qur’ān warns that their knowledge could deprive them of the excuse of pleading innocence.707 Angels arrest sinful Qur’ān reciters sooner than even the worst offenders, the idolaters (‘abadat al-awthān), and tell them “he who knows is not the same as he who does not.”708 Scholars fall victim to the sin of pride and many criticized their own profession for what Muḥāṣibī would have deemed sins of conscience: envy, arrogance, hypocrisy and greed.709 Moreover, a profession with a strong reliance on oral transmission and mentorship is also susceptible to “sins of the tongue”.

Rumblings started early: Wakī‘ b. al-Jarrāḥ (d. 197/812) reports that those who will have the most to account for at the qiyyāmah will be the ones who will have the most to account for at the qiyyāmah will be the ones who

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707 Q39:9, 35:28, 58:11.

708 *layṣa man ya’lam ka-man lā ya’lam;* see Mundhirī, *Tarhib*, 1:76; Ibn Ḥajār al-Haytamī, *Kabā‘ir*, 1:93. Ibn al-Jawzī contests the above tradition, believing that its intent is to debase (wahrī) scholars and that the first sin to be punished is kufr; see Mawḍū‘āt, 1:346-7.

about sin (ma‘ṣiyah). The sins of Jewish scholars were constant reminders of the slippery slope: the Qur‘ān accuses rabbis (aḥbār) of distorting and concealing their own scripture, trading it for financial gain and failing to keep the laws of the Torah.

The disposition of scholars was not always bleak. In alluding to themselves as heirs of the prophets, the ‘ulamā’ step up as the first rank of intercessors at the qiyāmah. Later texts embellish this acclaim with the image of the Prophet honoring scholars at the ḥawd by cupping water with his hands in a gesture of appreciation. More self-promoting material can be found in some akhbār where mere acquaintance with a scholar — a similarity in name even — could guarantee its lucky possessor a lighter ḥisāb. As a class the ‘ulamā’ represented social and religious stability; their contribution to the collection and study of ḥadīth enhanced their prestige. In a broad definition the ranks of the ‘ulamā’ included ahl al-ḥadīth, Qur‘ān reciters (qurrā), jurists, exegetes and

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710 Wakī b. al-Jarrāḥ, Zuhd, 2:546.
714 Claude Gilliot, “Ulamā‘,” EI 10:802; Louise Marlow, “Scholars,” EQ 4:537-40. Nowhere do these two article discuss the criticism directed at the profession.
quṣṣāṣ or storytellers. It was not a profession free of pitfalls; the relationship of ‘ulamā’ with political power was always problematic and, as we will see, “counsel” (nasīḥah) was seen as a euphemism for appeasing the powerful (si‘āyah).  

Saḥnūn (d. 240/854), Mālikī jurist in Qayrawān, would come to comment on how loathsome (mā asmaja) for someone to arrive to the majlis of a scholar only to find it vacant and learn that the company of the powerful was the cause of his absence.  

The qurrā’, or as the earliest sources would refer to them, asḥqiyā’  

ḥamalat al-Qurān, were among the first groups assigned to a specific location — jubb al-ḥuzn — in Jahannam. Opinions vary as to who the qurrā’ were; it has been suggested that they were the early Muslim settlers in Iraq who opposed the move to abolish the distinctions and benefits that separated them from latecomers. Initially they supported ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, then some split with the Khawārij. Known for their devotional recitation of the Qurān, they have been

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715 Si‘āyah translates as reaching out; see Tha‘ālibī, Taḥṣīn al-qabīḥ, 27-8. Sufyān al-Thawrī commented that any qārī’ at the door of power (bāb al-sulṭān) is without a doubt a thief (liṣṣ); see Dinawāris (d. 333/944), Kitāb al-Mujālasah wa-jawāhir al-‘ilm, ed. ‘Adnān ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Majīd al-Qaysī (Mecca: Mu’assasat al-Rayyān, 1997), 1:376.


717 Ibn Mājah, Sunan, 1:94; Asad b. Mūsā, Zuhd, 59-60; Qurṭubi, Tadhkurrah, 1:488; Mundhirī, Tarḥīb, 4:229.

718 Bakrī mentions that seventy thousand of the Anṣār sent by the Prophet as re-enforcements were known as qurrā’; see Mu’jam, 2:549, s.v. Ma‘ūnah.
labeled as the ultra-pious party. For all their piety many of the qurrā’ were unreliable transmitters of ḥadīth.

The criticism levelled against the qurrā’ highlighted the hypocrisy of their renunciants' lifestyle when they were better known for their greed and fickleness. In Ibn Mājah’s Sunan, the qurrā’ are cited for visiting oppressive rulers (al-umarā’ al-jawarah). Al-Ḥasan al-Ḥasārī criticized the manner in which they hawked the Qur’ān as if it were a commodity (biqā‘ah), coveting money from rulers and ordinary people alike. The Umayyad caliph al-Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 705/85-715/96) was the first to put them on the government payroll. Their dubious reputation led some to believe that the qurrā’ learnt the Qur’ān to allay suspicions and that they were the true hypocrites the Prophet warned against. Many believed that learning the Qur’ān would free them from punishment in the afterlife (yarfa‘ anhum al-‘adhāb). Bribery tainted their reputation especially when in the service of the powerful, so much so that many ascetics would have

721 Muhāsibī, al-Ri‘āyā li-huquq Allāh (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Hadīthah, 1960), 100-1; Ibn al-Mubārāk, Zuhd, 388 and Bayhaqi, Zuhd, 100-1. Shahr b. Hawshab was one of the unreliable qurrā’ transmitters also infamous for his greed; see Tha‘ālibī, Thimār, 169, s.v. kharījat Shahr.
723 Suyūṭī, Awā‘il, 28.
725 Ibn al-Jawzī, Talbīs, 124-5.
nothing to do with power — Ḥammād b. Salamah (d. 167/783-4) warned against visiting the governor even should he request the recitation of the shortest sūrah! By al-Ājurri’s time (d. 360/970) anti-qurrā’ sentiment was well-established. As teachers and reciters of the Qur’ān, they continued to exhibit their opportunistic behavior by bullying the poor and rushing to the sick beds of the wealthy. Al-Ājurri, whose indignation led him to compose an anti-qurrā’ tract, complains of their hypocrisy, arrogance, lack of piety, boorishness, infatuation with strange and unusual Qur’ānic readings and overall ignorance.

In the afterlife the qurrā’ are punishment for immoral acts committed under the cloak of piety. Angels in the ‘Azamah rebuke them for leading double lives in agreement among themselves (afnaw a’mārahum fī ‘l-riyā’ muttafiqīn) and for listening to poetry and music while faking godliness. Metal is poured into those ears that have delighted in the forbidden (muḥarramāt) while they are told that this is the least painful of what awaits them. A scorpion is attached to the stomach of each qāri’injecting venom into his liver, spleen, heart, and intestines, causing these organs to disintegrate and spill out of his backside. Amid much crying and begging (yabrūna wa-yaṭaḍarrā‘ūna), the zabāniyah remind them that they have yet to be chained. Black snakes blow venom onto their faces and crush their bones. Their cries go unheaded as they are scolded again for their

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726 That must be Q112; Melchert, Reciters, 386-7.
total lack of shame (*fa-tunādihim al-malā‘ikah yā ashqiyā’ mā kuntum tastahyūn*). 729

The sins of the ‘*ulamā’*, on the other hand, differed in substance and scale. Their proverbial envy (*ḥasad*) has caused many to question their ethical competence as witnesses (*‘udūl*) on Judgment Day. 730 Envy is the root of all evil; Jāḥiz, who deliberately falsified the authorship of his own works to avoid the jealousy of his contemporaries, describes envy as the first sin committed in the heavens and on earth. 731 Iblīs, after all, was the first when he compared himself to Adam. 732 In Ibn al-Jawzī’s opinion, ‘*ulamā’ al-dunyā are those who soak up its power and praise. 733 Zamakhsharī resorts to strong metaphor; the ‘*ulamā’ al-sū’ are nothing but a collective of deceptive robes (*darārī‘ khattālah*) worn by vipers

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730 Samarqandi, *Tanbih*, 65; Ibn Ḥajār al-Ḥaytami, *Zawājir*, 1:57. The *qurrā‘* were also an envious lot; Mālik b. Dinār said that he would not accept the evidence of *qurrā‘* against one another because of their spite; see al-Qārī al-Ḥarawi, *Tabʿīd al-‘ulamā‘*, 135-6.
731 In one of his *rasā‘īl*, Jāḥiz comments: “Envious [critics] begin to jostle like rutting camels, hoping to discover some way of discrediting my book in the eyes of its patron … They steal the ideas out of a book, rewrite them, add some filler, and present their pirated version to another prince in order to win his favor. Of course, when [the original book] has my name on it, all they can do is criticize it”; see Kilito, *The Author and His Doubles*, 68-73. Envy, in the opinion of Joseph Epstein, is still associated with the learned profession, which he attributes to their feeling vastly undervalued in the light of their intellectual superiority; see *Envy: The Seven Deadly Sins* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 79-80.
733 When Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal’s jailor (*sajjān*) asked him if he should consider his profession to be one of the helpers of the oppressors (*a‘wān al-ẓalamaḥ*), Aḥmad replied that, on the contrary, he was indeed one of the oppressors, the helpers being those who aided him (*lā, anta min al-ẓalamaḥ innamā a‘wān al-ẓalamaḥ man a‘ānaka ‘alā amr*), see Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣayd al-khāṭīr*, ed. Ādam Abū Sunaynah (Amman: Dār al-Fikr, 1987), 21-2; 428.
that slither from wide sleeves to authorize ignorant fatwās.\textsuperscript{734} Jāḥiẓ portrays the envious man as an anxious watchful type whose jealousy makes him incapable of providing sound advice, speaking well of others or of forgiving error. He would be the one to circulate slanderous gossip and to concur with every backstabber. In this way Jāḥiẓ ties gossip to envy, another sin rooted in the scholarly profession. Perpetually tormented by the successes of their competitors, the suffering of the envious is without end; it is the one disease that has no cure (\textit{al-dā' alladhī lā dawā' lahu}).\textsuperscript{735}

Al-Ājurri takes on the ‘ulamā’ in a second critical tract describing their cut-throat tactics. Public debates become forums to smear and snub opponents and show off rhetorical skills (\textit{balāghah}). Scholars relish the minor oversights of colleagues and can go so far as to take pleasure in their death since their own services would be in greater demand. Quoting Mālik b. Dīnār (d. 130/748), the ‘ulamā’ with their “bloated tongues have traded the afterlife for this world”. Flaunting the little they know, tailoring fatwās, competing for the favors of the wealthy and displaying little compassion for the poor, they have fallen short in their public service.\textsuperscript{736} In another work dedicated to the subject of conceit,


Ghazzālī adds his voice noting how scholars of his day confuse their self-righteousness with pride in faith (‘izz al-dīn) and justify their mean-spiritedness as the voice of Divine disapproval.\(^\text{737}\)

Qurṭubī limits the defects of his profession to seven sins distributed across the gates of hell. He starts with the bully preacher who hecters his audience and exhibits stubborn arrogance when counseled (\(\text{idhā wa‘aza} \text{‘anifa wa-idhā} \text{wu‘īza anifa}\)), followed by the scholar who places his knowledge at the disposal of the powerful. Third comes the scholar who conceals his ‘ilm followed by he who tailors his knowledge to suit the elite (\text{wujūh al-nās}). The fifth type is the one who learns the traditions of the Jews and the Christians in order to disseminate them, followed by the pretentious know-it-all (\text{mutakallīf}) who seeks recognition, and finally the hypocrite scholar who will be assigned to the lowest level of hell.\(^\text{738}\)

\text{Tashhīr} in the afterlife exposes the hypocrisy of the ‘ulamā’; their knowledge of all matters of faith has been attained for the sake of worldly fame and recognition.\(^\text{739}\) Those who withhold ‘ilm (ḥadīth) will have their mouths

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\(^{737}\) Ghazzālī, \textit{al-Kashf wal-tabyīn fi ghūrūr al-khalq ajma‘īn}, ed. Jamīl Ibrāhim Ḥabīb (Baghdād: Maṭba‘at Munīr, 1984), 13-22. The qurrā’ and nussāk conduct their ghībah differently — the defects of colleagues are brought up in an exclamatory fashion (\text{min jihat al-ta‘ajjub}) followed by disingenuous prayers for their well-being (\text{yataṣṣanna} al-du‘ā‘); see Ibn al-Jawzī, \textit{Talbis}, 129.

\(^{738}\) Qurṭūbī, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:462.

bridled with fiery bits (lijām min nār) until the ḥisāb is completed.\textsuperscript{740} Their sermons will be read aloud and the lips of those who preached sedition (khūṭabā’ al-fitnāh) will be snipped with fiery scissors. Other preachers will be seen chewing one half of their tongues as pus oozes down their chests.\textsuperscript{741} The fleshless faces of those who have traded the Qur‘ān by reciting it for money will betray their shamelessness.

In Jahannam the ‘ulamā’ retain their professional attire and become all the more recognizable in their fiery shirts, trousers (sinwāls), turbans (‘imāmas or ṭayālis) and shoes.\textsuperscript{742} These are the scholars, according to the ‘Aẓamah manuscript, who befriended the powerful (jabābirah), prompting them with false hopes and embellishing their evil actions (yuḥassinū lahum al-af‘āl al-sū'); these are also the ones who hoarded money, paraded in silk garments and enlarged their turbans. They will be taken to wāḍī Wayl where thousands of fiery metal grinders crush their brains.\textsuperscript{743} In the mi‘rāj Muslims who forget the Qur‘ān also


\textsuperscript{741} Ibn al-Mubārak, Musnad, 22; Qurtūbı, Tadhkirah, 1:248; Majlisī, Biḥār, 7:89; Rāzı, Mafālīḥ, 8:433-4; Zamakhsharī, al-Kashshāf, 4:487-8.

\textsuperscript{742} The turban (‘imāmah) was the headgear for Muslims of all classes while the taylasān/tyalisān (pl. tayālis) resembled the hood of an academic gown; see Kennedy, When Baghdad ruled the world: the rise and fall of Islam’s greatest dynasty (Cambridge: De Capo Press, 2004), 140.

have their brains crushed.\textsuperscript{744} Damage is not limited to the brain; the tongues of qādis\textsuperscript{s} who pronounced biased and unfair verdicts are pressed between infernal coals.\textsuperscript{745}

The ‘ulamā’ endure endless parades of tashhīr; those who have exhorted others to command good and forbid wrong are exhibited throughout Jahannam. Recognized and repeatedly asked about the reason for their being in hell, the ‘ulamā’ confess to their hypocrisy many times over.\textsuperscript{746} The specifics of this tashhīr are unusual in that ḥadīth describes a raḥā or mill stone that operates like a turn-table rotating the ‘ulamā’ as they encounter all who had known them.\textsuperscript{747} Al-Qārī al-Harawī comments that the image was probably inspired by Q62:5 where Jewish rabbis who fail to uphold the Torah are compared to mules logging their burden.\textsuperscript{748} Another version with a cruel twist has followers of these ‘ulamā’ imported from paradise declaring that had it not been for their strict guidance they would not have been so richly rewarded.\textsuperscript{749}

\textsuperscript{745} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘A‘zamah, fol. 26b.
\textsuperscript{747} Qurṭubī, Tadhkirah, 1:498, 501. There are those who argue that the verb ṭāfa (to circumambulate) applies to the spectators; see ‘Aynī, ‘Umdah, 24:203-4. See also Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Kabā‘ir, 2:166; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Dā‘, 33-4; Mundhirī, Tarhib, 1:75.
\textsuperscript{748} Al-Qārī al-Harawī, Tab‘īd al-‘ulamā‘, 156.
\textsuperscript{749} Mundhirī, Tarhib, 1:77, 3:174; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Kabā‘ir, 1:94.
The perils facing judges in the afterlife preface *adab al-qāḍī* manuals. The anti-*qāḍī* hadīth dramatize the risks of the profession; for every three judges, two are doomed for pronouncements made in ignorance or prejudice.\(^{750}\) Both *qāḍīs* and rulers undergo stricter scrutiny on the *ṣīrāt* with a public reading of their records. Should they be short on justice, the bridge would abruptly shake (*intafaḍa*) casting them into hell below.\(^{751}\) Such randomness is captured in another image where an angel holds the *qāḍī* or ruler (*ḥākim yaḥkum bayna al-nās*) by the scruff of the neck and looks up for the signal whether to release and drop his charge into hell. This is when *qāḍīs* and rulers would wish that they be suspended by their locks from the Pleiades than ever have accepted office.\(^{752}\)

The responsibility of *ijtihād* was onerous; ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar would direct anyone who came to him for a *fatwa* to go to the *amīr* alleging that they were making him a bridge to hell.\(^{753}\) We learn how one judge in Baghdad prohibited laughter in court, scolding the wit: “How dare you laugh when your *qāḍī* is now in the presence of God suspended between heaven and hell?”\(^{754}\) Texts limit the sins of *qāḍīs* to the tongue in a profession defined by the grave responsibility of

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\(^{753}\) *aturidūn an ta’jlūni jisran ta’birūna ‘alayhi ilā jahannam*; see al-Qāri al-Harawi, *Tabīd al-‘ulamā‘*, 174.

ijtihād and safeguarding the sharī’ah. It is to their credit that despite the anti-qādī ḥadīth, judges fared much better in the afterlife than other groups in their profession.

III. B. Tārik/mutahāwin al-ṣalāḥ:

History credits the disciplinarian ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb as the first caliph to enforce prayer and to refer to Muslims as ahl al-ṣalāḥ. The Qurʾān exhorts the believers to be punctual, alluding to the mark that forms on the forehead from regular prostration (ṣujūd) as the sign of the faithful.755 Much symbolism is read into the postures of prayer; the standing and bowing is interpreted as an anticipation of the gestures a believer would make on Judgment Day when divine pardon.756 On that day the hypocrite attempting to mimic the gestures of the faithful will find himself unable to bow, freezing into one solid block.757 Prayer is the first duty a believer will need to account for;758 it is the minimum level of observance — the baseline — required from a Muslim. Transgression here ranges between gradual slipping (tahāwun) at one end and total neglect (tark) at the other. The Ḥanbalī school of law initially regarded non-praying Muslims as apostates, calling for their execution; indeed, Samarqandī in his kabā‘ir homiletic

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756 Gerhard Böwering, “Prayer,” EQ 4:221.
758 Ibn Abī ’Āṣim, Awā’il, 17.
equates the *tārik al-ṣalāḥ* to a *kāfir* who dies in a state of hunger and thirst.\(^{759}\) Not only will the grave crush his ribs and a fire grill him night and day, the *tārik al-ṣalāḥ* will be subject to five regular beatings that correspond in time and number to all the missed prayers of a single day. In Jahannam the bites and stings of snakes and scorpions rot his flesh.\(^{760}\)

The ‘*Azamah* punishes those who procrastinate or miss their prayers (*mutahāwinūn al-ṣalāḥ*) for two sins: for the lapse itself and for engaging in pleasures that distracted these sinners in the first place. The text then rewords it differently: chastised for withholding an obligation owed to God (*ḥaqq Allāh*), these *mutahāwinūn* are defined primarily as thrill seekers (*al-tābi‘īn lil-shahāwāt al-māni‘īn ḥaqq Allāh*) whose twofold punishment is carried out in different locations. Assigned to the mountain of Ghayy, procrastinators are suspended from poles, by their hands or feet, as angels bite and spit into their flesh, their spittle burning through skin and bone. They are flogged with fiery whips across their knees, abdomen, legs and heads. With heart-breaking cries (*fa-yabkūna bukā‘an shadīd al-ḥarq yūji‘ al-qulūb*), they protest their innocence in never having touched a drop of wine or committed adultery. Having succumbed so easily to their desires, they are confined to caves furnished with fiery carpets in

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\(^{759}\) Melchert adds that by the thirteenth century, Ḥanbali jurisprudents admitted that the offense was too common for the rule to be enforced; see *Āhmad*, 87, 122.

\(^{760}\) Samarqandi, *Qurrāh*, 5-8; also Dhahabi, *Kabā‘ir*, 23-4. The long metal claws of the *al-shujā‘ al-aqra‘* digs up the *tārik al-ṣalāt* after every beating to repeat the process again.
black, red, blue and yellow flames that penetrate their backsides and emerge from their mouths. A voice announces that preoccupation with fun and games such as backgammon and chess has kept these sinners away from prayer.\textsuperscript{761}

Ablutions performed incorrectly invalidate prayer.\textsuperscript{762} This inattention is chastised in the grave as part of the ‘\textit{adhāb al-qabr}, though its early inclusion in Jahannam indicates that the infraction could initially have been associated with slippage (\textit{tahāwun}).\textsuperscript{763} In Asad b. Mūsā’s \textit{Zuhd} the \textit{mutahāwin} is dragging his ruptured intestines all over hell.\textsuperscript{764} Later scholars like Nābulusī would categorize ablutions as acts that in themselves carry no merit (\textit{thawāb}) without the intention (\textit{niyyah}) of prayer.\textsuperscript{765} Lore would name several of Iblīs’ progeny as specialists in distracting the faithful: Laqīṣ (ritual cleanliness or \textit{tahārah}), Walhān (prayer), Khanzab (forgetting the Qur’ān) and Mudhhib (disturbing the qurrā’ in their ablutions).\textsuperscript{766} It is no surprise then that the ‘\textit{Ažmah

\textsuperscript{761} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘\textit{Ažmah}, fols. 20a-22a.

\textsuperscript{762} \textit{Targhib} lauds the protective properties of water in safeguarding one from the fires of hell; see Mundhirī, \textit{Tarhib}, 1:103-4.

\textsuperscript{763} The Companion Sa’d b. Mu‘ādh was subjected to pressure (\textit{dammah}) in the grave for his own negligence. Most of the punishment in the grave is due to ritual negligence; see Bayhaqī, \textit{Ithbāt \textit{adhāb al-qabr}} (Amman: Dār al-Furqān, 1983), 84-7.

\textsuperscript{764} Asad b. Mūsā, \textit{Zuhd}, 63-4.


pairs a *shayṭān* to these slackers. Confined to wells filled with fiery houses that are furnished with coffins (*tawābīt*), each sinner is locked and chained to a brutal demon who kicks, slaps, eats the parts of the body related to ablution and spits in his face.  

*Tarhib* texts warned about other aspects of public prayer. With uniformity as the rule in communal prayer, the man who habitually lifts his head before his *imām* has his hair in the hands of the devil; his chances of being transformed into a donkey or a dog in the grave are very high. Spitting in mosques was not uncommon and those who expectorate in the direction of Mecca will face mankind in the *qiyyāmah* with a scalding spit stuck between their eyes.

If Muslims are indeed *ahl al-ṣalāh*, then those who ignore prayer altogether have forfeited their claim to belong to the community of believers. The eschatological narrative classifies them as such; they emerge at the *qiyyāmah* alongside a number of other disgraced characters: Korah (Qārūn) should wealth have been their preoccupation, Pharaoh should it have been power, or Ibn Abī Khalaf, a pagan merchant in Mecca, should it have been

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768 Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytami, *Kabā‘ir*, 1:146; Mundhirī, *Tarhib*, 1:122. Mundhirī notes that scholars have differed on the *wa‘id* here and that whoever speeds up his prayer subjects himself to the possibility of *maskh*; see *ibid.*, 1:180.  
770 According to Samarqandī *tārik al-ṣalāt...la ḥazza lahu fi ’l-Islām*; see Qurrah, 6.
trade. Tarhib warns that the tārik al-ṣalāh will emerge from his grave with three lines written across his forehead to proclaim that he has withheld a right of God (ḥaqq Allāh), that he deserves His anger and that he stands in despair of God’s mercy. Moreover, as prayer is an obligation traced to the original mithāq, the ʿAẓamah offers two images that capture the loss of direction or moral compass. Muslims who disregard prayer altogether will be taken to a dark valley with as many angels as there are stars. Amid the darkness they scream until their features (eyes, ears and mouths) are fused (tallḥah). Scalding ḥamīm is poured over their bodies and angels spit on them. Such indignity signals the removal of the privileged status granted to Muslims in the afterlife. The tārikūn al-ṣalāh are then made to carry a load (iṣr) representing the pivotal obligation they once shirked — this time as heavy as iron.

Texts do not cite other punishments for neglecting religious duties (ʿibādāt) with the exception of deliberately breaking the fast early. One miʿrāj image depicts men and women strung by their feet as they extend their necks to reach meager scalding waters (yalḥasūn min māʾīn qalīlīn wa-ḥamīʾah). As mentioned earlier, the brains of those who forget the Qurʾān, in one miʿrāj, are repeatedly bashed with rocks.

771 Dhahabi, Kabāʾir, 19; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Kabāʾir, 1:133.
772 yā muḍayyi ḥaqq Allāh; yā makhṣūṣan bi-ghadāb Allāh and kamā ḍayyaʿa ta fi ʿl-dunyaḥ haqq Allāh fa-ʿyiṣ al-yawm min raḥmat Allāh; see Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Kabāʾir, 1:137; Dhahabi, Kabāʾir, 24.
773 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ʿAzamah, fol. 28a.
774 Suyūṭī, Āyah, 71; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Kabāʾir, 1:195.
Though their sin is not neglect of prayers, I would like to include with this section the fate of the muṣawwirūn, or makers of images — a prohibition not unique to Islam. Their defiance is such that they will be ordered to breathe life into the animate representations they once drew or carved on murals, stone, coins, wax, clay, metal and so forth.\footnote{Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 3:1671; Tirmidhī, Sunan, 6:67; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Kabāʾir, 2:32; Dhahabī, Kabāʾir, 182; Mundhirī, Tarḥīb, 4:54.} In another version these images do indeed come to life to torment their creators. Those with artistic talents were advised to depict scenery and objects that do not “posseses a soul” such as trees and the like.\footnote{Nasāʾī, Sunan, 8:214-16; Dhahabī, Kabāʾir, 182.}

**III. C. Murderers: Killers**

The settlement of blood feuds gives the ḥisāb its full sense of being an open court. The Qurʿān equates the wrongful killing of a single individual to the killing of all humanity.\footnote{Q 5:32. When Cain informs Abel that he would kill him, he accepts the decision on the principle that he would rather die than kill another person unlawfully. Such passive submission bewildered many interpreters who came to the conclusion that self-defense might not have been permitted at the time! See Muḥammad Fadel, “Murder,” EQ 3:458-60.\footnote{Zayd b. ‘Alī, Tafsīr, 354.}} Isrāf, often used to indicate excess and waste (tabdhīr), is also used to denote exceeding limits so that early exegetes, like Zayd b. ‘Alī, used the term musrifūna in Q40:43 to mean killers.\footnote{Zayd b. ‘Alī, Tafsīr, 354.} Demanding justice, the victim appears in the qiyāmah with his killer in various re-enactments of the murder scene. In one version, the murdered man carries his own severed head
in one hand and drags his killer in the other declaring him to be the murderer. A second version has the killer carry the bloodied head of the victim that demands to know the reason for its murder.\textsuperscript{779} The most fragile victims, such as birds, make a powerful entrance; those who have been unnecessarily killed will circle the \textit{mawqif} emitting a drone “louder than thunder” and demanding justice.\textsuperscript{780} As betrayal can be associated with murder, traitors hold up standards proclaiming their perfidy (\textit{liwā’ al-ghadr}) even if those killed were infidels (\textit{kuffār}).\textsuperscript{781}

One cannot overlook the “iconography” of blood and severed heads related to the murder of the Prophet’s grandson in both Sunni texts and to a larger extent in Shi‘ite martyrology. The display of al-Ḥusayn’s severed head was a first in Islam.\textsuperscript{782} As seen in the chapter on topography, a mountain in Jahannam, al-Kamad, is reserved for the killers of al-Ḥusayn.\textsuperscript{783} In a Sunni text, the killer of al-Ḥusayn is confined in a fiery coffin to suffer “half the torment of the people of hell”.\textsuperscript{784} In the \textit{ḥisāb}, Fāṭimah refuses to enter paradise unless she knows the fate of al-Ḥusayn, and screams at the sight of a headless son. God orders the hottest of fires to be stoked and allows her to cast his killers into

\textsuperscript{780} Samarqandi, \textit{Qurrah}, 45.
\textsuperscript{782} Ibn Ḥabīb al-Sulamī, \textit{Tārikh}, 127. The Shi‘ite concept of \textit{raj’ah} will be discussed at length in the chapter on afterlife justice.
\textsuperscript{783} Majlisi, \textit{Bihār}, 6:288.
hell. Other iconography is mentioned in Sunnı texts; Ibn ‘Abbás dreams of a distraught Prophet on the day of the murder (61 h) carrying a vessel containing his grandson’s blood. In another the Prophet leans against the tree of his crucified great-grandson, Zayd b. ‘Alī (d. 122/740), lamenting the fate of his progeny. The killers of al-Ḥusayn and their progeny are cursed for generations to come. In the case of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib it is relevant to note how chronicles document the certainty on the part of ‘Alī that God would adjudicate his murder. Balādhurı reports that ‘Alī asked that the man who stabbed him be given a good meal and that Ibn Muljam was to be put to death so he could join him immediately in the next world where he could accuse him before God.

The barzakh narrative subjects Ibn Muljam to endless cycles of physical disintegration. Our primary witness is a solitary Christian monk living in a desolate area (fi ba’d al-falawāt) who observes a white bird, the size of an ostrich, descending on a rock to regurgitate a human form. The form is unable to stand up and crumbles with a single peck from the bird who proceeds to

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785 Majlisı, Biḥār, 7:127.
786 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, K. al-manāmāt, ed. ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyyah, 1993), 76, 134; Munāwī, Kawākib, 1:103; Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī (d. 356/966), Maqātil al-Ṭalibiyin, ed. al-Sayyid Ahmad Şaqr (Cairo: Ḥisā al-Bābī al-Halabī, 1949), 144. ‘Ayyāshı makes a distinction between qatl and mawt with regard to the doctrine of raj’ah, maintaining that those who have been killed do not “experience death” and therefore need not return; see Tafsīr, 1:202.
787 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā relates the fate of the two killers: the first was constrained by his enlarged penis while the second died of thirst; see Kitāb mujābī al-da’wah, ed. Ziyād Ḥamdān (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyyah, 1993), 52.
788 L. Veccia Vaglieri, “Ibn Muljam,” EI 3:887-90; for accounts of how Ibn Muljam was put to death see Ibn Sa’d, Ṭabaqāt, 3:26-7.
consume it only to regurgitate it again. The repetition of this amazing spectacle over several days increases the resolute faith (izdadtu yaqīnān) of the monk in a life after death! Asking the bird to explain, it responds in fluent Arabic (bi-ṣawt ‘arabī ṭaliq) that it is the angel assigned to torture this body of no other than the notorious ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muljam.789

Infanticide

The Qurʾān deems infanticide, wa’d, or the pre-Islamic practice of burying daughters alive at birth, to be murder. The practice was not limited to girls; in times of famine boys too were subjected to wa’d.790 This type of infanticide was widespread in the Hellenistic world as a drastic form of birth control.791 Two Qurʾānic verses address wa’d; in one, the mawʿūdah at the qiyāmah will ask why she was put to death while the second describes the dark reception of a father at the news of a daughter’s birth.792 In this new moral world order, the Qurʾān treats infanticide not only as murder but, more fundamentally, as a lack of trust in the power of God to provide. In what became known as the “pledge of women” (bayʿat al-nisāʾ) a group of women offer the Prophet an allegiance similar to an

790  Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān, 15:190-1, s.v. waʿd.
791  Donna Lee Bowen, “Infanticide,” EQ 2:511; Avner Giladi, “Children,” ibid., 1:301 and Himmelfarb, Tours, 74. In Muslim tradition, the practice of ‘azl, or coitus interruptus, is referred to as the minor or covert infanticide (al-wa’d al-khaṭīf). This premise fuels the debate in modern times on the permissibility of family planning; see F. Leemhuis, “Waʿd al-Banāt,” EFi 11:6.
792  Q 81:8-9; 16:57-8. Other verses where poverty is explained as the reason for infanticide include Q6:151, 137, 140, 17:31, 60:12.
earlier bay’at al-‘Aqabah where a delegation from Yathrib pledged not to associate any deity with God, not to steal, commit adultery or kill their own children. Although wa’d ceased to be practiced, Ibn Abî al-Dunyâ includes the story of an adulteress who kills her newborn to conceal her marital infidelities. Children at the qiyâmah unite — testifying with voices “like thunder”, they cling to their mothers (or slayers) pleading to know the reason they were killed. Samarqandî imprisons these women with tigers, foxes, snakes and scorpions in one of the deepest wells in Jahannam.

Suicide

Hadîth makes clear that the punishment appointed for the suicide (qâtil al-nafs) is an endless repetition of this final act. Whoever takes his own life violates a divine prerogative. A suicide’s punishment lies in experiencing many times over his final moments whether he threw himself from heights, ingested poison or used a blunt instrument. Hence we find angels ceaselessly (lâ tabrâḥ) throwing these sinners from heights or stabbing them with fiery knives releasing blood as thick and dark as pitch. Much ambivalence surrounds the subject of suicide; Ṭabarî includes a tradition by Ibn Ishâq where the Prophet contemplated hurling

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793 Q60:12; see also Joseph E. Lowry, “Theft,” EQ 5:255.
795 Samarqandî, Qurrah, 44.
796 kamâ anna ‘l-mushrik mukhâllad fi ‘l-nâr ka-dhâlika qâtiî al-nâfs mukhâllad fi ‘l-nâr; see Samarqandî, Qurrah, 46.
797 Ibn Hanbal, Musnad, 8:185; Muslim, Šâfi‘î, 1:103-4.
798 Samarqandî, Qurrah, 44.
himself from the mountain when the revelations had ceased for a while — a point that evokes no comment from traditionists.  

Suicide is not absent from medieval sources; Jāḥiz reports its prevalence among prisoners who fear humiliation and long imprisonment. He notes, not without empathy, that a disease of the mind can make those who take their own lives believe that this is a right course of action. Written in 1946, Franz Rosenthal’s exhaustive article examines suicide in the context of political upheavals, financial difficulties and passionate love affairs. Feigning death appears to have been a popular ploy on the part of pseudo-prophets to deceive the simple-minded. Rosenthal notes that his sources — extensive as they are — have yet to name a single theologian who has taken his own life! 

III. D. Adulterers: the zunāh

When asked the reason most people end up in hell, the Prophet replies with one word: al-ajwafān — a dual that implies the mouth and the genitals (al-fam wal-faraj). The Qur’ānic term for sexual infraction is faḥshā or fāḥishah

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800 Jāḥiz, Hayawān, 2:272; 312.
801 Franz Rosenthal, “On Suicide in Islam,” JAOS 66 (1946): 239-59; “Intīḥār,” EI 3:1246-8. One can rightly argue that carrying out the vow to attain shahādah is suicide and seeking the shahādah outright has been debated by Muslim scholars. So if a male martyr gets seventy ḥūrīs, what do women martyrs get? One speculation is that as soon as these women reach paradise they will undergo a sex change and enjoy the same benefits as their male counterparts; see Guardian Weekly, May 2—8, 2002.
802 Ibn Ḥanbal, Zuḥd, 397; Ibn Mājah, Sunan, 2:1418; Kharāʾītī, Masāwi’, 211; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Şamt, 178; see also Mundhirī, Tarḥīb, 3:14.
fawāḥish (pl.), though legal texts call it zinā and the individual who engages in the act is a zānī (masc.)/zāniyah (fem.). As we will see in this section adultery or fornication is a sin that claims the whole body; publicity, for starters, exposes its covert nature. Witnesses, often hard to come by in the world, are not in short supply in the afterlife. The Prophet himself admitted that all of us commit a measure of zinā and that it is not an easy infraction to be innocent of. Sexual infractions are as old as man’s origins; the first prostitute, according to awā‘il literature, was no other than ‘Awaj, the daughter of Adam himself.

Adulterers emerge from their graves with their genitals ablaze. The strong stench of their private parts separates them and continues to plague them everywhere they go — the hottest and smelliest of hell’s seven gates is the one assigned to adulterers. A ritual of public shaming follows and Samarqandi drives home his lesson: shackled, adulterers are dragged before mankind as

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Q6:151, 7:33, 42:37, 53:32.
Himmelfarb attributes the interest in sexual sins to the full sense of justice achieved in exposing the illicit nature of the sin: “It may be that the strong interest in sexual sins... is the result of the invisibility [of these sins]... Sexual sins ... are almost by definition private, precisely the sins that never come before a court. Murder is difficult to conceal, and the murderer is likely to be brought to justice by an earthly court. But to see... adulterers reap the just reward for their hidden crimes, one must await the punishment of heaven”; see Tours, 73.

kataba Allāhu ‘azza wa-jalla ‘alā kull nafsin ḥaḍżan min al-zinā; see Dinawari, Mujālasah, 2:548.
Tha’labi, Qīṣaṣ, 213, 133; Jazā’iri, Qīṣaṣ, 77; Majīsi, Bihār, 63:270.
Qurtubī, Tadhkirah, 1:463; Dhahabi, Kābā‘īr, 52; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytami, Kābā‘īr, 2:137.
angels ask everyone to take a good look at them. Amid their overbearing stench, everyone is ordered to curse them;\textsuperscript{811} adulterers are flogged with fiery whips in the presence of forty impartial witnesses.\textsuperscript{812} One \textit{mi'raj} resorts to metaphor: the Prophet observes men and women in hell consuming rotten carrion while leaving the clean cooked meat untouched. These, he is told, are the adulterers who have discarded what is lawful (\textit{ḥalāl}) for filth.\textsuperscript{813}

Within the legal framework adultery is complex and theologians delineated degrees of severity commensurate with the status of the partners. All offenders must consent to the act;\textsuperscript{814} and the \textit{ḥadd} authorizes banishment, flogging or stoning. The last option is not prescribed in the Qur'ān but emerges as a consensus (\textit{ijmā’}) by scholars for the \textit{muḥṣan}, that is the adult, free Muslim who through matrimony had access to legitimate sexual relations.\textsuperscript{815} People who are

\textsuperscript{811} Samarqandi, \textit{Qurrah}, 18.
\textsuperscript{812} Anon., \textit{al-Istikhrāj min aḥādīth al-mi’rāj}, Princeton University Library, Yehuda 680, fols. 144 a-b.
\textsuperscript{813} Qurtubi, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:175-6; Qushayri, \textit{Kitab al-mi’rāj}, 47; Ibn Ḥajir al-Haytamī, \textit{Kabā‘ir}, 2:135. Both Kharā‘ī, \textit{Masā‘wi}, 204 and Suyūṭī, \textit{Sharḥ al-ṣudūr}, 71 included the version where the smell of the carrion resembles that of latrines (\textit{marāḥid}). The version in Ibn Hishām describes the foul meat as \textit{ghathth muntin} or scr awny rotten in contrast to \textit{al-samīn al-ṭayyīb} or rich and delicious; see \textit{Sirat al-nabī}, 47.
\textsuperscript{814} Q53:32. Ibn al-Jawzī discusses the penalty of an unwilling male slave who is forced to have sexual relations with his mistress as one that should be measured against the severity of her retaliation should he refuse. If he feared death then there would be no \textit{ḥadd}, if he feared being struck, then half a \textit{ḥadd} and if his mistress is a \textit{muḥṣanah} then she should be stoned and if she were not then she would receive a full \textit{ḥadd} and be forced to sell the slave; see \textit{Khulāṣat al-dhahab al-masbūk aw mukhtaṣar siyar al-mulūk} (n.p.: Maṭba‘at al-Qaddis Jāwrurjiyūs lil-Rūm al-Urthūduks, 1885), 157.
\textsuperscript{815} Interestingly, stoning is not pursued in the afterlife though Muslim scholars postulated that a Qur'ānic verse not included in the ‘Uthmanic codex prescribes it as punishment for adultery; see Dmitry V. Frolov, “Stoning,” \textit{EQ} 5:129-30. A \textit{khabar} traced to Nu‘aym b. Hammād relates that the practice of \textit{rajm} for infidelity was observed among female monkeys; see Bukhārī, \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ}, 3:20-1;
not *muhšan* get lesser penalties; the punishment of a slave is half that of a free person.\(^{816}\) The Qurʾān stipulates one hundred lashes for both male and female, and eighty lashes for false accusation of adultery (*qadhīf*). Thus, the flogging of adulterers in the presence of witnesses at the *qiyyāmah* adheres to the letter of the Qurʾān.\(^{817}\) *Fuqahāʾ* charted the fine print: adultery with an unmarried woman is grave but with a married woman is graver still; the same principle applies to the old versus the young and the free versus the slave.\(^{818}\) *Kabāʾir* texts extend the definition of adultery to include the man who marries with an agreed bride price with no intention of paying it, or the woman who perfumes herself knowing the full extent of a scent’s tantalizing powers.\(^{819}\)

In Jahannam adulterers continue to be punished as a group. In the standard *miʿrāj*, naked adulterers of both sexes are crowded into an oven with a narrow opening and trapped in their own stench. Fires repeatedly blast them

\(^{817}\)Q24:2, 4, 4:15, 24:2, 8.  
\(^{818}\)Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytami, *Kabāʾir*, 2:138. Ibn al-Jawzī offers his readers a *masʿalah*, involving five penalties that correspond to cases of adultery: death, stoning, a *ḥadd* proper, half the *ḥadd* and no penalty. The answer is as follows: the first, death, pertains to a non-believer (*mushrik*) who commits adultery with a Muslim woman; the second, stoning, to a *muhšan*, the third, a full *ḥadd*, to a virgin, the fourth, half a *ḥadd*, to a slave who merits half the punishment and the fifth, no penalty, a madman or an under age boy (*şaby*); see *Khulāṣat al-dhahab*, 157. In another work, Ibn al-Jawzī disapproves of old men engaging in sexual trysts and regards it as a sign of stubbornness (*’inād*) that could lead to other sins from which one could not repent; see *Ṣayd al-khāṭir*, 290-1.  
upward through its narrow outlet so that they experience the constriction of space. The principle of punishment here is not clear — unless it is a reenactment of intimacy under harsher conditions. Samarqandi’s adulterers are suspended by their hair and trapped with scorpions and snakes injecting venom into every part that was once kissed (taqriṣuhum fī kull qublah). Adulters discharge excessive amounts of pus that feed a tributary known as al-Ghawṭah.

The offending limb is also punished. Seduction, it was (correctly) believed, begins with the second gaze, the zabāniyah hammer fiery nails into those roving eyes or fill the sockets with infernal pebbles. Lips are next on the list as they get clipped with fiery scissors (maqārīḍ min nār) followed by the hands that sought to grope the illicit as well as the feet that walked toward the object of desire — both now fettered in chains. In fact, a complete love scene unfolds with the confession of all the offending limbs (shahādat al-jawāriḥ). Not all texts highlight the genitals; those that do so depict adulterers, in contortionist positions, with feet locked behind their heads lapping up (yal‘aqūna bi-
alsinatihim) their own pus.\footnote{The terms saw'ah and 'awrah are used in the Qur‘an to indicate the genitals. The first was used in the story of the Fall when Adam saw the evil of his ways, saw'ah being a derivative of sū’ which is the reason evil or shame is the term found in most translations. ‘Awrah is an Islamic neologism; see ‘Askarı, Awā‘i, 45. Qurṭubī believed that the private parts bore those terms because people found it unpleasant to display them; see Marion Holmes Katz, “Nudity,” EQ 3:548-9; Ash’ari, Sha‘arat al-yaqīn, 54.} It is more common to depict adulteresses suspended by their breasts and adulterers by their feet;\footnote{Qurṭubī, Tadhkirah, 1:176-7; Suyūṭī, Āyah, 17-18; Majlisī, Biḥār, 18:333.} Muslim sources mention that in an earlier sacred text (the zabūr) adulterers hang by their genitals.\footnote{Dhahabi, Kabā‘ir, 50; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytami, Kabā‘ir, 2:133. In Jewish apocalypses men are hung by their genitals and women by their breasts, while in Christian visions women are hung by their hair; see Himmelfarb, Tours, 82-5.} Muslim sources mention that in an earlier sacred text (the zabūr) adulterers hang by their genitals.\footnote{Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘Azamah, fols. 27 a-b; 25b.}

In the ‘Aẓamah genitalia are subjected to tashhīr where sinners of both sexes are paraded in chain-gang fashion with snakes wrapped around their protruding genitals. A crier (munādī) asks all of Jahannam to curse them, as do all plants and creatures (down to its beetles and scorpions) who were once mute witnesses to their illicit acts (fa-laqad kāna yal’anuhum nabāt al-arḍ wa-dawābbuhā ḥattā al-khunfusā’ wa-l’aqrab). Genitals are featured in other punishments that involve sex; voyeurs who snoop on their neighbors find themselves consuming their own genitals.\footnote{Majlisī, Biḥār, 18:334.} Men who have deflowered virgins out of wedlock have fiery needles puncture and stitch their flesh (tukḥāṭ jilūduhum bi-makhāyiḥ min nār).\footnote{Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘Azamah, fols. 27 a-b; 25b.}\footnote{Majlisī, Biḥār, 18:334.} These scenes are highly dramatized; amid
the screams adulterers are repeatedly scolded: “Where was that noise when you were laughing, enjoying yourselves and unashamed of your acts?”

**The lūtis (liwāṭ)**

In Muslim homiletic literature the vices of the people of Lot represent the height of moral depravity. Although the term *liwāṭ* has come to connote pederasty, the sins of the people of Lot (*khabā‘īth qawm Lūt*) were a blend of vices which included farting in public, flashing of private parts, cross-dressing, hair-styling (*taṣfīf al-sha‘r*), applying henna “like women”, playing with pigeons, chewing gum, whistling (*al-ṣafīr bil-ašābi‘*), cock and dog fighting, drinking wine and cheating (*bakhs*). However, the story of Lot, as Devin Stewart reminds us, is not without its own moral controversy when at one point the prophet offers his daughters to the lustful crowds in order to dissuade them from raping his male guests! One would conclude from the offer that heterosexual sex is less of an infraction than its homosexual counterpart. Popular lore associates Iblis with *liwāṭ* by describing him as the first to practice sodomy (with

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830 This is expressed in two variations as *wa-yajlisūn kāshifi‘ awrāṭihim* or as *isbāl al-izār*.
831 Whistling was used as a code; when good looking men would pay Lot a visit, his wife would whistle to alert the *lūtis*; see Jazā‘īrī, *Qiṣaṣ*, 170.
833 Q7:80-2, 11:77-9, 27:54-5, 29:28-9. Commentators have glossed over this by saying that he intended to offer his daughters in marriage; see Devin Stewart, “Sex and Sexuality,” *EQ* 4:584.
himself!) and to solicit a homosexual act by transforming himself into a handsome boy.\footnote{wa-da’āhum ilā dubrihi; see Suyūṭī, Awā’il, 57; Jazā’īrī, Qiṣṣa, 77; Qināwi, Fath, 27.}

Awā’il material traces pederasty to the creation of Eastern outposts (\textit{thughūr}) in Khurasān where long periods without family and wives led many to take up the company of their pages.\footnote{Askarī, Awā’il, 383-4. Jāḥiẓ was one of the proponents of this idea, describing lust (\textit{ghulmah}) as a non-discrimining force regardless of whether the object was a boy, a beast or simply oneself; see \textit{Buldān}, 458. Şan’ānī maintains that the first man to commit the vice (\textit{al-amr al-qābitī}) in Islam was during the time of ‘Umar, who ordered the Qurashī youth to ostracize him; see \textit{Muṣannaf}, 11:243.} Because the Qur’an mentions no penalty for \textit{liwāt}, jurists cite the precedent of the destruction of Lot’s people to suggest stoning, burning or hurling from the highest point as adequate punishment.\footnote{Ibn ˘ajar al-Haytamī, \textit{Kabā’ir}, 2:142-3; Dhababī, \textit{Kabā’ir}, 55.}

\textit{Fiqh} defines \textit{liwāt} primarily as anal intercourse and divides it into two categories: a major \textit{liwāt} (\textit{al-liwāt al-akbar}) between members of the same sex and a minor \textit{liwāt} (\textit{al-liwāt al-asghar} or \textit{al-lūtiyyah al-ṣughrā}) between men and women.\footnote{Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, \textit{Kabā’ir}, 1:12; Mundhirī, \textit{Tarhīb}, 3:200.} The second is also known as \textit{tamkhīd},\footnote{Khaṭṭābī, \textit{Gharib}, 2:400.} and unlike adultery, the law stipulates equal punishment of both parties in the major \textit{liwāt}, leaving the penalty for \textit{al-lūtiyyah al-ṣughrā} to the discretion of the judge.\footnote{Exegetes quote Q2:223 as a verse directed at the Jews prohibiting vaginal intercourse from behind, which was believed to cause the birth of cross-eyed children (\textit{ḥūl}); see Dhababī, \textit{Kabā’ir}, 60 and Stewart, “Sex,” 4:582.   ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb was said to have had a man beaten for engaging in \textit{al-lūtiyyah al-ṣughrā}; see Şan’ānī, \textit{Muṣannaf}, 11:442-3.}

\footnote{Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, \textit{Kabā’ir}, 2:142-3; Dhababī, \textit{Kabā’ir}, 55.} Ibn Taymiyyah, for example, recommends \textit{ta’zir}, and if this proves to be an insufficient deterrent for a couple and they fail to learn that the act is reprehensible then the two parties should be
separated.\textsuperscript{840} Şan‘ānī’s \textit{Muṣannaf} reveals that \textit{tamkhiḍ} was not uncommon when in Medina the wives of the Meccan immigrants ask the Prophet’s opinion on the matter.\textsuperscript{841} The richest Arabic sources on the subject of male desire belong to the early ‘Abbāsid period; these cite various terms for different types of these partners and their sexual status such as \textit{ma‘būn} (passive partner), \textit{mu‘ājir} (someone paid for his services) or \textit{mubādil} (agrees to be passive in exchange for a turn as an active partner).\textsuperscript{842} Jāḥiz notes the nickname \textit{ṣīsiyah}, derived from the spur of a cock, to describe the philandering male incapable of leaving any member of his own sex — boy, man, eunuch or stud — alone.\textsuperscript{843}

The “object of desire” is incorporated into the afterlife punishment. Mālibārī delineates three strands of \textit{lūṭiyyah}: those who look, those who “greet you” and those who engage in the act!\textsuperscript{844} In the grave, pederasts will be transformed into pigs and resurrected alongside \textit{qawm Lūṭ}. Like adulterers, pederasts are a collective; a \textit{khabar} relates how an angel in the form of a vulture will snatch every \textit{lūṭ} from his grave to stamp on his forehead a statement that declares his personal despair of God’s mercy before depositing him with his own

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{840} Ibn Taymiyyah, \textit{Majmū‘at fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyyah}, ed. Ismā‘il b. al-Sayyid Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Ṣab‘a‘at Kurdistān al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1326), 1:65.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{841} Şan‘ānī, \textit{Muṣannaf}, 11:442-3. A few \textit{ḥadīth}, according to Devin Stewart, support anal sex as a practice, stipulating that a husband must obtain his wife’s permission and that although it is a reprehensible act it is not forbidden; see “Sex,” 4:583. Someone asked Nābulusī whether it would be permissible to engage in anal sex if a husband had a disease that could not be cured except through engaging in it. His answer is in the affirmative provided that no other cure for the disease was known; see \textit{Ajwibah}, 105-9.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{842} Everett Rowson, “The Effeminates of Early Medina,” \textit{JOAS} 111 (1991): 685.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{843} Jāḥiz, \textit{Hayawān}, 2:238.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{844} Mālibārī, \textit{Irshād}, 171-2.}
At the qiyāmah, pederasts are crucified on fiery palm trunks. Witnesses are called forth; headless children, as Samarqandi relates, will testify that their parents made them available to men who sexually abused them. A different punishment, from the popular “Jesus narratives”, involves the two partners. Jesus encounters a man ablaze in the wilderness and after extinguishing his flames another fiery figure — this time of a boy — appears. Jesus weeps for their pain and asks God to show him their sin. The man confesses to an infatuation that led him on a “Friday night” to commit the reprehensible act. Not having repented before death, each partner is transformed into a fire that consumes and tortures the other until the qiyāmah.

More graphic imagery can be found elsewhere. Muḥammad’s miʿrāj describes a black hill where dazed men (mukhabbalūn) have fire pumped into their backsides with flames emerging from all their orifices. The ‘Aẓamah barely disguises the phallic symbolism in its depiction of zabāniyah with knives (fī yad kull wāḥid minhum sikkīn min ghaḍab al-jabbār) awaiting pederasts on islands amid fiery seas. Not only will their tongues get sliced but these shores

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846 Ghazzālī, Kāshf, 65; Qurṭūbī, Tadhkīrah, 1:296.
847 Samarqandi, Qurrah, 24. Suyūṭī changes the wording so that the children accuse their own fathers of molesting them; see Ḥāwi, 2:36.
848 Samarqandi, Qurrah, 21-2; Dhahabi, Kabāʾīr, 60; Ibn Ḥajar al-Ḥaytami, Kabāʾīr, 2:142; anon., Istikhraj, fol. 147b.
849 Suyūṭī, Āyah, 69-70.
are filled with snakes which reach out in simulation of a kiss only to consume them. A voice announces that these are the ones who had desirously kissed young boys.⁸⁵⁰ As for men who have engaged in anal intercourse with their wives, the second version of the ‘Ažamah offers another graphic simulation. Each husband, confined to a well, is made to sit on a mill (raḥā) with thousands of fiery tongues. Lest this appear like a joy ride, the men repeatedly beg the angels for breaks.⁸⁵¹

Lesbians: the sāhiqāt (siḥāq):

The Qur‘ān is silent on other sexual infractions such as lesbianism (siḥāq, saḥq), bestiality and masturbation (istimnā‘, nikāḥ al-yad, jald ‘Umayrah). Siḥāq, from the verb “to rub” also refers to female masturbation; and lesbians are referred to in our texts as sāhiqāt, saḥḥāqāt or musāхиqāt. In an attempt to create a parallel gender narrative to the qawm Lūṭ, Tha’labī speculated that siḥāq began with another group, the ašḥāb al-Rass, who likewise incurred the wrath of God. Initially a good people, the ašḥāb al-Rass were seduced into their wicked ways by Lāqīs bint Iblīs and were incinerated beneath a hail of hot stones.⁸⁵² Samarqandi believed that the practice originated in the south with the people of

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⁸⁵¹ Anon., ‘Ažamah, fol. 32a.
⁸⁵² Tha’labī, Qīṣaṣ, 133-5; Jazā‘īrī, Qīṣaṣ, 419, 422. Jazā‘īrī cites another demoness/temptress by the name of Dilāth. Shi‘ite sources apply the euphemism al-lawāṭī bil-lawāṭī to refer to lesbians; lawāṭī is a feminine demonstrative pronoun and here it is used to indicate women who prefer women; see G. H. A. Juynboll, “Sīḥā‘,” EJ, 9: 565-6.
Tubba\textsuperscript{853} while another source claimed it was the north, where al-Nu\textsuperscript{m}ân b. al-Mundhir’s daughter fell in love with Zarq\textsuperscript{ā}’ bint al-\textsuperscript{H}asan from al-Yam\textsuperscript{m}amah.\textsuperscript{854} Tradition treads carefully around same-sex activity; the \textit{sunnah} makes it clear that neither men nor women should gaze at the private parts of their own sex.\textsuperscript{855} Jā\textsuperscript{ḥ}iz comments that what drives most women to \textit{sahq} is the “unusual pleasure” (\textit{al-ladh\textsuperscript{d}hah al-\textsuperscript{ʿ}ajibah}) they derive from clitoral rubbing that some smart men (\textit{ḥudhdh\textsuperscript{ā}q al-\textsuperscript{r}ij\textsuperscript{ā}l}) have learned to manipulate.\textsuperscript{856} Although the legal penalty for \textit{sih\textsuperscript{ā}q} is similar to that for adultery, Muj\textsuperscript{ā}hid believed that house confinement as in Q4:15 was appropriate. Şan‘ānī quotes Zuhrī as recommending one hundred lashes for each partner, though the position of most jurists such as Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik and Ibn Ḥanbal is that judicial discretion (\textit{ta\textsuperscript{z}ir}) should be applied as a general rule to sexual infractions like masturbation (\textit{istimn\textsuperscript{ā}}), necrophilia (\textit{i\textsuperscript{t}y\textsuperscript{ā}n al-maytah}) and \textit{liwāt}.\textsuperscript{857} In hell Samarqandi confines his lesbians to a narrow

\textsuperscript{853} Samarqandi, \textit{Qurr\textsuperscript{ah}}, 23; Tubba’ is mentioned in Q44:37 and 50:14. Linguistically, it is the title of the Himyarite kings, and the word was used in pre-Islamic poetry; see Jeffery, \textit{Foreign Vocabulary}, 89.
\textsuperscript{854} Ibn al-Nadîm cites a text entitled \textit{Kit\textsuperscript{ā}b Hind wa-bint al-Nu\textsuperscript{m}ān} containing love romances with names of women in the title and another, now lost, composed at the end of the 3rd/9th century by Abū al-Abbas al-Śinyarī entitled \textit{Kit\textsuperscript{ā}b al-sah\textsuperscript{h}q\textsuperscript{ā}t}; see “Liwāt,” \textit{EI} 5:776-8; Jarrā’ī, \textit{Aw\textsuperscript{ā}‘īl}, 118, though in this version it is the wife of al-Nu\textsuperscript{m}ān b. al-Mundhir who is being seduced; also see Suyūtī, \textit{Aw\textsuperscript{ā}‘īl}, 55.
\textsuperscript{856} Jā\textsuperscript{ḥ}iz, \textit{Hayawān}, 7:29.
\textsuperscript{857} Şan‘ānī quotes Ka‘b b. Mālik as saying that the Prophet had cursed \textit{al-rākibah wa-markūbah}; see \textit{Mu\textsuperscript{ş}annaf}, 7:334-5; Juynboll, “Siḥ\textsuperscript{ā}‘”, 9:565-6.
space (ḥuqq) with scorpions and provides them, interestingly, with fiery veils, shoes, long garments (jilbāb), shifts made of fire (dir‘ min nār) and turbans.\textsuperscript{858}

Cross-gender behavior receives some attention in \textit{ḥadīth}; the Prophet curses both effeminate males (mukhannathūn) and the “mannish” women (mutarajjilāt).\textsuperscript{859} Khanath alludes to languid demeanor which ‘Aynī later describes as “softness of speech and a certain looseness of the joints” (fī kalāmihi līn wa-fī a’ḍā’īhi takassur).\textsuperscript{860} Pederasty was not initially associated with takhannuth; Everett Rowson’s research into the early mukhannathūn in Medina concludes that only for two mukhannathūn from the pre-‘Abbāsid period is there explicit anecdotal evidence to suggest homosexual activity.\textsuperscript{861} There is a perceived connection, however, between cross-dressing and sexual impropriety, so that by ‘Aynī’s time a mukhannath was regarded as a passive male pederast. It is no surprise that takhannuth was associated with the singing profession; the proverbial fame of Ṭuways was based on his mannerisms.\textsuperscript{862} Takhannuth was

\textsuperscript{858} Samarqandi, \textit{Qurrah}, 23. This is the only punishment for lesbians that I have seen in my sources. Juynboll states that they will be “punished in Hell in a spectacular manner” which so far is not the case. Women, as we shall see, are indeed punished in a spectacular manner but not lesbians as a group. Mālibārī omits the section on lesbians from his reproduction of Samarqandi’s work.

\textsuperscript{859} Bukhārī, \textit{Ṣahīḥ}, 4:308; Ibn al-Athīr, \textit{Nihāyah}, 2:203, s.v. rajul. Cross dressing was not uncommon in later ‘Abbāsid circles where ghilmāniyyāt became a fashion trend. The first story of the \textit{Arabian Nights} describes ten male slaves dressed as slave girls to disguise their tryst.


\textsuperscript{861} Rowson, “The Effeminates,” 689.

\textsuperscript{862} ash’am min Ṭuways refers to the jinx that accompanied the singer Ṭuways throughout his life, for he was born the day the Prophet died, weaned the day Abū Bakr died, circumcised the day ‘Umar was killed, married the day ‘Uthmān was murdered and was blessed with a son the day ‘Alī was killed. Later texts attribute liwāt to the singer; see Jarrā’ī, \textit{Awā’īl}, 394.
not a deliberate affectation but an imbalance believed to be due to improper sexual conduct on the part of the parents such as union with a menstruating woman.\textsuperscript{863} In the afterlife, a \textit{mukhannath} emerges naked and unsteady on his feet, his effeminacy even more pronounced with his imbalance.\textsuperscript{864} Sources are not forthcoming on punishments regarding other sexual infractions. One minor citation, for example, describes how in the \textit{qiya\textacute{}
ma} the swollen fingers of masturbators will be evidence for all to see.\textsuperscript{865}

The reason pederasty received the attention it did from medieval scholars betrayed an anxiety about the seductive power of a young boy’s beauty (\textit{fitnat al-amrad}). Many counseled against private sessions with young boys; Sufy\text{"a}n al-Thawr\text{"i} banished boys from the baths saying that with every woman he sees one demon but with every boy they total seventeen!\textsuperscript{866} Sources are immensely rich in tales of ‘ulam\text{"a}’ aware of this issue; ‘Askari relates how one day the philologist Ibn Durayd (d. 322/933) was unusually patient with a young boy who made repeated mistakes when a student whispered to another that the boy’s beauty would forgive all sins (\textit{l\text{"a} ta’jab\text{"u} fa-inna f\text{"i} wajhihi ghufr\text{"a}n dhun\text{"u}bihi})! Ibn Durayd amazed his students with his sharp hearing when he called on the boy “whose

\textsuperscript{863} Shibli, \textit{\text{"a}k\text{"a}m al-marj\text{"a}n}, 201.
\textsuperscript{864} Ibn M\text{"a}jah, \textit{Sunan}, 2:871-2.
\textsuperscript{865} Dhahabi, \textit{Kab\text{"a}\text{"i}r}, 57.
\textsuperscript{866} \textit{Ibid.}, 58-9.
The threat of sexual impropriety with young boys remained a concern; Ibn Taymiyyah expressed outrage at parents who allowed their sons to keep the company of those who claim the purity of their intentions, comparing such a parent to a cuckold (dayyūth). The desire for male youth was expressed openly in Şūfi circles and by Ibn Ḥajar’s time merchants and the wealthy publicly flaunted their beautiful black and white slave boys.

III. E. The Wine Drinker: Shārib al-khamr

On his night journey, the mi'rāj, the Prophet was offered a choice between wine and milk. Had he chosen the former, Gabriel later explained, his community would have been lead astray. Though initially describing it as a blessing, the Qur‘ān grew gradually intolerant toward wine, associating it with vices such as gambling, divination and idolatry. The first negative verses attempt to contain

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867 ‘Askarī, Awā‘il, 383. The ghilmān, or pages, in paradise had some scholars like Ibn Nujaym (d. 971/1563) argue that from the waist up they have the features of young boys but from the waist down they have female genitalia; see Sharḥ risālat al-ṣaghā‘ir wal-kabā‘ir, ed. Khalīl al-Mays (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah), 3-4.

868 Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmū‘at fatwā, 2:210-12.

869 Ibn Ḥajar al-Ḥaytāmī, Kabā‘ir, 2:143; on criticism of the trend among șūfīs, see Ibn al-Jawzī, Talbis, 303-10.

870 Bukhārī, Sahih, 427; Muslim, Sahih, 1:154. One should mention here that there is no punishment for consuming wine in the many visions associated with the mi'rāj.

871 Q16:69, 2:219, 5:90-1. Rāzī, an exegete with many surprises, lists as the benefits (manāfi‘) of wine that it “strengthens the weak, helps with digestion of food, assists in sexual congress, consoles the grief-stricken, emboldens the coward, makes the miser more generous, clears the complexion, raises the natural body heat and increases the ambition and desire for mastery.” McAuliffe notes that the editor of her edition includes an apology for Rāzī by saying “al-Fakhhr’s, may God have mercy on him, statement about wine drinking … is a remarkable declaration which would not stem from a reasonable man. If some of those advantages which he mentioned existed in wine then why would God prohibit us from drinking it?”; see Jane McAuliffe, “The Wines
the habit; Q4:43 requests believers not to engage in prayer unless they know what they are saying. The definitive prohibition (nahy muṭlaq) against drinking was revealed in Q5:90-1 where wine (khamr) was added to the list of pre-Islamic vices and labeled as the devil’s agency in inciting conflict and in diverting the faithful from prayer and the path of God. The earliest penalties against the consumption of wine were set by the caliph ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb who doubled the number of blows (inflicted with palm branches) suggested by the Prophet and Abū Bakr. The severity of the ḥadd made the consumption of wine equivalent to the sin of falsely accusing good women of adultery (qadhf al-muḥṣanāt).

The afterlife punishment for consuming a prohibited substance is based on the principle that the punishment should fit the crime: the shārib al-khamr is forced to drink revolting substitutes and to experience extreme thirst. The physical imbalance associated with drunkenness will be a familiar one in Jahannam as Q22:2 evokes it to convey, this time, extreme pain. Scholars warn that if the shārib al-khamr were drunk when gasping his last breath, he would, from then on, sail through the hurdles of dying and the interrogation of the grave of Earth and Paradise: Qur’ānic Proscriptions and Promises,” in Logos Islamikos: Studia Islamica in Honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens, ed. Roger M. Savory and Dionisius A. Aigus (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984), 167.

872 A brawl led to the final prohibition when Sa’d b. Abī Waqqāṣ held a party for which he grilled the head of a camel. Sa’d said something that angered one of the anṣār who picked up the jawbone and smashed/fractured the nose/skull of his host; see McAuliffe, ibid., 162-3; also see Kathryn Kueny, “Wine,” EQ 5:481-3; Enes Karic, “Intoxicants,” ibid., 2:555-7; P. Heine, “Nabdih,” EI² 7:840; Wensinck, “Wine in Islam,” MW 18(1928): 367; the article was adapted for “Khamr,” EI² 4:994-7.

in a state of drunkeness.\(^{874}\) In the \textit{qiyāmah} he is recognized by his stench, the jug of wine dangling from his neck and the cup (\textit{qadaḥ}) in his hand.\(^{875}\) His face displays all the markings of a debauched lifestyle: the blackened skin, the swollen lips, the sagging tongue dribbling what appears to be blood. It is his thick voice (\textit{sawt jahwarī}) that betrays those long hard nights.\(^{876}\) Crucified on a fiery pole amid paraphernalia of jugs, cups and a mandolin (\textit{ṭunbūr}), his foul breath wafts through the crowds. All present are ordered to curse him. Dragged off the pole, the \textit{shārib al-khamr} is shoved into hell with his belongings.\(^{877}\) Ibn al-Jawzī believed that anyone who escapes the \textit{ḥadd} for drinking wine in this life would experience its implementation in the next one.\(^{878}\)

Constantly in thirst, the \textit{shārib al-khamr} suffers the scalding heat of the drink handed to him. Its steam causes his eyes to fall out, his face to peel and his insides to tear. Far from a smooth beverage, worms stick to his tongue after he has downed a cupful.\(^{879}\) Samarqandi schedules a full itinerary that includes a stop at a new watering hole, \textit{ṭīnāt al-khabāl}, a stinking swamp that collects

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\item Qurṭubi, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:249.
\item Samarqandi, \textit{Qurrah}, 10; Dhahabī, \textit{Kabā‘ir}, 84; Mundhirī, \textit{Tarḥīb}, 2:158.
\item Samarqandi, \textit{Qurrah}, 13.
\item Ibn al-Jawzī, \textit{Bahr al-dumū‘}, 182-5.
\item Ibn al-Jawzī, \textit{Bustān}, 276.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Jahannam’s pus, blood and vomit. Drizzling putrid sweat (‘araqan muntinan) adds to his discomfort.  

The ‘Aẓamah’s punishment of the shārib al-khamr is principled. Screaming, these sinners’ knees are first scraped across a slope of hot pebbles before scalding ḥamīm, alternating with lead, is poured into their backsides causing their intestines to spill out of their mouths. Like doctors, the zabāniyah explain their detox treatment: these sinners have been disrespectful to Islam, they need to funnel through their systems double or more (aḍ‘āf mā sharibtum) what they had once consumed. In vain, wine-bibbers beseech mercy.

The “water” resources are relevant details in the shārib al-khamr’s punishment. Apart from ṣīḥat al-khabāl, nahr al-ghawṭah is a river that originates from the genitals of prostitutes and adulterers. The shārib al-khamr can find himself assigned to a ditch (khandaq) in wāḍī al-sakrān undergoing a separate detox regimen of pus and blood. In one homiletic, the most potent drink — that of summ al-asāwid (poison of venomous serpents) — was seen as a fitting antidote for those who drank themselves silly. As pointed out in the previous

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880 Samarqandī, Qurrah, 12-14.  
883 Mundhiri, Tarhib, 3:189; Qurṭubī, Tadhkirah, 1:228, 484.  
884 Dhahabi, Kabā‘ir, 58.
chapter on drinking resources in hell, lexicons explain khabāl as pus, cut off extremities (jadhm) and potent poisons.

The shārib al-khamr is also punished for leading the debauched lifestyle in which wine is the principal vice. In barzakh lore, undertakers describe seeing pigs shackled to the corpses of those who have not repented of their hard-drinking ways. The immersion in delights, in the words of one exegete, can only be a sign of “turning away from thought of the Hereafter and the life to come [to become] one who forgets God and will therefore be forgotten by God.”

III. F. Verbal Transgressors: Gossipers and Flatterers

Veracity haunted the Qur’ānic revelation and its messenger from the beginning. Sins of the tongue, such as lying, making false claims and gossiping, were initially framed with the Meccan opposition in mind. The Qur’ān describes this opposition, the non-believers or the kuffār, as those who falsely ascribe things to God, doubt the resurrection and the reality of Judgment Day, declare Muhammad’s message a lie, and proclaim him a sorcerer, a madman.

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885 It is not clear whether these pigs are alive, dead, or supernatural; see Mālibāri, Irshād, 175.
886 McAuliffe, Wines, 167.
887 Q6:21, 93, 144, 157, 7:37, 10:17, 11:18, 18:15, 29:68, 39:32, 61:7. Blasphemy in the Qur’ān is alluded to as takdhīb (denial) and iftīrā’ (false imputation); so in essence it is a denial of truth or the propagation of a falsehood in its place; see Devin Stewart, “Blasphemy,” EQ 1:235-6.
888 Q56:47. Nowhere does the Qur’ān attribute to the people of the Book the sin of polytheism (shirk) or describe them as such (mushrikīn); see Mir, “Polytheism and Atheism,” EQ 4:161. For a general review of the concept of enemy in the Qur’ān, see Reuven Firestone, “Enemies,” ibid., 2:23-4.
889 Q52:11, 56:51.
or a poet.\textsuperscript{890} The infamous \textit{ḥammālat al-ḥaṭab}, whose gossip fanned the flames of enmity, dates from that period. Opposition changes course in Medina from open to hidden enmity, introducing the ruthless hypocrite (\textit{munāfiq}) as the next virulent combatant.\textsuperscript{891} The propagator of this brand of hypocrisy (\textit{kufr al-nīfāq}) feigns belief in the divine revelation while remaining at heart a disbeliever.\textsuperscript{892} The term \textit{nīfāq} (hypocrisy) in this early context, according to Ibn Qutaybah, is an Islamic neologism (\textit{lafẓ islāmī}).\textsuperscript{893} The ranks of the hypocrites, who will be consigned to the deepest pit in hell, include those who convert expecting God to enrich them, only to turn against the Prophet at the first sight of adversity and call his promises a delusion.\textsuperscript{894} They enjoin evil and forbid good so that they are as bad as the Meccan unbelievers.\textsuperscript{895} In fact, sins of the tongue, as tradition would define them, are what peg the hypocrite (\textit{munāfiq}): when he speaks, he lies (\textit{idhā ḥaddatha kadhaba}); when he makes a vow, he betrays (\textit{idhā ‘āhada ghadara}) and when he promises, he fails to keep his word (\textit{idhā wa’ada akhlafa}).\textsuperscript{896} Another form of hypocrisy much discussed in \textit{kabā’ir} texts is \textit{riyā’} or the

\textsuperscript{891} Raven, “Reward,” 4:451-61.
\textsuperscript{892} Q9:64.
\textsuperscript{893} Ibn Qutaybah, \textit{Gharīb}, 20; ‘Askari, \textit{Awā’il}, 45. Other Islamic neologisms include \textit{kufr}, \textit{fisq} and \textit{mukhaḍram}; see also Ibn al-Athīr, \textit{Nihāyah}, 5:98, s.v. \textit{nafaq}.
\textsuperscript{894} Q9:74, 29:10-11, 33:12, 8:49.
\textsuperscript{896} Many variants describe a fourth characteristic such as dishonesty in litigation; see Waki’ b. al-Jarrāḥ, \textit{Zuhd}, 3:787; Ibn Mandah, \textit{K. al-imān}, 2:604; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, \textit{Ṣamt}, 486, 487, 492. In only three contexts, according to \textit{ḥadīth}, can one lie without sin: in war, to bring about reconciliation between people, and between a man and his wife. Some leave it open-ended as long as the end result is for the common good; see Nawawī, \textit{Adhkār}, 278-9; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, \textit{Ṣamt}, 502; see also a relevant monograph in D. M. Donaldson, “Truth and Falsehood in Islam: A Translation with Comments,” \textit{MW} 33 (1943): 276-85.
ostentatious display of piety.\textsuperscript{897} Often alluded to as the “minor idolatry” (\textit{al-shirk al-aşghar}), Jāḥîẓ aptly describes this hypocrite or \textit{murā‘i} as ‘\textit{abd al-‘ayn} (slave to the eyes of others).\textsuperscript{898} The true nature of hypocrites (\textit{munāfiqūn}) will be exposed at the \textit{qiya‘mah} when they will find themselves, like all unbelievers, crossing the \textit{ṣirāṭ} bridge in total darkness beseeching the good to lend them some of their light.\textsuperscript{899}

The Qur‘ān frames the verbal dishonesty of the unbelievers as part of a broader \textit{malaise}. The \textit{kuffār} are arrogant obstructionists who are deaf and blind to the truth — to the message of the Prophet.\textsuperscript{900} Living in luxury and amassing great fortunes, they cheat, ignore the orphans and the poor and persecute the believers.\textsuperscript{901} The Bedouin, whom the Qur‘ān singles out as being the staunchest opponents and hypocrites (\textit{ashaddu kufran wa-nifāqan}), turn out to be shifty at best, sitting on the side-lines, joining the Meccans or staying behind.\textsuperscript{902} The fact that the early Muslims were engaged more in raids against Bedouin than in armed conflict with the Meccans highlights these problems.\textsuperscript{903}

\textsuperscript{897} Q2:264, 4:38, 8:47. At the \textit{qiya‘mah}, God will tell the hypocrites to go get their rewards from those they have been trying to impress with their piety; see Ibn Ḥanbal, \textit{Musnad}, 5:429; Ibn Mājah, \textit{Sunan}, 2:1406; also see Dhahābi, \textit{Kabā‘ir}, 11.

\textsuperscript{898} Tha‘ālibī, \textit{Thimār}, 329, s.v. ‘\textit{abd al-‘ayn}.


\textsuperscript{900} Q79:37-8.


\textsuperscript{903} The Qur‘ān holds the Bedouin’s religious commitment in low regard; those who revert to their nomadic lifestyle (\textit{ta’arraba}) commit a great sin; see Ute Pietruschka, “Bedouin,” \textit{EQ} 1:214-17. The switch back to the nomadic lifestyle is called \textit{ta’rib} or \textit{al-rujū’ ilā al-arābiyyah}; see Ibn Ḥajar al-Ḥaytamī, \textit{Kabā‘ir}, 1:10. So endemic is this prejudice against nomads that al-Jāḥîẓ rejects the
Verbal sins are much discussed in early ethical texts. Backbiting (ghībah) and gossiping (namīmah) are two sins punishable in the grave but much of barzakh lore puts emphasis on the speed with which God strikes those who insult the Companions of the Prophet.\textsuperscript{904} The list of verbal sins is extensive and includes al-kadhib `alā Allāh wa-rasūlīhi (which includes fabricating ḥadīth); shahādat al-zūr (perjury); kitmān al-shahādah (withholding information in a legal case); qadhf al-muḥṣanāt (slandering chaste women); al-yamīn al-ghamūṣ (lying under oath); not honoring one’s oath; al-kadhib (lying); al-namīmah (gossiping); al-ghībah (backbiting); al-liʿān/sabb al-ṣaḥābah (cursing or reviling the Companions); flattery (al-madīḥ); bragging (iftikhār) and, some add, al-jidāl wa-mirāʾ (disputation and contention).\textsuperscript{905}

The complexity of verbal sins lies in the details; ightiyāb and namīmah are different types of gossiping — the former is the act of mentioning a fault or a defect whereas namīmah is intentionally reporting what someone else said in assumption that Khālid b. Sinān al-ʿAbsī is a prophet because God would never raise up a prophet from among the nomads; see al-Ḥayawān, 4:478. See also the excellent review of policies for resettling Bedouin after the Prophet’s death in Khalil Athamina, “Arāb and Muhājīrūn in the Environment of the Amṣār,” Studia Islamica 66 (1987): 5-25 and Patricia Crone’s discussion of hijrah in “The First-Century Concept of Higra,” Arabic 41(1994): 352-87.\textsuperscript{904} ‘an Qatādah qāla dhukira lanā anna ʿadhāb al-qabr thalāthath athlīth min al-ghībah wa-thulīth min al-bawl wa-thulīth min al-namīmah; see Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Şamī, 317; Dhamm al-ghībah wal-namīmah, ed. Najm Abī al-Raḥmān Khalaf (Cairo: Dār al-lṭiṣām, 1989), 125.

\textsuperscript{905}This intense aversion to all forms of verbal deceit is also paralleled in European medieval culture as illustrated in the rich vocabulary designating innumerable types of lies and varieties of liars; see Le Goff, Medieval Civilization, 253-4.
order to create discord.\textsuperscript{906} To gossip about a non-existent defect adds lying to the sin, rendering the act \textit{buhtān} — a more serious offense.\textsuperscript{907} The Qur’ānic \textit{hamz} and \textit{lamz} encompass defamation, nicknaming, undue suspicion, spying and mockery; one Qur’ānic verse goes so far as to draw an analogy between backbiting and cannibalism — a figure of speech that will impact the depiction of verbal sins in hell.\textsuperscript{908} Etymologically these terms are rich in imagery; \textit{nammām}, for example, is derived from a word describing leather skins that are too weak to hold water.\textsuperscript{909} Contesting the ‘\textit{adālah} (moral probity) of someone is called \textit{jarḥ} (injury) and \textit{ṭa’n} (stabbing).\textsuperscript{910} Needless to say, the \textit{la’ānūn} will never be intercessors at the \textit{qiyyāmah}.\textsuperscript{911}

In the \textit{hisāb}, verbal sins ruin good credit.\textsuperscript{912} An intricate dialectic, as seen in works on ethics, exists between silence and speech: a word uttered cannot be

\textsuperscript{906} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, \textit{Šamt}, 325, 331; \textit{Ghibah}, 137; Nawawi, \textit{Adhkār}, 247-9. ‘Aynī reverses the order and considers \textit{al-nammām} to be the liar who repeats what others say and commits in a day more evil than a magician can in a month while \textit{al-qattāl} is one who eavesdrops on other people’s talk; see ‘\textit{Umdah}, 22:129-30.

\textsuperscript{907} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, \textit{Šamt}, 329; \textit{Ghibah}, 140; Ibn al-Jawzī, \textit{Ashbāh}, 193-4. Should one curse another unfairly, the malediction would befall the one who uttered it. This is known as \textit{mubāhalah} which is swearing to a curse in order to strengthen the assertion one is making; see W. Schumker, “\textit{Mubāhalah},” \textit{E.Í} 7:276-7.

\textsuperscript{908} Q49:11-12, 9:58, 79, 104:1. Q23:97 describes the whisperings of the devil as \textit{hamazāt}; see also E. Rowson, “\textit{Gossip},” \textit{EQ} 2:343-4.

\textsuperscript{909} For other synonyms designating gossipers see Anbārī, \textit{Zāhīr}, 1:379.

\textsuperscript{910} Tyan, “\textit{Adl},” 209. Ibn Sirīn, whose almsgiving went toward atoning for any infraction, was once asked why he never commented on the fate of al-\textit{Ḥajjāj}; he responded that while al-\textit{Ḥajjāj} might be pardoned because of his belief in one God (\textit{tawḥīd}), he, on the other hand, might find himself chastised for \textit{ghibah}; see Zamakhsharī, \textit{Rabi`}, 2:169.

\textsuperscript{911} Abū Dāwūd, \textit{Sunan}, 4:279; Ibn Hanbal, \textit{Musnad}, 6:471; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, \textit{Šamt}, 437. At the end of time, people will greet each other by cursing one another; these will be known as the \textit{saqqārūn}; see Ibn al-\textit{Athīr}, \textit{Nihāyah}, 3:41, s.v. \textit{saqar}.

\textsuperscript{912} Kharā’īṭi, \textit{Masāwi`}, 28, 39.
retrieved, and it is in one’s best interest to remain silent — a strategy that will tip the scales in one’s favor on Judgment Day. Silence is vital to exemplary conduct; chattering only diminishes one’s dignity (waqār): the more one talks, the more one is likely to stumble. Joking (mizāĥ) is how simpletons engage in slander; Sa‘īd b. al- Āş warns his son against mizāĥ for it can only provoke the antagonism of the noble and encourage the audacity of the boorish. No words throw their speaker further from salvation than those uttered to make others laugh. The failing of scholars lies in their infatuation with talking. Flattery is all too predictable; if a man flatters you outright with what you do not have, you can only imagine what he could discredit you with behind your back. These texts also criticize qiyaş, referring to those who engage in it as aşhāb al-khuṣūmāt (contentious people) or marrā‘ūn (show-offs); and the worst of the lot

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913 One mi‘rāj offers the simile of a large bull emerging from a hole to find that he is unable to get back in; see Suyūṭī, Āyah, 20-1; Qurtubi, Tadhkirāt, 1:176; and Barzanjī, Tāj, 51.
914 Not all texts are cut and dried; Ibn al-Jawzī discusses, for example, how difficult it is to keep secrets due to the relief (rāḥah) one experiences from sharing information with a wife or a son. The downside is that one is held hostage to the person one entrusts the secret to and that it might be best to keep matters relating to money, troubles (maṣā‘īb), one’s own age, and places of solitude (khala‘wāḥ) to oneself; see Ṣayd al-khāṭīr, 269-71. On the role of secrecy in romantic literature, see Ruqayya Yasmin Khan, “On the Significance of Secrecy in the Medieval Arab Romances,” JAL XXXI 3 (2000): 238-53; see also Shigeru Kamada, “Secrets,” EQ 4:572-3.
915 Ibn Abī al-Dunya, Šamt, 263, 220, 222, 248. The danger in joking is that one would exaggerate or lie to embellish a fact; see Tirmidhī, Sunan, 4:557; Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, 4:297-8; Ibn al-Mubārak, Zuhd, 322.
916 Joking is how idiots curse one another (al-mizāĥ sībāb al-nawkā) is attributed to Khālid b. Ṣafwān (d. 133/750); Ibn Abī al-Dunya, Šamt, 446; nawkā (sing. nawkī) are idiots.
917 qāla Sa‘īd b. al- Āş li-ibnihi yā bunayy lā tumāziḥ al-sharīf fa-yahqīd ‘alayka wa-lā tumāziḥ al-dani’ fa-yatajarra’ ‘alayka; ibid., 444; for another variant of the second case (… fa-tahūn ‘alayhī), see Dinawarī, Mujālasah, 2:634
918 Ibid., 235.
919 Ibid., 253.
920 qāla Wahb b. Munabbih idhā madā‘yaka al-rajul bimā layṣa fīkā fa-lā ta‘manuhu an yadhummaka bi-mā layṣa fīka; ibid., 554.
are the mutashaddiqūn, those gifted with the gab who don fine clothes and live well.\textsuperscript{921} These are cursed for their thoughtless words (\textit{min ghayr iḥtiyāt wa-iḥtirāz}) and their habitual smirk (\textit{al-mustahzī’ bil-nās yalwī shidqahu bihim wa-‘alayhim}).\textsuperscript{922} The traditionist al-Sha’bī (d. 104/722) calls those who engage in disputations \textit{al-sa’āqifah}, merchants who trade with no capital, lacking in \textit{fiqh} or \textit{ḥadīth} to back their arguments making “the mosque more vile a place [to al-Sha’bī] than the rubbish in [his] home”.\textsuperscript{923}

Poets are a group that made their living from words. Imru’ al-Qays, the most prominent pre-Islamic Arab poet, is depicted in \textit{ḥadīth} wielding the standard of his profession (\textit{liwā’ al-shu’arā’}) and leading all poets into hell.\textsuperscript{924} Deluded by Iblīs, in Ibn al-Jawzī’s opinion, poets imagine themselves litterateurs (\textit{ahl al-adab}) whose talents take them down the road of lying, slandering people’s honor, and a lifestyle of vice all too eagerly confessed (\textit{al-iqrār bil-fawāḥish})! Ibn al-Jawzī regarded invective (\textit{hijā’) and panegyric (\textit{madīḥ}) as blunt forms of blackmail, noting how fast people pay up to avoid the poet’s damaging publicity or profuse flattery.\textsuperscript{925} In his satire of the Muslim afterlife, Ma’arrī (d. 449/1058) recasts poetry as a suspect profession that secures their practitioners no privileges.

\textsuperscript{921} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, \textit{Ghibah}, 93-4.
\textsuperscript{922} Ibn al-Athīr, \textit{Nihāyah}, 2:435, s.v. \textit{shadaq}.
\textsuperscript{923} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, \textit{Ṣamt}, 101, 103.
\textsuperscript{925} Ibn al-Jawzī, \textit{Talbis Iblīs}, 140-1.
Thus *Risālat al-ghufrān* we find the infamous *mukhādram* poet, al-A’shā (Maymūn b. Qays), pardoned through the *shafā‘ah* of Muḥammad and admitted to paradise on condition he not touch a drop of its legendary wines.926 The repentance of poets on their deathbeds and their fate in the afterlife is a common literary trope. Jarīr, who died shortly after al-Farazdaq (d. 110/728), is said to have appeared in a dream to recount how he had been forgiven while his competitor’s slander of virtuous women (*qadḥ*) had led him to perdition.927 Other sources are kinder to al-Farazdaq; they recount how the poet met the ascetic al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī at a graveside and recited the profession of faith, *shahādah*, in response to al-Ḥasan’s questioning of the poet’s readiness for death. In a dream al-Farazdaq informs his son that he had indeed been forgiven on account of this *shahādah*.928

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926 More of *Risālat al-ghufrān* will be picked up in the next chapter; suffice it to mention here that the poetess al-Khansā’ glimpses her brother Ṣakhir, true to his name, standing amid the flames like a towering mountain as fires burn his head; or that Bashshār b. Burd’s blind eyes are forced open with pincers so he can witness his own torment while ‘Antarah is walking dazed amid the flames; see *Risālat al-Ghufrān*, ed. Kāmil al-Kilānī (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Ma‘ārif, n.d., 2:25-7; 67-9; 133; 3:137-9; 142-3.


928 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *K. al-qubūr*, ed. Tāriq Muḥammad al-‘Āmūdī (Medina: Maktabat al-Ghurabā’ al-Athariyyah, 2000), 106. Al-Farazdaq’s grandfather gained fame for saving girls from the practice of infanticide and was known as *muḥyī al-maw‘ūdāt*, a number set at three hundred; see Ibn al-Jawzī, *Khulāṣat al-dhahab*, 26-8. On his deathbed Abū Nuwās (d. 195/810) asked to be seated and recited the *ḥadīth* where the Prophet saves his intercession for *ahl al-kabā‘īr* and declares his hope to be included among them. He appears in a dream to announce that he has indeed been forgiven on account of a few lines of poetry expressing remorse which he placed under his pillow; see *ibid.*, 128-31; Ibn Abī ‘Āṣīm al-Andalusī, *Ḥadā‘iq al-azāhir fī mustaḥṣsan al-ajwibah wal-mudhikāt wal-hikam wal-amthāl wal-hikāyāt wal-nawādir*, ed. ‘Affī ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (Beirut: Dār al-Masīrah, 1987), 430; Suyūṭī, *Sharḥ al-ṣudūr*, 430.
Despite the lengthy discussions on silence and speech in ethical tracts, the gossiper is conspicuously absent from Samarqandi’s list of major sinners. Nor do texts speculate the fate of Abū Lahab’s wife, ḥammālāt al-ḥaṭab.\(^{929}\) Gossiping, as we have seen, marred the qurrā’ and the ‘ulamā’,\(^{930}\) it was described as the pastime of posers, kings, women and the lowest dregs of society.\(^{931}\) An ideal leader (sayyīd), according to a group of nomads, is one whose approach inspires awe and whose departure stimulates gossip!\(^{932}\) The first mughtāb is Iblīs who blathered about Adam the moment he fell from grace.\(^{933}\) Books on zuhd contain plenty of admonition — no vice burns up good deeds faster than gossip; the majority of those who tumble into hell have fallen as a consequence of their tongues (ḥašā’īd alsinatihim).\(^{934}\)

In the afterlife the tongue — as the offending organ — is wounded in a number of ways. In some cases the organ is cut out so that mouths are

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\(^{929}\) Ibn Kathīr suggests that the enthusiasm of Abū Lahab’s wife could be channeled into her adding more fuel to his torment in hell; see Tafsīr, 7:400. Uri Rubin argues that ḥammālāt al-ḥaṭab refers to the active role of Abū Lahab’s wife in the worship of al-‘Uzzā making the reference not a metaphor but an association. Similarly, he takes the view that the kunyā Abū Lahab could relate to the fire he kindled in worshipping the goddess when his personal name was ‘Abd al-‘Uzzā; see Rubin, “Abū Lahab and Sūra CXI,” JOAS 42 (1979): 26.

\(^{930}\) Nahrawānī, Jalīs, 1:276. Al-Fuḍayl b. ‘Iyāḍ warned against associating with the qurrā’ for they would flatter you with attributes you did not possess and if they turned against you, they would be all too eager to commit perjury knowing that they would be believed; see Bayhaqī, Zuhd al-kabīr, 100-1.

\(^{931}\) Zamakhsharı, Rabī’, 2:171. ‘Ali b. al-Husayn is related to have said al-ghibah…idām kilāb al-nās; see Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Ṣamt, 386. Tha’alībī where the original quote is cited reads (al-ghibah fākihat al-murā’i wa-bustān al-mulūk wa-marta’ al-nisā’ wa-idām kilāb ahl al-nār); see Iqtibās, 1:245.

\(^{932}\) qāla li-rajul min al-a’rāb man al-sayyīd fikum qāla alladhī idhā aqabala hibnāhu wa-idhā adbara iḥtābanahu; see Zamakhsharı, Rabī’, 2:170.

\(^{933}\) Ibid., 2:176.

\(^{934}\) Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Ṣamt, 318, 388, 180.
described as hollow cavities and in other cases lips or tongues are exaggerated in size.\textsuperscript{935} The gossiper, in our earliest text, paces compulsively in hell, vomiting blood and pus.\textsuperscript{936} Tongues — of both men and women — are pulled out from the back of necks or are sagging down chests like leather skins to be hammered with fiery mallets.\textsuperscript{937} Those who defame the honor of good Muslims are hung by their tongues.\textsuperscript{938} In hell flatterers stutter, the lips of \textit{khuṭابā' al-fitnah} are snipped and the tongues of ‘\textit{ulamā’} are sandwiched between fiery coals.\textsuperscript{939} In one \textit{mi'rāj} the mouth is disfigured as an angel slices through the cheeks of a gossiper with a metal hook as he lies powerlessly on his back.\textsuperscript{940}

Perjury and false testimony, known as \textit{al-yāmīn al-ghamūṣ}, is a double sin where lying or deliberate silence (\textit{yamna‘ūna al-shahādah}) deprives others of their rights.\textsuperscript{941} The qualifying adjective, \textit{ghamūṣ} (dipping), refers to hellfire. It was the caliph ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb who instituted the public humiliation of the perjurer (\textit{shāhid al-zūn}) as a way of discrediting that individual’s reliability as a witness.\textsuperscript{942} In the afterlife false accusers will be crucified on fiery palm trees.\textsuperscript{943} This visibility

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{935} Ghazzālī, \textit{Durraḥ}, 170.  
\textsuperscript{936} Asad b. Mūsā, \textit{Zuḥd}, 63-4.  
\textsuperscript{937} Ash’ārī, \textit{Sha’jarah}, 52; Majlisī, \textit{Bīḥār}, 75:262; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, \textit{Ṣamt}, 551; Ghazzālī, \textit{Kashf}, 65; anon., ‘\textit{Aẓamah}, fols. 43b-44a; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘\textit{Aẓamah}, fol. 31b.  
\textsuperscript{938} Suyūṭī, \textit{Sharḥ al-ṣūdūr}, 77.  
\textsuperscript{939} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, \textit{Ṣamt}, 507, 538.  
\textsuperscript{940} Kharūṭī, \textit{Māsāwi‘}, 76; Suyūṭī, \textit{Sharḥ al-ṣūdūr}, 69-70; Barzanjī, \textit{Tāj}, 50; Ibn al-Athīr, \textit{Niḥāyah}, 2:459, s.v. \textit{sharshar}.  
\textsuperscript{942} Khāṣṣāf, \textit{Adab al-qādī}, 776.  
\textsuperscript{943} Zamakhshārī, \textit{al-Kashshāf}, 4:687-8; Razī, \textit{Mafā'īḥ}, 8:433-4; Qurṭūbī, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:248; Majlisī, \textit{Bīḥār}, 7:89.}
is also given to another verbal offense, that of insulting one’s elders and parents.\textsuperscript{944} As mentioned earlier, the mouths of perjurers in the qiyāmah are empty cavities (\textit{yuḥsharūn min qubūrihim wa-laysa bi-afwāhihim alsinah}),\textsuperscript{945} and in hell they toy with their dismembered tongues for a long time (\textit{yal‘abūna bi-alsinatihim dahran ṭawilān}).\textsuperscript{946} Mouths are sealed as if to shut off their toxicity — the hot liquid brass poured through a hole in the heads of liars drains out of their noses.\textsuperscript{947}

The Qur‘ānic analogy between gossiping and cannibalism is explored in the afterlife.\textsuperscript{948} Gossipers eat, or are forced to eat, their own flesh.\textsuperscript{949} In the ‘Aẓamah, gossipers (\textit{al-mughtābūn}) consume their internal organs, pulling intestines out of their ripped bellies or senselessly gnawing their own fingers. With fiery batons, the zabāniyah monitor any slackening in the chewing motion.\textsuperscript{950} This senseless mastication parallels an apocalyptic image of a time when people will be chewing words the way a cow masticates cud.\textsuperscript{951} Poets who slander their rivals are described as “dogs consuming rotten meat”.\textsuperscript{952} Flesh is lacerated and torn; slanderers with copper nails rend their own faces and

\textsuperscript{945} Anon., \textit{Istikhrāj}, fols. 126 a-b.
\textsuperscript{946} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, fol. ‘Aẓamah, 27b.
\textsuperscript{947} \textit{wa-qad inshaqqat admighatuhum fa-yuṣabb fihā al-nuḥās al-mudhāb fa-takhruj} (sic) \textit{min ānāfīhim}; see Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘Aẓamah, fol. 28b.
\textsuperscript{948} Q49:12; \textit{laḥm} is a euphemism for ghībah and \textit{haṭaḥ} for namīmah; see Tha‘alibī, \textit{Iqtībās}, 2:66.
\textsuperscript{950} Anon., ‘Aẓamah, fols. 35b-36a.
\textsuperscript{951} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, \textit{Samt}, 289, 613 and \textit{Ghibah}, 92.
\textsuperscript{952} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘Aẓamah, fol. 25a.
Professional women wailers re-enact their mourning performances and are punished, as Samarqandī would remind us, for uttering untruths and lying about a grief that they do not share with those who have lost loved ones.

Hypocrites in their double-dealings will find themselves emerging from their graves with two faces on fire (\textit{wajhān min nār}) and two tongues in each face.\textsuperscript{954} In one variant the second tongue is located at the nape of the neck whence (as in a horror film) it slowly consumes its own body.\textsuperscript{955} In order to illustrate the revulsion against hypocrisy, angels spit at their charges — projectiles that land on their targets causing unbearable torment.\textsuperscript{956} Those who have mocked believers will claim in the \textit{qiya\textstyle{m}ah} that they were only chatting and joking; God promises to ridicule them as they have ridiculed the faithful.\textsuperscript{957} In a scene played many times over to the delight of believers in paradise, the mockery is re-enacted when infernal gates unexpectedly open, offering an exit only to slam shut in the faces of mockers. The joke lies in the repeated attempts that end in despair and exhaustion.\textsuperscript{958}

\textsuperscript{955} \textit{yajī‘ yawm al-qiy\textstyle{m}ah dhū al-wajhayn dālī‘an lisānahu fi qafāhu wa-‘akhhar min quddāmīhi yaltahibān nāran ḥattā yulhibā jasadamu thumma yuqāil hādḥā alladhī kāna fi ‘l-dunyā dhā al-wajhayn wa-dhā al-lisānayn yu‘raff bi-dhālikā yawm al-qiy\textstyle{m}ah}; see Majlīsī, \textit{Bīhār}, 75:203.
\textsuperscript{956} Anon., \textit{‘A\textstyle{z}amah}, fol. 43b.
\textsuperscript{957} Q9:65-66, 2:15, 9:79, 83:34-5; also see Ludwig Ammann, \textit{“Mockery,” EQ} 3:400-1.
The severity of reviling (sabb), cursing (li‘ān) and defaming (qadhī), especially in matters of faith, is equated with killing. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā’s work is filled with terrible predicaments for those who have cursed the Companions of the Prophet. A Jahmī who slandered Abū Bakr and ‘Umar was seen naked in a dream informing his friend that he had been placed among the Christians in hell. The conflicts of the civil wars seeped into the dreams of Muslims who sought the forgiveness of the Prophet. A man who slandered Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr dreams of standing in a desert full of naked men with torn limbs and heads of dogs. After being told that these are the ones who had slandered the Companions, he meets the Prophet and petitions for pardon. Whether in the barzakh or the dream world, retribution for cursing the Companions is swift. The metaphors remain cogent; a gossiper was forced in a dream to consume a plate of pork whose aftertaste lasted an entire month.

Exposing the private affairs of Muslims includes the dead as well, and here those who dig up graves (nabbāshūn al-qubūr) emerge as the primary suspects. The nabbāshūn, grave robbers, are those the Prophet cursed in

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959 Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, 4:123; Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, 4:34; Ibn Mājah, Sunan, 1:97.
962 Ibid., 91-2.
963 In one dream, a slanderer is slapped across the face and wakes up to find one half of it black. In another, the Prophet gives a knife to the neighbor of a slanderer who wakes up to find that the slanderer had died in his sleep as if his throat was slit; see ibid., 108-9; ‘Uqūbāt, 199-200; Mujābī, 4:57-8; Ibn Sīrin, Ablām, 16-17.
964 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Manāmāt, 65.
both sexes (al-mukhtafi/mukhtafiyyah) for disclosing what burial has placed out of sight. In the ‘Azamah, they are punished for breaking the bones of Muslims and for having violated the sanctity of the dead (hatakū astār al-muslimin min al-rijāl wal-nisā’). The nabbāshūn are beaten on their heads, shoulders, abdomen, and knees or forced to carry heavy loads while being harangued by angels. They are manhandled; their eyes are torn out and their arms and legs cut off in the same manner that they have hacked up the corpses of fellow Muslims. Centuries later when şūfis claimed to glean the conditions of the grave through their extraordinary ability of kashf, Sha’rānī (d. 973/1565) considered discussing the affairs of the grave as ghībah.

III. G. Sins of Greed: the zakāh evaders

The Qur’ānic discourse on wealth is central to understanding sins related to money. The verses make clear that God is the ultimate giver, He is al-ghanī in the grand sense that all wealth belongs to Him (and He lacks for nothing), whereas humans stand as supplicants (fuqarā’) in need of His blessings and grace. Given God as its source, wealth is essentially a trusteeship, an amānah, to be spent in acts that would be returning to God what is ultimately His.

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966 Nahrawānī, Jalis, 1:195; Anbārī treats al-mustakhtā as one of the aḍḍād, meaning both what is obvious and what is hidden, see Aḍḍād, 48.
967 Anon., ‘Azamah, fol. 39b.
The Qur’anic usage of the term nafaqa (to spend) refers to wealth expended in the service of God; all good deeds are loans (qard ḥasan) which will ultimately double many times over from His endless bounty. Not only are sins related to money an evasion of this trusteeship, hoarding and avarice reflect either an intrinsic lack of trust in God’s ability to provide or an exaggerated claim to self-sufficiency. Q5:64 challenges a Jewish claim that God is not bountiful. In the final tally, the Qur’ān makes it clear that the acquisition of wealth is useless; none of the trappings will mitigate or offer protection from accountability or divine retribution. Many ascetic sayings endorse this view; ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd describes men (and women) as earthly guests — all they own is on loan (‘āriyah) and is slowly remitted as they move through life.

Initially the difference between zakāh and voluntary almsgiving (ṣadaqah) was unclear. Zakāh appears to acquire a redemptive function; the Qur’ān commands the Prophet to perform prayers with the purpose of cleansing a zakāh

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970 Q57:11, 18; 64:17, 2:245, 73:20, 5:12.
971 Q57:23-4, 4:36-8. Q5:64 refutes the argument made by the Jews that God’s beneficence is measured.
972 The Qur’ānic verse led Muslims to depict Jews as mushabbihah. Shahrastānī writes that the Jews unanimously agree (wa-qad ajma‘at al-yahūd ‘alā ākhīrihim) that after God created the world, he sat on his throne mustalqiyan ‘alā qafāh wādī‘an ihdā rijayhi ‘alā al-ukhrā; see Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), Mawsū‘at al-mi‘āl wal-ni‘al (Beirut: Mu‘assasat Nā‘ir lil-Thaqāfah, 1981), 99.
donor’s sins. Almsgiving expiated (kaffārah) misconduct and minor sins. The Qur’ān documents the early objections — primarily from Bedouins — who regarded zakāh as a penalty (maghram). Some contemporaries of the Prophet shared this position and it appears that Bedouins paid up in order to avoid being attacked. Donations for jihād and other acts in the service of God were met with resistance. Research has shown that several key concepts of zakāh were later interpretations imposed on earlier texts in order to legitimize the tax as an institution and a tenet of faith. Statements traced to ṣaḥābīs warned that withholding zakāh would negatively impact all prayers for divine assistance. In the larger scheme of things, treating zakāh as a penalty is a portentous sign of the end of time.

Greed is at the heart of sins related to money. Illegal gains are known as suḥt, a category that includes withholding zakāh, usury (riḥā), hoarding (iḥṭikār), fraudulent trade practices (bakhs) and embezzling the property of orphans (akl


976 Q9:60, otherwise known as āyat al-ṣadaqah, lists those deserving of zakāh and was a verse revealed in response to criticism of the Prophet’s equity. These categories are not permanent; the caliph ‘Umar saw no need to endorse the mu’allafatu qulūbuhum, declaring that Islam had achieved enough stability to be able to do without the services of “those whose hearts had been won over”; see Zysow, “Zakāt,” 11:408; also see Paul Heck, “Taxation,” EQ 5:192-3.

977 Objections were raised to Qur’ānic verses that warned against hoarding, voicing a fear that those who donate would have little to leave for their children to inherit; see Bashear, “On the Origins,” 99-100, 102.

978 Shi‘ite tradition equally emphasized the obligatory nature of zakāh; not only does ‘Ali describe zakāh as one of the arches of Islam but a statement traced to Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq equates the person who withholds one carat (qiṣrāṭ) of it as not being a mu‘min or a muslim; ibid., 100; 111.
māl al-yatīm). Tax collectors (‘ashshārūn/makkāsūn) were intensely disliked for their greed and brutality. Qur’ānic metaphor associates greed with “devouring” so that it comes as no surprise that usurers and zakāh evaders emerge from their graves with bloated bellies. Unpaid debt is regarded as an unlawful coveting of someone else’s wealth and settling all dues becomes one of the conditions for relieving suffering in the barzakh. There are gradations to avarice; shuḥḥ, in its envy of another’s possessions, is more extreme than bukhl which is mere stinginess. An oppressor (zālim) in comparison to the shāhīḥ, in the opinion of some, has a better chance of divine forgiveness. As mentioned earlier, the Prophet’s abhorrence of avarice is well documented; the counterpart of avarice is sincere almsgiving (ṣadaqah ṭayyībah) that can cancel out a “mountain of sins”.

In the Muslim afterlife zakāh evaders are equal to thieves. Their sin is primarily hoarding wealth (kanz), which includes any property whose zakāh was not paid. Many have attempted to provide a numerical figure to al-kanz al-madhūm (abhorred wealth) in Q9:34-5; ‘Alī appraised any amount over four

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979 Q5:42, 62, 63. Mundhirī defines suḥt as al-ḥarām wa-qīla al-khabīth min al-makāṣib; see Tarḥīb, 3:15.
981 Dinawārī, Mujālasah, 1:298-99. Al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār in discussing the concept of compensation or ʿiwaḍ brings up the case of the miser, and notes that the miser feels more sorrow about losing any part of his possessions than a generous person. Because God made the miser the way he is and because it is an act of God that he feels this way about his loss, He compensates him in proportion to his greater suffering; see Heemskekerk, Suffering, 173.
thousand dinârs as kanz regardless of whether its zakâh had been paid.983 Thus the zakâh evader becomes a hoarder whose kanz was discussed among pietists. The prohibitive verses, Q9:34-5, had much appeal: Abû al-Dardâ’ (d. 32/652), on spotting trading caravans returning to Mecca, would recite the verse aloud from the tops of mountains proclaiming that he stood witness to a trail of hellfire moving closer.984 Abû Dharr al-Ghifârî (d. 32/652), in his “coarse demeanor”, would scream out to the Meccan assembly (al-malâ‘) the punishments awaiting hoarders before abruptly taking off.985

The punishment for zakâh evaders is based on Q3:180 that warns the greedy that their riches will fetter them on Judgment Day.986 The kanz will emerge as the infamous reptile, al-shujâ‘ al-aqra‘, who on declaring himself to be the hoarder’s worst enemy, effectively restrains him. With teeth of steel he bites off the stingy right hand, alternating between both limbs as screams punctuate each bite.987 This punishment is in effect the Qur’ânic ḥadd for thievery since, in

983 Ṭabarî, Jâmi‘, 10:120; Râzî, Mafâtîh, 4:629 and Zamakhshârî, al-Kashshâf, 2:267. Zamakhshârî, true to his Mu’tazili principles, states that God in his justice would not allow someone to gather wealth and punish him citing the two wealthy šaḥâbîs, ‘Abd al-Rahmân b. ‘Awf and Ṭalhah b. ‘Ubayd Allâh, who were promised paradise. Money is legitimate (iqtinâ’ mubâh) but everything has its limits (wa-li-kull shay’ ḥadd).
984 Râzî, Mafâtîh, 4:629.
985 Bukhârî, Šâhîh, 1:356; Muslim, Šâhîh, 2:689; Ṭabarî, Jâmi‘, 10:120; Râzî, Mafâtîh, 4:628; Ibn Kathîr, Tafsîr, 3:392.
986 Similarly, the Prophet describes the debtor as lonely and in bondage on Judgment Day, šâhîb al-dayn ma’sûr yawm al-qiyâmah yashkû ilâ Allâh ‘azzâ wa-jalla wahdahu; see Dinawarî, Mujâlasah, 1:243.
987 Samarqandî, Qurrah, 41.
the end, all wealth is God’s wealth (māl Allāh). Tarhib magnifies the consequences of appropriating public money; Ibn al-Jawzī preached that for every pilfered dirham, grain or even mouthful of food a fiery snake would grab the offender to place him among the Jews in hell. A more aggressive punishment awaits those who have withheld zakāh on their livestock. Resurrected in stronger physical form (aqwā mimmā kānat ‘alayhi fī ’l-dunyā wa-ashaddu batšhan), camels, horses, sheep and goats will trample these sinners. Zakāh evaders will also be forced to carry their livestock on their backs — the metaphor of sin as weight — which will prove to be a challenging task with all the load and noise. Livestock are also transformed into tigers and foxes chasing their prey or former owners into hell.

The Qur’ān threatens hoarders with a “taste” of their wealth as foreheads, sides and backs will be branded and stamped with fire. Here kanz is “weaponized” (to apply a current neologism); Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī describes how hot coins placed on nipples would sear their way through the hoarder’s body to emerge from the shoulder-blades. The skin is stretched to accommodate the stash of dinārs and dirhams as each coin is laid out separately (yuwassa‘ jilduhu

988 Q5:38; see also Joseph Lowry, “Theft,” 5:254-6.
989 Ibn al-Jawzī, Bustān, 66. Q5:64 alludes to the Jews describing God’s “hand” as chained which might explain why thieves would be placed alongside those who doubt God’s munificence.
989 Samarqandi, Qurrah, 41; Ghazzālī, Durrarah, 64-5.
989 Q9:35.
992 Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, 1:356; Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 2:689; Ṭabarī, Jāmi‘, 10:120; Rāzī, Mafātiḥ, 4:628; Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, 3:392.
Another suggestion includes smelting the treasure trove into metal sheets according to the weight of each hoarder’s wealth (each qirāṭ equals one sheet) or re-shaping the dirhams into fiery nails to puncture the skin (ṣārat kulluhā masāmir min nār fi laḥmihī).993 Rāzī adds an interesting gender related footnote; zakāh on jewelry and gold is the sole responsibility of men who, as buyers, need to account for the weight of their purchase and pay its zakāh.994

Rāzī explains why the forehead, the back and the sides are selected for punishment. For one, wealth manifests itself in these three body parts: the happy heart of the wealthy causes the face to glow; satiety (shaba’) can be seen in the bulging waistline and affluence is displayed in expensive garments on the back. A wealthy man on seeing the poor turns away with his side then his back. Besides, in this exegete’s opinion, pain should be distributed equally throughout the body: the softest is the forehead, the strongest the back. These body parts contain sensitive organs that would be subject to enormous pain. Humiliation, though, is the real punishment; the rewards of wealth are beauty and strength symbolized by the face and the back — the first effaced, the other broken.995

994 Rāzī, Matātīḥ, 4:630. Not all legal schools agree on this; most exempt decorative articles from zakāt, but not the Hanafis, Zaydis, Ibādis and Zāhiris; see Zysow, “Zakāt,” 11:413.
995 Rāzī, Matātīḥ, 4:632; see also Dhahabī, Kabā’īr, 35.
The Qur'ān also warns against any exaggerated display of charity; those boasters will emerge empty-handed on Judgment Day.\footnote{Q2:264. The parable in the verse draws an analogy between the boastful man to dust on a rock which a sudden downpour would wash off in contrast, in the following verse, to the charitable acts of believers, which are likened to an elevated garden which a sudden downpour causes to double its yield.} Most texts portray uncharitable souls as those who have neglected their duty toward the poor on account of their decadent life-styles (ḥā’ulā’ alladhīnā mana’ū al-masākin min al-ṣadaqah wa-tahayya’ū lil-maghānī wa-ahl al-la’ib).\footnote{Ibn Abī al-Dunya, ‘Aẓamah, fol. 16b.} In the mi’rāj they are naked save for patches covering their genitals as they wander aimlessly grazing the zaqqūm.\footnote{Qurṭubī, Ṭadhkīrah, 1:175; Suyūṭī, Ṣharḥ al-ṣudūr, 20-1; Barzanjī, Tāj, 47.} In the ‘Aẓamah the decadent have their heads lopped off and placed between their legs; in this “stress position” (another modern neologism) they confess to their selfishness with much regret and sorrow.\footnote{Anon., ‘Aẓamah, fol. 36b.}

**Usurers and other “eaters”**

The prohibition against ribā, usury, stood as a safeguard against hoarding and a way to ensure an equitable distribution of wealth. Those who engage in ribā, from an Islamic standpoint, might as well consider themselves as having received an ultimatum from both God and His Prophet.\footnote{Q2:279.} Many traditions prohibit the practice without defining it beyond the prohibitive maxims — that it is the gravest of sins or that the mildest version of usury equals incest.\footnote{Mundhirī, Ṭarhib, 3:50; see also J. Schacht, “Ribā,” EI² 8:491-3; Masudul Alam Choudhury, “Usury,” EQ 5:406-8.}

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Qur’an alludes to usurers as “eaters of usury” (ākilūna al-ribā)\textsuperscript{1002} and extends the metaphor to those who covet illegal gains (ākilūna al-suḥt) and those who embezzle the property of orphans (ākilūna amwāl al-yatāmā).\textsuperscript{1003} The Qur’ānic wa‘īd warns all “eaters” that it is only a matter of time before they are devouring Jahannam’s fires in their bellies.\textsuperscript{1004} Suḥt here is a synonym for bribery or a gift in relation to legal sentencing (al-hadiyyah aw al-rashwah fı ‘l-ḥukm).\textsuperscript{1005}

Tarhib warns usurers that they will be restless in the grave, especially on the most sacred nights of Ramaḍān.\textsuperscript{1006} Immobilized by their large bellies usurers are incapable of keeping their balance, and in one mi’rāj these bellies “large as houses” teem with live snakes and scorpions.\textsuperscript{1007} At the qiyamah they will argue that usury is similar to trading.\textsuperscript{1008} Another mi’rāj depicts the usurer swimming upstream in a river of blood while being fed one boulder at a time as its weight drags him downstream. He struggles to keep afloat while being repeatedly fed. The image here is as much a literal reading of the “eater” metaphor as a

\textsuperscript{1002} Q2:275, 4:161.
\textsuperscript{1003} Q5:42, 62-3, 4:6, 10. Q2:174 and 4:10 apply the same metaphor to the illegal gains of the ahl al-kitāb who have withheld the word of God and sold it for gain, hoarding money and not spending it for the common good.
\textsuperscript{1004} Q2:174, 4:10.
\textsuperscript{1006} Mālibārī, Irshād, 115.
\textsuperscript{1007} Samarqandi, Qurrāh, 25; the image is also applied to the māniʿ al-zakāh; see Ash‘ārī, Shajarah, 53; Ghazzālī, Durrah, 170; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Ḵabāʾir, 1:222-23.
\textsuperscript{1008} Q2:275.
depiction of insatiable greed. Exegetes also applied to usurers the Qurʾān’s punishment for another group, this time the Jewish *aṣḥāb al-sabt* who were transformed (*maskh*) into pigs, apes and dogs. Muslim usurers acquire the form of cows with large tongues to illustrate the rapacious appetite with which they once “consumed the world” In addition to greed, *akkālū al-suḥt* are punished for enjoying affluent lifestyles at the cost of defrauding others. These are beaten, dragged up a mountain and crucified on fiery poles.

Those who plundered the property of orphans emerge at the *qiyaḥmah* ablaze, with fire in their bellies and smoke coming out of their mouths, ears, noses and eyes. Their large camel lips crush hot coals that emerge from their backsides. These images are faithful to a Qurʾānic verse. The prayers of the vulnerable were called the “mangonels of the weak” (*majānīq al-ḍuʿafāʾ*) and the powerful were often warned against the “fingers of orphans” (*aṣābiʿ al-aytām*).

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1009 Qurṭubī, *Tadhkirah*, 1:172-3; Suyūṭī, *Sharḥ al-ṣudūr*, 68-9; Dhahabi, *Kabāʾir*, 63. Ghayṭī, a believer in *kashf* or clairvoyance, raised the possibility that this image was the current condition of usurers in the *barzakh*; see *Qiṣṣah*, 73.
1015 Q4:10.
Beneath greed lies gluttony. This is illustrated in the grotesque exaggeration of lips, bellies and backsides — organs related to digestion and waste. Such representation can be found in Prophetic traditions that portray the voracity of a kāfir to extend to seven times that of a Muslim,\textsuperscript{1017} or in God’s abhorrence of the fat scholar (\textit{al-ḥibr al-sāmīn}).\textsuperscript{1018} Gluttony signifies a pre-occupation with worldly matters that can only harden the heart and turn it away from God.

Markets are portrayed in popular religious literature as the headquarters of Iblis. Not only does Iblis spawn his offspring in the marketplace but this is where the demon Zalanbūr takes credit for all the false swearing and fraud.\textsuperscript{1019} Deceptive market practices include \textit{taṭṭif} (short weight), \textit{bakhs} (shortchanging), \textit{taghābun} (mutual fraud), \textit{akl amwāl al-nāṣ bil-bāṭil} (devouring people’s wealth on false pretexts),\textsuperscript{1020} and hoarding food (\textit{iḥṭikār al-ṭaʾām}) and clothes to be later sold at higher prices.\textsuperscript{1021} The people of Madyan, as the Qur’ān warns, were destroyed for putting these market principles into practice. As we will see, fraudulent practices overlap with sins of the tongue or with usury, which is where Samarqandī decides to address it. \textit{Adab} works highlight this negative image of merchants and trade as an unsuitable profession, which is remarkable when one

\textsuperscript{1018} Qurṭubī, \textit{Tadhkimah}, 1:374.
\textsuperscript{1020} Jackson, “Cheating,” \textit{EQ} 1:300.
\textsuperscript{1021} Mālībārī, \textit{Irshād}, 160-61.
considers the central role trade played in the Prophet’s life and in the Arabian economy. One respected Jāḥīẓ scholar suggests that these traditions were propagated in the ‘Abbāsid period as an attempt on the part of the merchant class to dissuade the powerful Barmakids from competing in business.¹⁰²²

Merchants emerge at the *qiya‘mah* with fiery weights and scales dangling from their necks. Incriminating evidence of their lying is visible as blood spurts out of their mouths. Once they speak, they find themselves suffering from a speech impediment (*althagh al-lisān*). Hooks clasp their heels on the *ṣirāt*; and once trapped, they confront their victims and settle their debts on the bridge.¹⁰²³ Moralistic tales warn the hoarder (*muhṭakir*) against leprosy (*judhām*) and bankruptcy (*iflās*), mentioning how a *mawlā* of ‘Umar who engaged in the practice was seen deranged with a fractured skull (*majdhūban mashdūkhan*).¹⁰²⁴ *Ghulūl*, stealing from war loot, as the Prophet warns, will be fetters (*al-ghull ghulūl*) at the *qiya‘mah*.¹⁰²⁵

The most visible representatives of *suḥṭ*, in many homiletic texts, are the tax collectors with their large bureaucracy of scribes, witnesses, weighers and measurers who were infamous for unjustly extorting money and handing it to

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¹⁰²³ Anon., *Istikhrāj*, fol. 126a; Samargandi, *Qurrāh*, 27.
¹⁰²⁵ Mālībārī, *Irshād*, 160-1; see also Q3:161.
those who do not deserve it. Such is their injustice that as a collective they will be denied paradise. The office of diwān al-ṣadaqah established under the Umayyad caliph Hishām (r. 724/105-743/125) was an attempt to bring tax-collectors, the ‘ushshār, into conformity with Islamic law. Most of the anti-establishment rhetoric on oppressors and their assistants (al-ẓalamaḥ wa-a’wān al-ẓalamaḥ) comes from that period. Makḥūl al-Dimashqī (d. 113/731) counts those who fill the inkblots and sharpen the pencils of the rulers as in league with the ẓalamaḥ. Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/777) told a tailor of the caliph that those who sold him the thread and the needles were the henchmen of the oppressors (a’wān al-ẓalamaḥ) so that he should count himself among them. The greed and brutality of tax-collectors became proverbial; when the ‘ushshār asked Mālik b. Dīnār for his prayers he asked how they could expect the prayers of a single man to be heard when thousands pray against them!

The Qur’ān offers the morality tale of Korah (Qārūn) whose arrogance and wealth led him to believe that all was given to him on account of his knowledge. He refused to apply his wealth in the service of God, and during an impressive

1027 Very little detail is known about the official collection of zakāh; the term ‘ushshār is derived from ‘ushr which is the ten percent tax levied on non-Muslim merchants. The Hanafi jurist al-Sarakhsi notes the custom of collectors of giving receipts known as barā‘ah; see Zysow, “Zakāt,” 11:408-9.
1029 Ibn al-Jawzī, Talbis, 147.
display of his possessions the earth abruptly opened up to swallow him with his fortune and entire entourage. Exegetes gloss over Korah’s story by framing him as an alms-evader who paid a woman to accuse Moses of adultery just as the prophet was about to reveal the duty of almsgiving! Korah’s punishment is relevant in that some Muslim sources describe it as ongoing — he continues to sink deeper into the earth at the slow rate of a man’s height every day. The echo of this punishment is found in hadith; khasf is the punishment for the Muslim who struts about proudly (yatabakhtar) in adorned garments. Sins related to money have generated an ongoing commentary on affluence and power.

III. H. Women sinners

The predicament of women in the afterlife is bleak. A vision (ru’yā) during a solar eclipse reveals to the Prophet a hell populated with women. When paradise, in another ru’yā, appeared short of women Muḥammad was told that their indulgence in al-aḥmarān, gold and silk, had cost them dearly. Exceptional women are few and far between; many traditions offer little hope

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1031 Ibn Hanbal, Musnad, 2:222.
1032 Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, 1:367-9; Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 2:618-19; Tirmidhi, Sunan, 7:264-5.
1033 In some versions, it is perfume and jewelry; see Ibn Hanbal, Musnad, 5:259; Mundhirī, Ṭarḥīb, 3:104-5, 4:89. In this vision the Prophet encounters Bilāl in paradise; this poses a problem since the Prophet is to be the first to enter the domain, so how come Bilāl is already there? Tirmidhi states that the visions of the prophets are inspired and because Bilāl always walked ahead of the Prophet and performed his ablutions conscientiously, he was given this honor in a dream; see ‘Aynī, ‘Umdah, 3:631-2.
1034 The hadith reveals the Prophet drawing a parallel between an unusual crow with a red beak and feet and good women who gain paradise — they are as unusual as that bird; see Ibn Hanbal, Musnad, 4:197, 205; on the description of the ghurāb see Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Hādī, 146.
— women fall off the perilous širāt in alarming numbers.\footnote{Qurṭubi quotes this from Ibn al-Jawzī and the ḥadīth is not included by the canonical six; see Tadhkirah, 1:399.} Whereas the Qurʾān explicitly gives men a mandate over women, the above ḥadīth goes further in showing that women are more susceptible to sin.\footnote{Q4:34; also see Cook, Koran, 37-41.} Texts on paradise outline its community with the demographic imbalance in mind, their rhetoric betraying the certainty that men will outnumber women\footnote{al-rijāl fi ʾl-jannah akthar min al-nisāʾ; see Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, 2:507; Bayhaqī, Baʾth, 212.} and that only a few women will make that final cut.\footnote{inna aqalla sākini ʾl-jannah al-nisāʾ; see Qurtubi, Tadhkirah, 1:446.} The sources on women in hell are relatively late and can be traced to a “women’s miʿrāj", attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās, seconded by a Shīʿite version of the Prophet detailing to Fāṭimah the fate of women in Jahannam.\footnote{Majlisī, Bilār, 18:351-2; Mālibārī, Irshād, 138-9 and Khūbawī, Durrat al-nāṣihīn, 47-8.}

It is obvious that this gender imbalance works in men’s favor — the afterlife too is a man’s world. When Abū Bakr’s daughter complained about her husband, her father counseled patience for ʿal-Zubayr was a good man (ṣāliḥ) and likely to remain her husband in the next life!\footnote{According to Ibn Kathīr a man who deflowers a woman (ʿinna al-rajul idhā ibtakara al-marʿah) would likely retain her as a wife in paradise; see Nihāyah, 2:416. The Prophet keeps all his wives; on Khadijah’s deathbed he reminded her that she would be his wife along with Mary, Kūltūm (the sister of Moses) and Āsiyā (the wife of Pharaoh); see Ibn al-Jawzī, Muntazam, 3:19; Ibn Kathīr, Nihāyah, 2:353; ʿSilat al-jannah, 49-50. In fact, the desire to be resurrected as part of the Prophet’s household led one of his wives, Sawdah, to implore Muḥammad not to divorce her and to offer “her night” to ʿĀʾishah, see Barbara Freyer Stowasser, Women in the Qurʾān, Traditions, and Interpretation (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 114.} There was the opinion that a woman would be joined to her last husband in paradise.\footnote{Suyūṭī, Khaṣāʾīṣ, 3:144-5.}
Jawziyyah gets to the point (in terms of male benefits) when he states that women outnumber men in both abodes and that in paradise “it appears” that each man is allotted two ǧurīs\(^{1042}\) — a modest estimate compared to others.\(^{1043}\) In another part of the same text Ibn al-Qayyim explains that women (nisā’ al-dunyā) will constitute a minority in paradise because they are a majority in hell.\(^{1044}\) Equality between the sexes in paradise should not be assumed; will women be able to see God in the afterlife? Here the ‘ulamā differ: one position denies granting women the privilege of seeing God for they will be secluded in their tents (maqsūrat fi ’l-khiyām) while another makes it provisional in that women would be granted the privilege on special occasions like feast days (ayyām al-a’yād).\(^{1045}\)

The concept of tabarruj, sexual self-display, portrayed in texts as the brazen intrusion of women into public space, is the key to understanding the punishment of women in hell.\(^{1046}\) Associated with the first jāhiliyyah, tabarruj entails seductiveness which exegetes describe as strutting, flirting and showing

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\(^{1042}\) Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Ḥādi, 143. Ibn Kathīr is more cautious with generalizations and suggests that maybe these women will eventually be released through many intercessions (shafāʾāt) to become a majority in paradise, and God knows best; see al-Nihāyah, 2:377.

\(^{1043}\) Ibn Kathīr quotes an estimate of one hundred ḥūris, four thousand virgins and eight thousand non-virgins (ayyim/thayyib); see Nihāyah, 2:399. In another text he quotes the hadīth that out of seventy-two allotted wives, two are ḥūris and seventy are earthly women. Nowhere in these texts do they state if the four wives cap is lifted in the afterlife; see Ṣifat al-jannah wa-mā fihā min al-na’am al-muqūm, ed. Yūsuf ‘Alī al-Badawī (Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1989), 106-7.

\(^{1044}\) innamā kunna fi ’l-jannah akthar bi ’l-ḥūr al-ʿin allati khuliqna fi ’l-jannah wa-agall sākinihā nisā’ al-dunyā fa-nisā’ al-dunyā aqall ahl al-jannah wa-akthar ahl al-nār; see Ibn al-Qayyim, Ḥādi, 144.

\(^{1045}\) Ibn Kathīr, Ṣifat al-jannah, 127-8.

\(^{1046}\) al-tabarruj huwa idhā arādat [al-mar’ah] al-khurūj min baytihā labisat alkhar thiyābihā wa-tajammalat wa-taḥassanat wa-kharajat taftatin al-nās bi-ḥusnīhā; see Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Kabāʾir, 2:49.
off of finery. This first jähiliyyah was an age of decadence where women in chemises of pearls strolled down the middle of roads offering themselves to men. A ḥadīth captures their coyness; these women are covered but seem naked (al-kāsiyāt al-‘āriyaẗ al-mumilāt al-mā’ī erad) swinging their shoulders (mumilāt li-aktāfīhinna), strutting (mutabakhtīrāt) and donning captivating headdresses as large as camel humps. Implied in the idea of tabarruj is tazayyyn or the art of self-adornment. The Prophet curses all those women engaged in the beauty enterprise: the nāmiṣah (the woman who plucks and removes facial hair); the wāširah/mutafallījah (the one who sharpens/files/serrates her teeth); the wāšimah (one who imprints a tattoo); the wāsilah (the one who braids extensions into her hair) and the qāshirah walmaqshūrah (lightening the color of the skin). Lexicons offer insight into the

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1047 Stowasser, Women, 98. For the role of tabarruj in apocalyptic literature, see Walid Saleh, “The Woman as Locus of Apocalyptic Anxiety in Medieval Sunni Islam,” in Myths, Historical Archetype, Symbolic Figures in Arabic Literature, passim, 122-45.

1048 kānat al-mar’ah talbis al-dir’ min al-lu’lu’ fa-tamshī wasaṭ al-tarīq tarīq nafsahā al-lā al-rijāl; see Zamakhshari, al-Kashshāf, 3:537. Muqattāl’s idea of tabarruj is far more modest: he describes a woman not firmly fastening a shawl (khīmār), thus exposing her earrings and necklace; see Tafsīr, 3:48.

1049 In the opinion of Ibn al-Athīr al-mumilāt al-mā’ī erad are women who sway the way prostitutes do; see Muslim, Ṣahih, 3:1689; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytami, Kabā‘ir, 1:156; Dhahabi, Kabā‘ir, 135. These large headdresses are associated with singing girls; see Ibn al-Athīr, Nihāyah, 2:405, 4:382, s.vv. sanam, mayl.

1050 Tabarruj in the modern sense is the antithesis of ḥijāb, which according to Barbara Stowasser includes “everything from uncovered hair to elaborate salon-style coiffure, the hairpiece, and the wig, facial foundation, powder, and blushes; lid color and mascara for the eyes; manicure and enamel for the nails; “revealing” dress of any sort, but also including all Western clothing in generic terms, especially if it is of the couture kind or has intentions of being fashionable in the Western sense”; see Stowasser, Women, 98.

1051 Ibn Hanbal, Musnad, 1:415, 6:257.

1052 al-qāshirah allatī tu‘ālij wajhahā aw wajh ghayrihā bi-l-ghumrah il-yāṣū lawnuhā walmaqshūrah allatī yaf‘al dhālika ka-annahā tuqashshir a‘lā al-jilīd; see Ibn al-Athīr, Nihāyah, 4:64, s.v. qashr.
aesthetics of beauty; space between the teeth was regarded as a sign of youth so that the act of filing them, washarr/falaj, was intended to create the effect.\footnote{Ibn Manzür, Lisân, 10:313-15, s.v. falaj.} Lips, arms, hands and buttocks were tattooed for aesthetic pleasure;\footnote{Ibid., 15:311-12, s.v. washm.} and wasl, or hair extensions, were performed to conceal thinning hair.\footnote{Ibid., 15:316-29, s.v. wasl; Ibn Ħanbal, Musnad, 6:116, 234, 350; Ibn al-Athîr, Nihâyah, 5:192, s.v. wasl.} In one of his speeches the Umayyad caliph Mu‘āwiya reportedly brandished a lock of hair, denouncing such extensions as fraud (zûr) and as a Jewish practice that should be prohibited!\footnote{Bukhârî, Ša‹ahî, 4:101-2; Muslim, Ša‹ahî, 3:1679-80.}

All cases of tabarruj signal a public moral breakdown. It indicts the female body as the offending object — the shameless woman is to be further shamed in the afterlife. There are many levels to tabarruj; in the opinion of Abû al-Dardâ’ the salfa‘ah, the woman who exhibits a certain brazenness with men, is the worst type.\footnote{wa-hiya al-jari’ah ‘alâ al-rijaţ; see Ibn al-Athîr, Nihâyah, 2:390, s.v. salfa‘a.} One such mutabarrîjah materializes in a dream to relate how she found herself facing God in translucent garments (fi thiyabin riqâq) when a gust of wind exposed her body even more. The Almighty turns His face away and orders her to hell!\footnote{The story does not fail to mention that the man succeeding her was awarded paradise for attending to his prayers early; see Ibn Abî al-Dunyâ, Manâmât, 105, 152; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamî, Kabâ‘îr, 2:49; Dha habî, Kabâ‘îr, 177.} The infernal punishment for tabarruj makes it clear that this transgression is equated with adultery; the offending body parts include the feet
(the woman who leaves her home without her husband’s consent is strung up by her feet with her head in a *tannūn* and the hair (the woman who fails to conceal her hair from men is hung by her locks) and she who dyes it will find her body covered in pitch. Intrusion, more precisely, unauthorized intrusion, into public space places the entire body at risk; the women who go further and offer themselves to men will have their bodies snipped “front and back” with fiery scissors.

It is on the domestic front where troubles begin; the *ḥadīth* of the eclipse cites ingratitude (*kufrahunna*) as the primary defect. Women are incapable of appreciating companionship and good treatment; all it takes is one slip for a woman to condemn her husband and say she has never seen anything good from him. According to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib women share three traits with the Jews: they act as victims when they are the perpetrators, swear to the truth when they are lying and hold back when feeling desirous. Later *kabā’ir* works sum up four types of women in hell: the foul-mouthed one (*badhī’at al-lisān*) who verbally assaults her husband and engages in trysts in his absence (*lam taṣun*...
nafsahā); the one who burdens her husband beyond all limits (tukallifu zawjahā mā lā yuṭīq); the third who is incapable of modesty emerging from her home in all her finery (lā tastur nafsahā min al-rijāl); and the fourth who neglects her religious duties in favor of eating, drinking and sleeping (wa-imra‘ah laysa lhā hamm illā ’l-akl wal-shurb wal-nawm).

Men, we are told, experience the ingratitude of their womenfolk in a number of ways. Insubordination tops the list of domestic woes; wives who do not obey their husbands are beaten in hell with fiery rods on their heads and faces (wa-lahum (sic) šurākh shadīd). This is followed by sex; those who deny their husbands this conjugal right on false pretexts such as menstruation or who postpone the favor (tumānī‘ wa-tusawwif bihi sā‘ah ilā sā‘ah) until their husbands fall asleep with their desires ungratified (ḥattā yaghlibuhu al-nawm wa-yabqā ‘alā shahwatihi), these women, as texts point out, are legion, appearing in far larger numbers than those who neglect their cleansing rituals! These are the musawwīfāt, also known as mufassilāt. Pitch is poured over their bodies

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1066 Anon, ‘Aẓamah, fols. 44 a-b. A Bedouin advises his nephew to avoid five types of wives: the ḥannānāh, the one had a previous husband and still yearns for him; the mannānāh, the one who gives you something and reminds you repeatedly of it; the musawwīfah, the one who says sawf, sawf (later), until he falls asleep; the laghūt, the one with a son from a previous marriage who consumes all her attention (at the husband’s expense) and the muthaffīlāt, the one who has buried three husbands; see Khāṭṭābī, Gharīb, 3:216-18.
1067 A hadith curses the musawwīfāt and Ibn al-Āthīr describes such a woman as allātī idhā arāda zawjuhā an yaṭīyahā lam tuṭāwi‘hu wa-qālat sawfa af‘al wa-taswīf al-maṭī wal-ta‘khīr, see Nihāyah, 2:422, s.v. sawf.
and snakes attack their genitals; everyone in hell curses them.\textsuperscript{1069} Tradition
curses the \textit{ghā‘iṣah}, the one who does not inform her husband of her menstrual

cycle and the \textit{mughawwishah}, the one who lies about it in order to avoid sex.\textsuperscript{1070}

Bad mothers are next on the list and the author of the ‘\textit{Azamah} has strong

opinions on the subject. These are the women who deny babies their breasts in

order to protect their beauty, flinging their responsibilities onto wet nurses

(\textit{dāyāt}). These will be treated on an equal footing with the \textit{mutabarrijāt} and are

suspended by their hair as snakes with claws (\textit{līl-ḥayyāt makhālib}) dig into their

bellies. Reptiles with claws emerge in the punishment of women who engage in

sex while inebriated; suspended by their hair, the snakes claw their

brains.\textsuperscript{1071} Breastfeeding involves the risk of creating “milk siblings” that can lead to

confusing bloodlines so women who breast-feed infants other than their own

without their husband’s consent will be hung by their hair with their breasts

chained.\textsuperscript{1072} Women who attribute illegitimate children to their husbands are

placed in the center of hell (\textit{fī wasaṭ al-nār}). Blind, deaf and dumb, they are

confined to fiery coffins whose pressure squeezes their brains out of their noses;

\textsuperscript{1068} The term \textit{mufassilah} also includes the woman who uses menstruation as an excuse (\textit{wa-hiya

allati idhā ṭababahá zawjuhā līl-waṭ}’ qālat innī ḥā’īḍ wa-laysat bi-ḥā’īḍ fa-tufassil al-rajul ‘anḥā wa-

tufattir nashṭahu min al-fusūlah wa-hiya al-futūr fi ‘l-amr); see Khaṭṭābī, \textit{Gharīb}, 3:446.

\textsuperscript{1069} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘\textit{Azamah}, fol. 27a.

\textsuperscript{1070} Khaṭṭābī, \textit{Gharīb}, 3:202.

\textsuperscript{1071} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘\textit{Azamah}, fol. 27a.

\textsuperscript{1072} Ibn ‘Abbās, \textit{Mi’raj}, 18.
their bodies are ravaged by leprosy (*al-judhām wal-barāṣ*).\textsuperscript{1073} As seen in an earlier section, *waʿd* was added to the sins of women who kill their newborn in order to conceal their trysts.

With regard to religious shortcomings, women are plain lazy. The afterlife punishes those who intentionally postpone full ablutions after their menstrual cycles and miss their prayers with liquid brass that sears them internally and externally.\textsuperscript{1074} As punishment for general religious laxity women in hell are depicted with their arms tied behind their heads and their feet pulled up to their breasts (or as far as their tongues in another variant) as reptiles and scorpions attack their genitals.\textsuperscript{1075}

When it comes to verbal transgressions, Ibn ʿAbbās’ *miʿrāj* provides a long list of offenders. First in line are the *mustakhiffāt*, women who did not give their husbands due respect, with comment on their hideousness and body odor. These are fettered at the neck and clothed in *sirwāls* made of pitch. Women who demand divorce for no good reason are next; in hell their faces burn with their tongues hanging down on their breasts. Third are women who revile (*yashtimna*) their husbands; these hang upside down in an oven. The gossiper (*nammāmah*)

\textsuperscript{1073} Leprosy was assumed to have a sexual origin and in medieval Christianity was regarded as a visible sign of fornication; see Le Goff, *Medieval Imagination*, 101; see also Majlisī, *Biḥār*, 18:351-2; Ibn ʿAbbās, *Miʿrāj*, 19.

\textsuperscript{1074} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *ʿAzamah*, fol. 27a.

who creates discord between her husband and the neighbors undergoes a “composite maskh”, acquiring the head of a hog and the body of a donkey that is subjected to thousands of torments. Other women who spread hatred (baghdā) among people are transformed into dogs with fire entering their mouths and coming out of their backsides and are beaten with mallets. The female voice is also an object of offence; women singers are fettered in fiery chains with flames coming out of their open mouths, and wailers have pitch poured on their heads as snakes consume their brains.1076

Tha'labī lists fifteen misfortunes that afflict the daughters of Eve in this world such as menstruation and enduring difficult pregnancies.1077 The gripes about women, however, overshadow a more appalling reality. In his autobiography, Sha'rānī offers rare insight into the condition of women who, dependant on limited allowances, remain trapped and ignorant. He exhorts men to provide generously so that their womenfolk can attend public baths once a month.1078 Accepting money from women, Sha'rānī cautions his colleagues, for services such as wa'z gatherings could be aiding women in committing a sin if the payment is made without the knowledge of their husbands. Sha'rānī criticizes the selfishness of husbands who forbid their wives voluntary fasting so

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1077 Tha‘alibī, Qiṣaṣ, 28-9. Mas'ūdī offers a variant that includes pain when loosing virginity, always being beneath the man in sexual intercourse, wailing at the news of disaster (al-walwalah 'inda al-muṣibah), long pregnancy and soft heartedness; see Mas'ūdī, Akhbār al-zamān, 74.
1078 Sha'rānī, Lawāqīḥ al-anwār, 62-3.
as not to diminish their sexual availability.\textsuperscript{1079} Women of his day suffered from a distressing level of ignorance in basic matters of faith (\textit{arkān}), and Shaʾrānī objected to the cruelty of men who needlessly remarry against their wives’ wishes.\textsuperscript{1080} In such domestic set-ups, men exercised great control and evinced much cruelty.\textsuperscript{1081}

Women constitute a demographic majority in both paradise (\textit{ḥūrīs} included) and hell. There are, however, marked differences in the representation of the female anatomy. Punishments are conducted in the view of all in varying degrees of nudity (and in as many positions as could be imagined), in the very agora these women had once so brazenly assaulted. The most heinous sin, that of bringing illegitimate children into a marriage, is placed at the center of hell.\textsuperscript{1082}

Such graphic depiction of female anatomy is missing in the case of paradise’s female consorts, the \textit{ḥūrīs}. These pure beings (\textit{azwājan muṭḥharah})

\textsuperscript{1079} \textit{Ibid.}, 713, 715.
\textsuperscript{1080} \textit{Ibid.}, 751. Women’s abysmal ignorance was also commented upon by Ibn al-Jawzī though his texts are not free of misogynistic quotations. Ḍuṭayl b. ‘Iyāḍ used women as a barometer of divine displeasure by saying that whenever he disobeyed God he would notice its effect in the behavior of his horse and his female slave! See Ibn al-Jawzī, \textit{Ṣayd al-Khāṭīr}, 59, 62.
\textsuperscript{1081} Regardless of what the Lebanese Shiʿīte exegete Muḥammad Jawād Maghniyyah (d. 1979) says about a man being not a dictator (\textit{diktātūrī}), it is explicit in Shaʾrānī’s critique how a husband actually becomes one; see Cook, \textit{Koran}, 39.
\textsuperscript{1082} Sadly, this is not a medieval issue only and can be seen in today’s video games. Women in crime fiction were depicted as vamps, virgins or victims, and only when women writers ventured into the genre did we have women as problem-solvers. Graphic sadism in modern culture is a growth industry — in the view of Sara Paretsky — so that in this day and age we are bombarded with movies, songs and video games which show women violated in horrific ways. “It is as if we want to force women to be the monsters of demonic sexuality that western mythology has labeled them, and then punish them if they aren’t chaste, or if they refuse pregnancy”; see Sara Paretsky, \textit{Writing in an Age of Silence} (New York, London: Verso, 2007), 75; also see \textit{ibid.}, 54-5; 60-79.
do not bleed, spit, defecate or get pregnant. They aim to please with names like lu‘bah (toy) and mazıd (more), affirming the ego of male believers in unimaginable ways. These are the antithesis of the ungrateful, nagging, overbearing wives. Texts on paradise describe ǧurîs as hidden pearls, highlighting their invisibility as objects of desire. Despite their coyness and explicit sexual services, these consorts are not mutabarrijât; assigned to believers, they are owned and hidden. Although paradise is famous for its endless orgies, it is in hell that one finds the explicit sexual imagery. Hair, flesh, genitals, breasts, and wombs — the female body in Jahannam is overwhelming.

The shārib al-khamr consumes waters flowing from the genitals of prostitutes whose “stench” assaults the place. The question one needs to ask is whether Jahannam should not be read as the more explicit half of a larger sexual fantasy.

Finally, one cannot disregard the male authorship of these texts. Even the Mu‘tazilite Zamakhsharî could not shake off the anti-women bias in his discussion of the story of Adam and Eve. In the afterlife women are punished

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1083 Q37:49. On the breast of each ǧuri is written “You are my love and I am your love, my eyes have never beheld anyone like you, my soul is destined for you”; see Ibn Ḥabîb al-Sulami, Waṣf, 76.

1084 nahu al-rādiyât fa-lâ naskhaṭ abadan; see Suyūṭī, Budûr, 556. This is a standard line found in all texts on ǧuri talk.

1085 Stowasser touches briefly on Zamakhsharî’s position on Eve’s role in mankind’s primeval error. “As a Muʿtazilite he regarded Adam and Eve’s sin as “minor” in the sense that it involved disobedience and not apostasy, and with God being just, He had to forgive them [emphasis of the author]. The couple’s great repentance was “in the manner of saints and the righteous who regard minor sins as major, but enormous good deeds as minor.” At the same time Zamakhsharî includes the tradition where Adam on his deathbed commands Eve to stay away, blaming her for
in a public space for having invaded it in a previous one.\textsuperscript{1086} The harshness of some punishments goes beyond legal limits; the women who disobey their husbands are beaten across the face in the afterlife — a practice abhorred and prohibited by the ‘ulamā’ who often counseled that spousal beating should not be excessive or humiliating (\textit{ghayr mubarrih wa-lā shā’in}).\textsuperscript{1087} The graphic detail examined so far reveals how much Jahannam had become a sexual fantasy that should be read in the wider context of medieval notions of desire. The benefit of having women locked up in hell created the context for this freefall fantasy.

\textbf{III. I. The ‘āqq and the sin of ‘uqūq: breaking bonds made at birth}

\textit{Ḥadīth} maintains that heaven is a reward promised to the parent who survives the death of three children in recompense for their loss.\textsuperscript{1088} Children intercede for their parents at the \textit{qiyāmah} and are given priority at the Prophet’s \textit{ḥawḍ}, greeting them in emotional reunions and holding out cups of water. They refuse to enter paradise unless accompanied by their parents.\textsuperscript{1089} It is clear from our texts that filial ties defy death and \textit{barzakh} lore abounds with stories of

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Nābulusī in his \textit{fatāwā} is asked if there are partitions in heaven between women. He replies that the device would be unnecessary unless it were a prop (\textit{bi-ṭārīq al-taḥabub wai-ta’āṭu}) and that a man would be capable of engaging in sex with all his women at the same moment in the sense that there would be no dividers among the partners. The matter is entirely different with the Prophet’s wives with each having her separate abode; see \textit{Fatāwā}, 295-8; 293-4.
\item Q4:34; Ibn Ḥajar al-Ḩaytami, \textit{Kabā’ir}, 2:49.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
neglectful offspring who receive messages from their parents often through a third party reprimanding them for their forgetfulness. More importantly, the living son may earn merit for deceased parents through certain acts such as a pilgrimage and reciting the Qur’ān in their name. This filial bonding becomes an important cornerstone in Muslim intercessory prayer.

‘Uqūq al-wālidayn, loosely translated as disobedience to parents, is about breaching a contractual bond formed at birth. A derivative of ‘aqq (maṣdar ‘uqūq), a ‘aqīqah is a symbolic sacrificial ritual undertaken by a father at the birth of a son celebrated by shaving the head of the newborn — the ‘aqīqah proper is this tuft of hair. The Prophet performed it for his sons and grandsons. A ḥadīth makes it clear that what we are looking at is a contract: a deceased child intercedes for his father in the afterlife. Conversely, an adult son is bound to the duty of praying for his deceased parent regardless of his own personal piety. Disregarding this bond, or the act of ‘uqūq is a moral defect; ‘Umar b.

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1090 Ibn al-Kharrāt, al-‘Āqibah, 129.
1091 Ibn Rajab, Ahwāl, 64.
1092 Ibn al-Athīr, Nihāyāt, 3:276-7, s.v. ‘aqq; for an extensive description of the ‘aqīqah, which includes rubbing the head of the newborn with saffron (instead of the pagan version of sacrificial blood) and with donating to the poor an equivalent of the weight of the hair in gold; see Khayr al-Dīn Nu’mān al-Ālusī (d. 1317/1899), Ghāliyat al-mawā‘īz (n.p., 1884), 20-2; the EI article describes the ritual but not the implication; see W. Juynboll and J. Pedersen, “A ḥā,” Efż 1:337.
1093 In Muslim animal lore, the crest on the hoopoe’s head was God’s reward for his loyalty to his dead mother. The bird continued carrying her grave on his head for a long time which is why, according to Jāḥiz, the hoopoe was a smelly bird; see Ḥayawān, 3:510-11.
'Abd al-'Azīz cautioned against befriending a ‘āqq for how can a man honor friendship if he cannot honor his own father?\textsuperscript{1094}

‘Uqūq in afterlife texts is always associated with the martyr who is temporarily suspended on the a‘rāf for having gone to battle against his parents’ wishes. It would be wrong to read this in the comparative sense: that the gravity of ‘uqūq outweighs the value of a meritorious martyrdom. A more accurate interpretation is that parental consent to a son’s jihād would imply an acceptance on the part of the parent of the possibility of being deprived of a son’s prayers should he die in battle.\textsuperscript{1095} Dreams often draw on this bond, forged at birth, with stories of reconciliation and forgiveness of a dead parent to an offspring or vice versa.\textsuperscript{1096} There are no mixed messages from the dream world: an angry father is interpreted as an angry God.\textsuperscript{1097} It is only in this light that the condemnation of the emotional outburst of a pious man whose only grandson dies makes sense. Ibn al-Jawzī relates it as a cautionary tale to illustrate how a lifetime of piety can be lost in a single moment by declaring the total worthlessness of prayer.\textsuperscript{1098}

\textsuperscript{1094} Dinawarī, \textit{Mujālasah}, 2:775.
\textsuperscript{1095} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā’s \textit{Makārim al-akhlāq} includes two versions of the story about a poet, Umayyah b. Askar al-Junda’ī, who complains to the caliph ‘Umar that his sons have abandoned him in his old age to go off on jihād; ‘Umar brings them back; see Bellamy, “The \textit{Makārim al-Akhlāq},” 114.
\textsuperscript{1096} The intercession of children in the Muslim afterlife is unique; children in the Christian eschatological scene have no such value, see G. G. Coulton, “Infant Perdition in the Middle Ages,” \textit{Medieval Studies} 16 (1922): 1-32.
\textsuperscript{1097} wa-qad ruwiya fi ba’ d al-akhbār sukhṭ Allāh ta’ālā fi sukhṭ al-wālidayn; see Ibn Sirīn, \textit{Tafsīr ahlām al-tashā’um}, 14.
\textsuperscript{1098} wa-laqaq ra’aytu rajulan kabiran qad qārab al-thamānin wa-kān yuhāfiz ‘alā al-jamā’ah fa-māta walad li-ibnīhī fa-qāla mā yanbaghi li-ahād an ya’d’uwa fa-innahu lā yastaʃāb thumma qāla
Samarqandi’s *Qurrah* has the Prophet conducting several mediating trips between paradise and hell to reconcile indignant mothers with their wayward offspring. Muḥammad declares that these are the toughest intercession cases! From paradise the Prophet hears the screams of these sons and sees them hung on fiery trunks and flogged with whips on their backs and buttocks with biting reptiles and scorpions not far beneath their feet.\(^{1099}\) The ‘Azamah confines them to a valley with scorpions and reptiles within a ring of fire. Their condition is described as one of endless dying and living (*wal-nār fī kull nāḥiyah taḥriquhum fa-yamūṭūn wa-yuḥyawn*).\(^{1100}\) After repeated attempts (effort needs to be shown) to petition for their release, the Prophet asks God to track down the parents of these ‘āqqūn who, in paradise, seem to be still simmering with indignation and hurt. One mother narrates how her son “broke her heart” (*kasara qalbī*), humiliating and neglecting her, abandoning her hungry and naked when his wife was decked out with the expensive and the beautiful; another complained of her son hitting her when she would offer advice. Stubborn and angry, no amount of persuasion would make these mothers change their minds so that the Prophet’s only recourse was to take them to hell to see for themselves. On hearing the

\(^{1099}\) Samarqandi, *Qurrah*, 55. Mālibārī in his reproduction of the work deletes all the drama associated with ‘uqūq and nīyāḥah, see Jawāḥir, 23.

\(^{1100}\) Anon., ‘Azamah, fol. 45a.
painful screams of their children the mothers forgave them, thus securing their release. Others who are not granted parental pardon must remain until God decides to release them; these would become known as the *Jahannamiyyūn*.

The sin of *qaṭ' al-rahim* or “breaking the bonds of the womb” overlaps with ‘*uqūq* in Samaraqandi’s text. The complaints of the mothers in the previous paragraph are examples of *qaṭ' al-rahim*; loyalty and respect belong in the first order of things to the mother. *Qaṭ' al-rahim* is the opposite of *birr al-wālidayn* or the acts of compassion one does for one’s parents in their old age. As pointed out earlier, a man obeying his wife at the expense of his mother illustrates the loss of moral values typical of the Muslim apocalyptic scenario. Admonitions against the reversal of this order are plentiful; God, the angels and all of humanity curse a man who prefers his wife to his mother. Obeying the wife could cost the son a rough tumble into hell. In Samaraqandi’s view the one who takes this route is on the fast track to hell; he is imprisoned in Barahūt, a well

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1102 Q17:23-4; Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, *Kabā’ir*, 2:76-82. Respect for the father goes back to the code of Hammurabi. Whereas the Babylonian code dictated that a man who assaults his father has his hand cut off, Israelite law went further to prescribe execution. Muslims were aware that Jewish law prescribed capital punishment; see Dhahabi, *Kabā’ir*, 43.
situated on Jahannam’s funnel. The abuse of parents deserves nothing less than a hail of fiery coals.1105

III. J. Women wailers: the last to enter hell

Niyāḥah or loud wailing, regarded as a pre-Islamic custom, is strictly prohibited in Islam.1106 The Prophet forbade all acts associated with this form of mourning — the loud crying, the beating of chests, the tousling of hair and the tearing of clothes.1107 The dead, according to early tradition, undergo additional torment on account of their relatives performing these mourning rituals.1108 It is clear that the living walk a fine line; the four legal schools prohibit nadab, or the act of reciting the merits of the recently deceased — not to be confused with ta‘ziyah which is offering condolences and support to the families of the dead.1109 ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb was particularly rough on women wailers.1110 In Samarqand’s view, they commit a number of transgressions such as “selling tears”, exploiting the sadness of others for personal gain, and dramatically displaying sorrow that can only add to the suffering of the dead. Samarqandi describes how niyāḥah

1105 Samarqandi, Qurrah, 55, 57; Dhahabi, Kabā’ir, 43.
1106 Muslim, Şahih, 2:644; Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, 5:342-3; Ibn Mājah, Sunan, 2:504; see also Bosworth, “Niyāḥa,” EI 8:64-5.
1107 Ibn Mājah, Sunan, 2:505. Lore designated one of Iblīs’ offspring, named Bi’r, as the one responsible for all prohibitive acts of mourning; see Damīrī, Ḥayāṭ, 1:297. See also Wensinck’s interesting interpretation in “Some Semitic Rites of Mourning and Religion,” Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen 28 (1918): 1-101.
1108 Muslim, Şahih, 2:2434.
1109 Mālibārī, Irshād, 46-52.
1110 Şān’anī quotes an account of how on hearing niyāḥah at night in Medina, ‘Umar entered a house, dispersing the women and hitting the wailer with his stick; when he was alerted that her veil had fallen off he said that she could claim no respect (fa-lā ḥurmata lahā); see Muṣannaf, 3:557-8.
affects the dead as angels beat the deceased during the ongoing wailing of the living and tell him that it was his responsibility to leave clear instructions (waṣiyyah) not to hire the services of wailers.\footnote{Samarqandi, Qurrah, 29-32.} In the afterlife the nā‘īḥah is made to confront her “victim” and witnesses the dead man’s screams at the “gift” his family sent him.

The nā‘īḥah forms a dramatic conclusion to Samarqandi’s text on sin. Other tarhib texts depict her as part of a crowd lining up on either side of hell and wailing for the fate of all those who are entering the abode of pain. Their tears, we are told, might be genuine this time but the sounds coming out of their mouths resemble the barking of dogs.\footnote{Samarqandi, Tanbih, 151; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytami, Kabāʾir, 1:159; Dhahabi, Kabāʾir, 184.} Their barking lasts the duration of the qiyāmah — an impressive fifty-thousand years.\footnote{Qurtubi, Tadhkirah, 1:229-30; Mundhirî, Tarhib, 4:177; ‘Idwi, Mashāriq, 39-40.}

The nā‘īḥāt are the last to enter hell. With long copper nails they pluck their own eyes out and scratch their cheeks and ears and resume their wailing.\footnote{Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘Aẓamah, fol. 32a.} Pitch garments are now their new mourning clothes. Their skin afflicted with scabies, the women wailers itch and burn very much in the same way that their words once pained the living.\footnote{Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, Masā’il, 84-5.} The nā‘īḥāt are punished alongside women who attend their séances; these are hung by their eyelids as
their screams, like the braying of donkeys, resonate in hell. Other groups of women who attend mourning gatherings and singing parties will be doomed to being forever split in half and forever mending (fa-yushaqqa niṣfayn wa-yulḥamūna dā’iman), their bodies illustrating, perhaps, the rending of clothes which grief and passion can evoke.\textsuperscript{1116}

**IV. Conclusion:**

The diversity of sinners placed the body at the center of the infernal narrative. Emerging from their graves as marked men and women, these bodies advertized sin and punishment giving Islamic wa’id a graphic dimension it did not have before. The first part of this chapter covers sources, the classification of kabā’ir and the principles of punishment. Honored and dishonored in the afterlife, Muslim scholars criticized their own profession in an ongoing commentary. It would be fitting to start the list with voices that subjected their own group to scrutiny. That Samaraqandi puts tārik al-šalāh at the top of his list goes to the heart of the issue of membership to the Muslim community. Tārikūn al-šalāh are followed by murderers, adulterers, wine-bibbers, gossipers and flatterers, usurers and zakāh evaders, women sinners, those who have not honored the obligations of their ‘aqīqah (otherwise known as sin of ‘uqūq) and women wailers. The chapter discusses the principles of punishment and how some implement the ḥudūd already established by legal scholars.

\textsuperscript{1116} Ibn Abi al-Dunyā, ‘Aẓamah, fols. 32a, 36a.b.
*Tashhîr* in our narrative becomes case specific. Anonymity ceases to exist in Jahannam; the visibility of punishment exposes sinners to an added dimension, that of humiliation. The professional garb identifies scholars, the murdered cling and drag their slayers to justice, adulterers emerge with their genitals ablaze. Paraphernalia accompany the *shârib al-khamr* with his cups and musical instruments, the weights and scales betray fraudulent merchants. Greed is exposed through bloated bellies and gossipers through swollen lips. No one escapes exposure and the typology constructed defined the infernal narrative even further.

As much as *tashhîr* is about nudity, we also find the inverse true — that clothes shame their owners. Wahb b. Munabbih allegedly mused that the people of hell will be given clothes when nudity would have been preferable and that they will be given eternity when death would also have been preferable.\(^{1117}\) Initially the large frames and exaggerated sizes of hell’s inhabitants ensured maximum contact with fire. *Dhawq* (savour/experience) is paired in the Qur’ân more with pain than with reward.\(^{1118}\) The range of *dhawq* is impressive: ‘*adhâb*, ‘*adhâb al-andâ*, ‘*adhâb al-nâr*, ‘*adhâb al-khulûd*, ‘*adhâb al-ḥarîq*, al-‘*adhâb al-

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\(^{1117}\) Suyuṭî, *Budûr*, 431.

\(^{1118}\) The Qur’ân applies *dhawq* a total of nine times with reference to reward and forty-six times with reference to punishment. *Dhawq*, according to Zamakhshārî, also refers to correctly assessing the distance of a thrown spear as well as to men and women (*dhawwâqûn/dhawwâqāt*) with roving eyes; see *Asâs*, 209-10.
Our texts have moved beyond the big bodied homogeneous collective to specifics — nothing captures this more than the textual allusion to garments.

The Qur’ān describes infernal clothes as thiyāb of fire and sarābil of qaṭirān. Tradition cites fiery shoes (na’lān min nār), which will cause the brain to bubble “like a cauldron”. Sirbāls are two items of clothing: shirts (qamīs) and shifts (dir’), and because of their direct contact with flesh, Majlisi interprets the sarābil in the Qur’ānic verse as metaphor for skin. In Jahannam infernal garments are layers of pitch or burning copper smeared over flesh.

As texts explore the typologies of sinners, garments acquire a significance not seen earlier. They become markers of identity scandalizing their owners. ‘Ulamā’ al-sū are fitted with shirts (qamīṣ), drawers (sarāwil) and two types of headgear (‘amā’im/atālis). For reasons of modesty Samarqandi provides his lesbians with longer dresses (jilbāb), shifts (dir’), nitāq, tāj (turbān) and

\[ \text{alīm, mass saqar and ḥamīm and ghassāq.}^{1119} \]


\[ 1120 \quad \text{Q22:19, 14:50. Asad b. Mūsā, Zuhd, 56-7; Ibn Mandah, K. al-īmān, 2:890-1; Qurṭubī, Tadhkira, 1:509; Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 126; Mundhirī, Tarhīb, 4:240; Suyūṭī, Budūr, 458.} \]

\[ 1121 \quad \text{Ibn al-Athīr, Nihāyah, 2:377; Majlisi, Bihār, 8:240, 252.} \]

\[ 1122 \quad \text{Muqātil, Tafsīr, 4:546; Majlisi, Bihār, 7:73.} \]

\[ 1123 \quad \text{Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘Āzamah, fol. 18b.} \]

\[ 1124 \quad \text{A nitāq is a type of sleeveless working garment with a belt where women were able to tuck in the front part reaching the knee so it did not get in the way; see Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān, 14:188-9, s.v. nitāq.} \]
slippers.\textsuperscript{1125} Women wailers have shifts fashioned of scabby skin (\textit{dir‘ min jarab}) but also are fitted with \textit{jilbābs} and \textit{sirbāls} of \textit{qaṭīrān}.\textsuperscript{1126} Throughout this chapter the allusion to clothes should be read as part of the “census conscious” demographics (for example, women are a majority) and a blunter \textit{wa‘īd}. In the next chapter we piece together another aspect of Jahannam, namely, internal politics and the community of the enslaved and dispossessed.

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item \textsuperscript{1125} Samarqandi, \textit{Qurrah}, 23.
  \item \textsuperscript{1126} Ibid., 29.
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Chapter Four: Community in Jahanam: Internal Dynamics

I. Introduction

Our texts make it clear that in Jahannam there is a power structure in place. At the head of this pyramid is Mālik who heads a platoon of angels known as the zabāniyah equipped with an arsenal of chains, manacles, batons and other subjugating paraphernalia. A survey of this arsenal uncovers not only their job description but their relationship to Jahannam’s community. A second way to understand this power structure is to turn to language. Although it was never in doubt that Arabic would be the language of paradise, the same cannot be said for its counterpart. Speech in Jahannam is appropriated from the Qur’ān reflecting the fear, regret, sorrow, and anger of its inhabitants. Scholars believed that the enormity of what lay ahead would force sinners to speak the truth. It is in this chapter that we turn to community and its prosopography; Jahannam’s cast of local celebrities merges pagans, those the Qur’ān condemned to damnation, with a few infamous characters from the first Muslim century. We conclude with a second list drawn up by Shi‘ites who had no problem condemning their Sunni adversaries to hell. In their case, reservations have already been made and itineraries set.
II. Hell’s Angels: the zabāniyah

Angels (malā‘ikah, sing. malak) were not unknown in pre-Islamic Arabia; Quraysh had venerated them by calling them banāt Allāh. When Abū Bakr inquired who their mother was, he was told that the most select of the jinn (sarawāt al-jinn) carried them. A rich Judeo-Christian tradition was to influence Muslim angelology and much of early Western scholarship treated the subject as a foreign import. Within the Islamic context however, angels had their share of controversy with their gender much debated in the Qur‘ān. In a clear break from its pre-Islamic past, the Muslim creed would come to stipulate that angels are gender-neutral and should not to be ascribed masculine or feminine attributes. Those Muslims who succeeded in catching a rare glimpse

1127 Tabari, Jāmi’, 23:69; Ibn Qutaybah, Gharib, 429; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Hādi, 119; Majlisī, Bihār, 63:47 and Jawād ‘Ali, Tārikh, 6:120. Ibn Hishām relates how a man from Quraysh by the name of ‘Abd Allāh al-Zu‘barī stood in the majlis of Mecca to expound on the idea that all who enter Jahannam will do so alongside their idols and that Quraysh will follow their angels into hell; see Sirah, 1:385-6.

1128 Muslim angelology was seen as derivative and the Prophet accused of having gleamed the material from dubious sources; see Carra da Vaux, “Djabrā’il,” EI1 2:990-1; J. Pedersen, “Djabrā’il” EI3, 3:362-4; MacDonald, “Malā‘ikah,” ibid., 6:216-19 and Gisela Webb, “Angel,” EQ 1:84-92. In Q2:95 the Prophets challenge the Archangel Michael as their patron (ṣāhib) and Gabriel as their enemy, a harbinger of war, death and punishment. Gabriel’s epithet of amīr is an attempt to differ from the Jews (mukhālafat al-yahūd). In Muslim angelology Gabriel acquires several epithets that reflect his high standing: ṣāhib/wali, al-amin, amīn al-wasty, khāzin al-qudus, rūh al-qudus, al-nāmūs al-akbar and tawūs al-malā‘ikah; see Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Ighāthah, 2:129; Khaṭṭābī, Gharib, 1:123; Qazwīnī (d. 682/1283), ʿAjāʾib al-makhlūqāt wa-gharāʾib al-mawjūdāt (Qumm: Manshūrāt al-Raḍī, 1985), 1:43.


1130 The men on the aʿrāf in Q7:45 had scholars infer that because the gender was specified these could not be angels (wal-malā‘ikah la yangasimūna ilā dhukūr wa-ināth). The ability to see angels, according to Ghazzālī, is a karāmah granted to the awliyā‘; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Fatāwā, 90-1.
reported how angels appear to have no genitals (lā ‘awrata lahuma).\textsuperscript{1131} Q6:9 maintains that should an angel need to manifest himself he would take the guise of a man — the Prophet once remarked on the strong resemblance between the šaḥābī Dīyah al-Kalbī and the Archangel Gabriel.\textsuperscript{1132} The legions of angels who came to the aid of Muslims during their early battles with Quraysh were described in the Prophetic narrative as warriors in white or red turbans.\textsuperscript{1133} Modern scholars have come to regard this transition to a masculine preference as another symptom of the irreversible decline of goddess cults due to Christian and Jewish influence from the north and from within Arabia itself.\textsuperscript{1134}

With this background in mind, the Qur‘ān alludes to the angels of hell as its keepers (khazanah), more specifically as zabāniyah or aštāb al-nār with sinners addressing one of them as Mālik.\textsuperscript{1135} Strong and coarse (shidāḍ/ghilāẓ),

\textsuperscript{1131} Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Ḥādīt, 102-3. The root j-n-n refers to the unseen making the modern word for embryo (janīn) an accurate derivative. Jinn and angels have the ability for ījtimān or īsitār, to be made unseen; see Ibn Qutaybah, Gharīb, 21 and Anbārī, Aḍdād, 214; 336-7.


\textsuperscript{1133} Ṭabarī, Tāriḵh, 1:328-9; Suyūṭī, Ḥāwī, 1:302. In Q3:125 God reinforces believers with five thousand spear-wielding angels. Suyūṭī opts for yellow whose ends “hung down on their shoulders”. At the end of time armed angels will protect the Prophet’s city, Medina, and bar the Dajjāl from entering; see Ibn Kathīr, Niḥāyah, 1:46; 87.


\textsuperscript{1135} Q40:49, 67:8, 39:71, 96:18, 43:77; for angels as aštāb al-nār, see Q73:31. As stated in the previous chapter aštāb al-nār is also applied to the inhabitants of hell. The Qur‘ān does not refer
the Qurʾān sums hell’s angels as nineteen in all. Medieval linguists trace the root of zabāniyah to z-b-n to imply pushing or shoving violently and in our context the zabāniyah represent the forces (shurāt) of infernal law and order. The term is a collective plural whose singular is rendered as zābin/zabānī or zibniyyah although Ma’arri believes that no singular is applicable — a position Ibn Manẓūr concurs with (jamʿ lā wāḥid lahu mithl abābil). Jeffery thought the word derived from the Syriac zabbūrā who leads the souls of the deceased to their judgement. The name Mālik, on the other hand, is derived from the root m-l-k, to rule, implying strength, dominion and power. In one version of the miʿrāj, the Prophet is introduced to Mālik as he stokes the fires of Jahannam and describes him as an ugly and dour guardian (khāzin). It would be incorrect to infer that one single figure was in charge of hell; early exegetes believed that to hell’s inhabitants as ahl al-nār, the only ahl sinners have are the ones they are separated from by being in hell; see Q39:15, 42:45. Q66:6, 74:30. The term shurṭī is any individual invested with authority to implement order provided he carries marks (shurāt) recognizable by all. In dreams a shurṭī signifies the angel of death; the dream is more ominous if he appears with his assistants (idhā jā’a bi-a’wānihi). A butcher (qaṣṣāb) or a falcon (on account of his acute eyesight) also signify the angel of death; see Ibn Sirin, Tafsīr, 126, 140, 167; Dārimi, Ḥayawān, 2:49. Sijestānī, Tafsīr gharīb, 223; Ibn Qutaybah, Gharīb, 553; ‘Āynī, ‘Umdah, 16:15. Ma’arri, Risālat al-malāʾikah, ed. Muḥammad Salīm al-Jundī (Damascus: Maṭbaʿat al-Tarāqī, 1944), 18-19; Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān, 6:16, s.v. zabāniyah. Jeffery, Foreign, 148; “Zabāniyya,” EFl 1:369. wa-huwa ism mushtaqq min al-mulk wa-huwa al-quwwah wal-shiddah; see Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Ḥādi, 131. Jeffery links Mālik to the Biblical Moloch; see Foreign, 257. In Arabic the kunya “Abū Mālik” is a synonym for hunger because of its overpowering hold. Similarly, bread is known as jābir or ʿāsim; see Thaʿālibī, Thimār, 249, s.v. Abū Mālik. Ṣanʿānī records how the caliph ‘Umar forbade the use of the names al-Ḥakam and Abū al-Ḥakam because ḥukm was a divine prerogative (lā tusammū al-Ḥakam wa-lā Abū al-Ḥakam fa-inna Allāh huwa al-ḥakam); a similar uneasiness existed with the names Mālik, Abū Mālik and Mālik al-Amlāk; see Muṣannaf, 11:42. Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, 1:349; 2:313; 4:364-5; Suyūṭī, Ḥabāʾik, 55-6.
Mālik was one among an oligarchy of nineteen guardians who acted as prefects (nuqabā’) or heads (ru’asā’) commanding legions of angels. A census of this infernal force remains one of the divine mysteries.

That only nineteen were needed to punish God’s enemies evoked Quraysh’s mockery — it is a figure, the Qur’ānic verse warns, that will appear trivial to unbelievers (wa-mā ja‘alnā ‘iddahum illā fitnatan lilladhīna kafarū).

The ambiguity led some exegetes to focus on significance and explain nineteen as a figure quoted in other ancient revealed texts (tawrāt/injīl/al-kutub al-muqaddasah) or that, like the nineteen letters of the basmalah, it embodied an esoteric purport. Other exegetes inflated the number and read it as a reference to nineteen thousand or to an oligarchy of nineteen angels of the “status of Mālik” supervising Jahannam. Rāzī scrambles to explain the ambiguity by first doing his sums: dividing nineteen among seven levels he assigns one angel for the Muslim community whereas as many as three would be needed for each of the other six. Nineteen could also be a reference to types of sins (kabā‘īr) each requiring its specialized tormentor. Rāzī finally succumbs

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1142 Muqātil,  Tafsīr, 4:496-7; Qurṭubi, Jāmi’, 19:79-81; Majlisī, Bihār, 8:271.
1143 Q74:31. Only the Prophet has the privilege of knowing the exact number of hell’s angels; see Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, 2:172; 212 and Suyūṭī, Ḥabā’ik, 54; see also Budūr, 416; Ibn Rajab, Ahwāl, 173.
1144 Q74:30-1.
1146 Mujāhid, Tafsīr, 684; Bayhaqī, Ba’th, 269.
1147 Tabarī, Jāmi’, 29:161; Muqātil, Tafsīr, 4:496-7; Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, 7:158-9; Rāzī, Mafṭālīh, 8:360; Anbārī, Zāhir, 1:288-90; Majlisī, Bihār, 8:271-3; Qurṭubi, Jāmi’, 19:77-9.
to inflation: nineteen could be a reference to categories (*jins*) or rows of angels or the verse could be read as *tis‘at al-a‘shur* [ten nines] bringing the total up to ninety.\(^ \text{1148} \) The Qur‘ānic verse did not constrain the imagination; in all our texts the *zabāniyah* move in hordes — Jahannam is dragged into the *qiyyāmah* by seventy thousand strong angels; one hundred thousand rush to arrest a single sinner; four hundred thousand glowering and snarling angels (*kāliḥāt anyābihim*) await the rest at each of the seven gates.\(^ \text{1149} \)

As angels of torment (*malā‘ikat al-‘adhāb*), the *zabāniyah* were created from fire one thousand years prior to the birth of hell. Eternal, they are the obedient warriors of the Almighty,\(^ \text{1150} \) and their mission is to avenge against all who have transgressed His commands.\(^ \text{1151} \) In this the *zabāniyah* have time on their side — every passing day contributes to their prowess and fury.\(^ \text{1152} \) The same principle applies to Mālik.\(^ \text{1153} \) Hell’s *zabāniyah* are described along the same lines as Munkar and Nakīr; texts emphasize their ugliness, their-steely, thunderous gaze and the penetrating bite of their fangs.\(^ \text{1154} \)

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\(^ \text{1148} \) Rāzī, *Mafālīḥ*, 8:158-60. Qurṭūbī notes that the readings of *tis‘at a‘shur* and *tis‘atu wa-‘shara* have been rejected by other exegetes; see Jāmi‘, 19:81.


\(^ \text{1150} \) Q66:6. See also *junūd Allāh* in Q48:4, 7; 74:31. The *zabāniyah* of hell, the *ḥūris* and *wildān* of paradise will exist forever; see Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *Fatāwā*, 218-19.


from their mouths. Their innate aggression contributes to their efficiency as wardens — all empathy and mercy have been “extracted” from their bodies! The earliest description of the zabāniyah can be found in a dream where they appear in full gear on the edge of hell wielding their batons (mirzabbah) — their strength, as will be seen, was the stuff of nightmares.

Such ugliness and strength conveyed the seriousness of what lay beyond death. The same can be said with regards to the interrogating angels who shared the same features. As we will see, ugliness, or the absence of beauty, becomes a type of torment. No one is spared the ugliness of the interrogating Munkar and Nakir or of ‘Azrā‘il, the angel of death, not even a blind man. The Archangel Gabriel told the Prophet that should one of the khazanah make an appearance, humans would die at the sight of his ugliness and odour (natn riḥiḥ). Eventually this position was revised to suggest that only sinners would be subjected to such hideousness and that the interrogating angels could acquire more agreeable (and visually tolerable) forms with names such as Mubashshir.

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1155 Muqāṭil, Tafsīr, 4:497-8; Rāzī, Mafātiḥ, 8:258.
1156 Abū al-Shaykh, ‘Azamah, 153. In another section he describes this density as al-ṣamad alladhī lā ḥashw lahu; ibid., 66-7; see also Suyūṭī, Ḥabā‘ik, 117.
1157 Muqāṭil, Tafsīr, 4:496-7 to Q74:30, 4:603 (fī af‘alihim jafā‘ wa-khushūnāh lā ta‘khudhuhum rā‘āfā fi tanfīdh awāmir Allāh); see Zamakhsharı, al-Kashšāf, 4:568-9 to Q66:6.
1158 The dream of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb as cited in Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, 4:358-60; Ibn Mājah, Sunan, 2:1291; and Dārimī, Sunan, 2:52. On strength of zabāniyah see the following section on instruments.
1159 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Qubūr, reconstructed by Leah Kinberg (Haifa: University of Haifa: Department of Arabic Language and Literature, 1983), 41.
1160 Suyūṭī, Budūr, 410.
and Bashîr (signifying good tidings) when questioning the good. Similarly, the ḥadîth's allusion to Mâlik as hideous (karih al-mirâh) initiated among commentators a discussion as to whether what the Prophet saw in his mi'râj was not a “Mâlik-lite” version and that, in fact, sinners would more likely encounter a far uglier angel.\footnote{1161} This material remained highly speculative; one afterlife text included a disclaimer in that only the dying (or the dead) know what these angels look like and one should safely assume that Munkar and Nakîr defy description (khalq bâdi') in their ability to acquire frightful forms (ashkâl muz'ijah).\footnote{1162}

The sinner is introduced to the ugliness of his tormentors on his deathbed.\footnote{1163} In one Shi'ite text, doubters in the merits of Imâm ‘Alî will emerge in the qiyyamah with their necks in fiery chokers of growling and spitting demons.\footnote{1164} Once inside Jahannam, sinners find themselves chained to grotesque demons (shayâtîn) whose faces fan out into thousands of mouths and tongues that endlessly spit and gnaw at their screaming partners.\footnote{1165} In fact, ugliness in Jahannam is everywhere; as we have seen in the section on flora, the

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\footnote{1161} Bukhârî, Šabîh, 4:364-5; Barzanjî, Tâj, 87; Majlisi, Bihâr, 6:280. The prophet Idrîs’ encounter with Mâlik was traumatic. His commanding scream from the edge of hell turned the entire place “upside down” and the prophet Idrîs, as a result, suffered from insomnia; see Abû al-Shaykh, ‘AZamah, 176.

\footnote{1162} Ibn al-Kharrâf, al-Ăqibah, 57; see also ‘Idwî, Mashâriq, 47; Ibn Kathîr, Bidâyah, 124-5; Qurtûbî, Tadhkîrah, 166; Suyûtî, Ḥabâ‘îk, 71-2; Sharh al-şûdûr, 60.

\footnote{1163} Ahwâzî, Zuhd, 131. Abraham asks the angel of death to show him the form he appears to the fâji on his deathbed. The angel of death becomes a malodorous black man in black garments with spiked hair and flames billowing from his mouth and nose, at which point Abraham faints; see Muḥâsibî, Rî‘âyâ, 78-9; for variants, see Suyûtî, Ḥabâ‘îk, 33; Sharh al-şûdûr, 18; Ibn Abî al-Dunyâ, K. al-qubûr (Kinberg’s reconstruction), 42.

\footnote{1164} Qummî, Manâzîl al-Ăkhirah, 195.

\footnote{1165} Ibn Abî al-Dunyâ, ‘AZamah, fol. 21a.
zaqqūm tree, an infernal staple, blooms into a vicious miniature “demon fruit” that “bite” back its eaters.\textsuperscript{1166}

Berating sinners as they step into hell, exegetes have compared the zabāniyah to prison wardens (ḥaddādin) whose primary responsibility is vigilance.\textsuperscript{1167} Each angel is described as having one thousand eyes and in the ‘Aẓamah their presence is ubiquitous, filling vast areas in the thousands.\textsuperscript{1168} Mālik is equally vigilant as he occupies a central post (majlīs) with bridges connecting to everywhere.\textsuperscript{1169} His personal attention to punishment is such that he is said to have as many fingers as the inhabitants of hell!\textsuperscript{1170} Whereas the Qur‘ān praises such dedication, Muslim ascetics like Muḥāsibī winced at the thought of one hundred thousand strong zabāniyah rushing to arrest a sinner who crumbles (yatafattat) in their hands! In his imaginative text, these angels exaggerate their manhandling in order to win favor with God at the expense of their charges!\textsuperscript{1171}


\textsuperscript{1168} Each zibnī has one thousand eyes, in each eye one thousand heads, in each head one thousand faces, in each face one thousand tongues and one thousand fangs; see Ibn Abī al-Dunya, ‘Aẓamah, fol. 17a.

\textsuperscript{1169} Qurṭubi, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:489; Ash‘ārī, \textit{Shajarah}, 85.

\textsuperscript{1170} Ibn Abī al-Dunya, \textit{Ṣifat al-nār}, 115; Qurṭubi, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:482; Suyūṭī, Ḥabā‘īk, 53 and also \textit{Budūr}, 416.

\textsuperscript{1171} Muḥāsibī, \textit{Tawahhum}, 24-5, 37-8.
Not all afterlife texts designate Mālik as the principal khāzin of Jahannam. A head warden is absent in the ‘Aţamah and the zabāniyah conduct their vigilance (among other duties) with no oversight, but such autonomy, as far as texts go, is rare.1172 The ranks of Muslim angelology would expand into a complex bureaucracy of ḥafāzah with Judeo-Christian angelology filling in the gaps with names like ‘Azrā’īl or Isrāfīl.1173 Although the archangels were given Arabic equivalents, confusion was unavoidable — karūbīyūn (cherubs) were assumed to be derived from karb or adversity and thus listed as malā‘ikat al-‘adhābī!1174 Such confusion is reminiscent of the early days — when 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb heard someone being addressed as Dhū 'l-Qarnayn he remarked that now men seem to take on the names of angels!1175 In early dream interpretation, Gabriel was believed to be the angel of punishment (malak al-‘uqūbah).1176

These shaky beginnings can be seen in the “recycled” pool of images where the zabāniyah, Munkar/Nakīr, the jassāsah and the dābbah — all related to eschatology — shared similar features. Wensinck noted the relatively slow evolution in Muslim angelology where the dead were initially interrogated and

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1172 Ibn Kathîr ranks Mālik as a muqaddam ‘alā jamī‘ al-khazanah; see Bidāyat al-Khalq, 128.
1173 ‘Azrā’īl, the angel of death, is not mentioned in the Qur’ān or the canonical ḥadīth; see Ibn Kathîr, Bidāyat al-khalq, 121. Although the Qur’ān mentions the ḥafāzah only once in 6:61, these have multiplied — as many as ten angels accompany every person; see Mafāṭīḥ, 5:275; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamî, Fatāwā, 49-54, 206.
1174 The archangels had Arabic equivalents; Gabriel is ‘Abd Allāh, Michael is ‘Ubayd Allāh and Isrāfīl is ‘Abd al-Raḥmān; Suyūṭî, Ḥabā‘îk, 26.
1175 Balkhi, Bad’, 3:79.
1176 wa-in ra ā jibrīl hazīnān wa-maḥmūman aṣābathu shiddah wa-‘uqūbah li-annahu malak al-‘uqūbah; see Ibn Sirîn, Tafsîr ahlām al-tashâ‘um, 18.
punished by one nameless angel.\textsuperscript{1177} Much of the material remained speculative; the souls of sinners imprisoned in Barahût, for example, were heard calling out to Dûmah who was believed to be the angel in charge.\textsuperscript{1178} One must also keep in mind the dissenting voices; the Mu'tazilah doubted that angels could be given ugly names and argued that \textit{munkar} reflects the stammering (\textit{talajluj}) of the dead and \textit{nakîr} the haranguing (\textit{taqri'}) in the grave.\textsuperscript{1179}

The dialogues with the \textit{zabâniyah} capture the hierarchy and powerlessness of hell's inhabitants. Protective declarations are futile against the aggression of the \textit{zabâniyah}.\textsuperscript{1180} On arriving at the gates of Jahannam in \textit{Shajarat al-yaqîn}, Muslim sinners are so overwhelmed by the frightful sight of Mâlik that they forget the Prophet's name. They respond like lost children — they belong to the \textit{ummah} to whom the Qur'ân had been sent and they had fasted Ramaḍân.\textsuperscript{1181} In the 'Azâmah angels are strict enforcers. As the narrative moves from one punishment to the next, the \textit{zabâniyah} act like trained nurses

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item\footnotesize\textsuperscript{1177} Wensinck, "Munkar and Nakîr," \textit{EI} 7:576-7; see also Wensinck and Tritton, "‘Adhâb al-\textsuperscript{1177}abr," \textit{ibid.}, 1:186-7. In some versions two more angels (Nakûr and Rûmân) join the interrogation; see Ibn Hajjar al-Haytami, \textit{Fatâwâ}, 21. Ibn Rajab includes a \textit{khabar} where al-Barâ' b. ‘Âzib, reporting on ‘\textit{adhâb al-qabr}, was asked if the interrogator in the grave was a demon or an angel, and retorted \textit{nahnu ashadd haybatan li-Rasûl Allâh (s) an nas'alahu a-malik huwa am shaytân innamâ nu'hadithukum bi-mâ sami'nâ}; see Ahwâl, 56.
\item\footnotesize\textsuperscript{1178} Sometimes also rendered as Rûmâh; see Bayhaqi, \textit{Ba'th}, 266.
\item\footnotesize\textsuperscript{1180} Q25:22 cites \textit{hijran matuyûran} as an expression used in the Jâhiliyyah that would have guaranted amnesty in the sacred months; see Majlîsî, \textit{Bihiyr}, 7:150.
\item\footnotesize\textsuperscript{1181} Ash’ari, \textit{Shajarah}, 78.
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explaining the efficacy of their treatment to bewildered sinners who cannot fathom how they ended up in Jahannam.

Later literary works, such as Wahrānī’s Manāmāt, portray the qiyāmāt as an insurmountable bureaucratic nightmare of notarized permits and much favoritism. Such parody reflected the complexity of the supernatural world by the sixth/thirteenth century. With the Prophet inaccessible to mobs of petitioners, Wahrānī’s dreamer witnesses an intercessory system where archangels grant immunity to favorites. The one exception is our forbidding and incorruptible Mālik who remains stalwartly deaf to all flattery and praise as he rounds up sinners against a roster, with the dreamer and his friend finding themselves listed among the pederast crowd!

III. Instruments and Tools: the Lost Manual

Essential to explaining the fundamentals of chastisement, an inventory of the tools the zabāniyāh wield best illustrates their assignments. Hooks and

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1183  Ibid., 26, 29. In one Shi‘ī account Riḍwān spots some people in paradise whom he had not seen pass through the gates and asks them how they got in, to which they boldly answer ‘annyā fa-innā qawmun ‘abadh Allāhu sirrān fa-adkhālan Allāhu sirrān; see Majlisī, Biḥār, 8:146.

1184  Punishment tools and power are basically inseparable; in Egyptian colloquial these items still retain their Turkish origin; kelepçe (handcuffs), kirbac (whip), çekić (hammer), balta (axe) not to mention place, karaköl (guard house) and those in position of authority: çavuş (sergeant) or bash
prongs with which sinners are captured top this list followed by the more conventional such as mallets, whips, chains, shackles and gibbets. Portable and manually operated, these instruments are rudimentary and attest to the zeal the zabāniyah bring to their mission. With angels responsible for capturing and chastising, hunting and cooking metaphors dominate this part of the infernal narrative. Amid soaring temperatures, hell’s wardens exhibit the dexterity of hunters and master chefs; texts allude to the sounds of searing flesh, the crackling and popping as proof of Jahannam’s strong flames and tireless staff.

III. A. Hooks and Hammers

Assigned the task of hauling sinners off the širāt, the zabāniyah stand below seeking with the aid of hooks (kalālib, sing. kullūb/kullāb) to snatch many a trembling ankle.1185 Ibn al-Athīr describes this tool as an iron pole with a hook at the end (ḥadīdah mu’wajjat al-ra’s) originally used in fishing or for picking meat out of pots.1186 Ibn Manẓūr explains the kullāb as a hook (minshāl) whose pole, made of wood or metal, is commonly used by ironmongers; the term also applies to the talons of a falcon or the spines of a cactus.1187 The infernal kullāb is

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1186 Ibn al-Athīr, Nihāyah, 4:195, s.v. kalb.
1187 Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān, 12:136-8, s.v. kalb; Lane, Lexicon, 7:2624-7, s.v. kalb. See also ‘Aynī, ‘Umdah, 8:216; Damirī, Hayāh, 1:159. Maqrīzī (d. 845/1441) describes cannibalism in one Egyptian famine where passers-by were hunted from rooftops with kalālib and nets; see Ighāthat
gigantic; entire tribes are shoved into hell in one single swipe. Generally, the kalālib are associated primarily with the širāṭ where the fiery versions (kalālib min nār) impede the progress of debtors, giving their creditors a chance to catch up with them.1188 Muḥāsibī meditates on the pain of the kullāb as it pierces the ankle of its victim, who slips off the bridge and finds himself unable to slow down the force of his descent.1189

The sharpness of a hook allows the kullāb to function like a sickle. In one miʿrāj text, one half of the usurer’s face is sliced once the hook catches the inside of the mouth and tears through the cheek.1190 The širāṭ is strewn with cactus (saʿdān/ḥasak) whose spines are kalālib or khaṭṭīf — the latter being prongs used for roasting.1191 Ibn al-Athīr compares the spines on the širāṭ to fishing hooks (ṣinnārah) making the job of hauling sinners into hell appear more like a massive culling expedition.1192

Once in Jahannam the zabāniyāḥ goad sinners with marāzibah (sing. mirzabbah/marzabān). As stated earlier, the mirzabbah appears in an early

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1188 Samarqandi, Qurrah, 27.
1189 Muḥāsibī, Tawāhum, 28.
1190 Qurṭūbī, Tadhkirah, 1:172-3; Suyūṭī, Āyah, 68-9.
1191 Ibn Ḥajar al-Ḥaytāmī, Kabāʻir, 2:244; Lane, Lexicon, 2:766, s.v. khaft. The khaṭṭīf are metal hooks which, like kalālib, are synonymous with claws or talons of a beast or bird of prey.
dream validating the authority of the zabāniyah. It is a small rod or iron baton once used by the prefects or satraps of the Persian Empire — the term is a reference to the title-holder and a symbol of vested power. A mirzabbah is also an ironmonger's mallet used to knock wooden pegs and pins into the ground.\textsuperscript{1193}

Texts describe other items that function like hammers and these include maqāmi' min nār (sing. miqma'), maqāri' (sing. miqrā') maṭāriq (sing. miṭrāq), faṭṭīs (sing. fiṭṭīs) or a'midah min nār (sing. 'amūd; fiery poles).\textsuperscript{1194} Munkar and Nakīr strike those who give the wrong answer with a mirzabbah or a miṭraq or a miqrā'.\textsuperscript{1195} In the afterlife, these items are hefty (described as exceeding the capacity of both mortals and jinn) and are testimony to the spectacular strength of their wielders. In their hands, these batons are "lighter than a feather" which, with one strike, can make mountains crumble to dust.\textsuperscript{1196} ʿAbd Allāh b. ‘Umar in the earliest dream on hell describes the two angels who escort him and those standing on the edge as wielding metal maqāmi'.\textsuperscript{1197} The fiery mallets (maqāmi' min nār) in Q22:21 are used to deter those who seek to escape.\textsuperscript{1198} Sinners are repeatedly blasted from the pits below only to be pounded back with maqāmi' in the hands

\textsuperscript{1193} A satrap was also known as a marzubān and the office was marzabah; Lane quotes a protective prayer from those who wield these batons (aʿūdhū bi-llāh min al-marāzibah wa-mā bi-aydīhim min al-marāzibah); see Lexicon, 3:1075, s.v. zarab; Ibn Manzūr, Lisān, 5:201, s.v. zarab.

\textsuperscript{1194} The verb faṭṭasa implies violent treading or compression; fiṭṭīs (pl. faṭṭīs) is a great hammer used also by ironmongers; see Lane, Lexicon, 6:2417, s.v. faṭas.

\textsuperscript{1195} Ghazzālī, Ḥiyā'; 4:499; Bayhaqī, Ḥtbāt, 39; Ibn Rajab, Ahwāl, 6, 25.

\textsuperscript{1196} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ʿAẓamah, fol. 17b; Muqāṭil, Tafsīr, 4:634 to Q84:6; Ibn Rajab, Ahwāl, 6; Ibn Kathīr, Nihāyah, 2:299.

\textsuperscript{1197} Bukhārī, Ṣahīḥ, 4:358-9; Ibn Mājah, Sunan, 2:1291.

\textsuperscript{1198} Q22:21-2.
of angels awaiting them at the top.\textsuperscript{1199} In some early texts, however, \textit{mirzabbah} and \textit{kallūb} are conflated; Ibn al-Mubārak describes a \textit{mirzabbah} as an instrument with two prongs (\textit{shu'batān}) which angels on the \textit{ṣīrāṭ} use to cull seventy thousand sinners with a single strike.\textsuperscript{1200}

Fork or hook, the principle of piercing the sinner starts on his deathbed. The spear (\textit{ḥarbah}) the angel of death wields is described as resembling the \textit{saffūd/suffūd} (pl. \textit{safāfid}) — a metal fork with hooked prongs used for roasting meat.\textsuperscript{1201} The sinner’s soul is extracted by twisting the \textit{saffūd} in an upward motion — similar to uncorking a wine bottle — until it is released through the head.\textsuperscript{1202} The angel masterfully captures these souls “quivering like mercury” in his palm in sizes no larger than grasshoppers. No creature is too small for such surgical precision, not even a flea!\textsuperscript{1203} In popular versions the spear is heated in the infernal flames before it punctures its way through the sinner’s body. Five hundred assistants swaddle the sinner’s soul in a putrid cloth filled with Jahannāmī coals.\textsuperscript{1204}

\textsuperscript{1199} Suyūṭī, \textit{Sharḥ al-ṣudūr}, 434-5; Ibn Ṭājrib, \textit{Takhwīf}, 149.
\textsuperscript{1200} Ibn al-Mubārak, \textit{Zuhd}, 98; also see Mujāhid, \textit{Tafsīr}, 684 to Q74:30.
\textsuperscript{1202} Suyūṭī, \textit{Sharḥ al-ṣudūr}, 23-5.
\textsuperscript{1203} Qurṭūbī, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:87-8; 93; Ibn Ḥajar al-Ḥaytamī, \textit{Fatāwā}, 13. There are several versions to the tribulations of the sinner at death; the qāṣṣ Tamīm al-Dārī describes the \textit{saffūd} as having many spines (\textit{kathīr al-shawk}); see Suyūṭī, \textit{Sharḥ al-ṣudūr}, 23-4.
\textsuperscript{1204} Ibid., 19; Qurṭūbī, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 32.
III. B. Whips

Whipping is described in Q89:13 as the ultimate chastisement (sawt ‘adhāb). Ḥadīth sheds light on the whips (sawt/siyāt pl.) of hell: in the mi‘rāj the Prophet sees sinners beaten with whips like cow tails (siyāt ka-adhnāb al-baqar) — an allusion to their leather.1205 In afterlife texts the act of whipping with a sawt (or a mirzabbah) begins in the grave and is conducted by a deaf beast (dābbah) once the interrogation is complete.1206 The root itself, s-w-†, graphically captures the chafing of blood and flesh.1207 Generally the length of a whip (qayd sawt) is that of a spear (qayd rumḥ).1208 A man who reportedly walked in on Abū Muslim, then governor of Khurāsān, when he was striking a man with a rod gave him the following advice: the rod (al-‘aṣā) is for animals (lil-an‘ām wal-ḥayawān wal-bahā‘īm al-kibār), the whip (al-sawt) for enforcing ḥudūd and ta‘zīr, the baton (durrah) for discipline (ta‘dīb) and the sword for killing enemies and for revenge.1209 This standard was followed in the ‘Aẓamah where ta‘zīr is conducted in a public forum with whips made of hogs’s tails! Masses (khalq) wielding these whips strike fettered tyrants and their assistants (a‘wān al-ẓalamah) as well as

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1205 Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 3:1680, 4:2192-3; Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, 2:356, 440; see also Sijistānī, Gharīb, 218. Ibn Ḥanbal quotes another ḥadīth warning men who wield whips like adhnāb al-baqar for acting against God; see Musnad, 5:250.
1206 Ibn Rajab, Ahwāl, 25.
1207 Sawt is mixing or stirring (khalṭ) and here Ibn Manẓūr is clear: wa-summiya al-sawt sawṭan li-annahu idhā sīṭa bihi insān aw-dābbah khalaṭa al-dam bil-laḥm wa-huwa mushtaqq min [al-khaṭl] li-annahu yakhlīf al-dam bil-laḥm wa-yasūṭuhu; see Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān, 6:430-1, s.v. süṭ.
1208 Lane, Lexicon, 4:1466-7, s.v. s-w-†. Jeffery adds sawft to his list of borrowings, this time from Aramaic, where it is used in connection with calamities sent by God as a scourge to the people; see Foreign Vocabulary, 182.
1209 Tha‘alibī, Iqtibās, 1:63.
those who have cheated the Muslim community who get paraded on fiery mules (bighāl min nār) and donkeys (ḥamīr min nār).\textsuperscript{1210}

**III. C. Miscellaneous Items**

Small-scale objects used for piercing and lacerating flesh include fiery needles,\textsuperscript{1211} pincers (maqārīḍ) for lips,\textsuperscript{1212} copper claws,\textsuperscript{1213} and knives for cutting out organs and stabbing.\textsuperscript{1214} One should also add copper sheets, coins and nails.\textsuperscript{1215} Adulterers, for example, have nails hammered into their eye sockets.\textsuperscript{1216} Gravediggers offered stories of items retrieved from skulls such as indestructible nails with two heads apiece which no ironmonger (to date!) could successfully smelt.\textsuperscript{1217}

One figure in the Muslim afterlife associated with chains and mallets is Abū Jahl, a hardened opponent of the Prophet killed at the battle of Badr. There are numerous versions to the man ablaze who emerges from a grave, chained from the neck, holding out a utensil and begging for water. Another figure quickly emerges to strike him with a mallet (maqma'), yanking the miserable wretch back

\textsuperscript{1210} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘Azamah, fols. 28 a-b.
\textsuperscript{1211} Majlisi, Biḥār, 18:333.
\textsuperscript{1212} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘Azamah, fol. 25a; Šamī, 500; Qurṭubī, Tadhkirah, 1:175-6; Suyūṭī, Khaṣaṣʻīṣ, 1:389, 429.
\textsuperscript{1213} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘Azamah, 32a; in one mīrāj, gossipers lacerate their faces with azfār min nūhās; see Suyūṭī, Khaṣaṣʻīṣ, 1:388.
\textsuperscript{1214} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘Azamah, fols. 22a, 27b, 33a.
\textsuperscript{1215} Samarqandi, Qurrah, 40.
\textsuperscript{1216} thumma yaqūl Mālik yā mašhar al-zabānīyah ikwū ‘uyūn al-zunāh bi-masāmīr min nār; Samarqandi, Qurrah, 17.
\textsuperscript{1217} Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Rūḥ, 99-100; Suyūṭī, Sharḥ al-ṣudūr, 72; Ibn Rajab, Ahwāl, 58.
to the grave. The Prophet is said to have established the figure as Abū Jahl who will remain restrained and thirsty till the qiyāmah. The absence of complexity, the condition of thirst, the hammers, the constant presence of a “nameless” tormentor are early motifs that emphasize the basic transaction between tormentor and ahl al-nār.

III. D. Chains and Bondage

The Qur‘ān promises no shortage of shackles and chains. In one verse the Almighty commands the chain, al-silsilah, seventy cubits (dhirā’) long, to be fetched. Jahannam also offers unconventional means of restraint such as snakes or demons. Tarhib texts highlight bondage in punishments for sins that involve the hand such as theft, coveting war booty (ghulūl), bribery (hadāyā al-‘ummāl ghulūl), not giving or sharing God’s bounty, or declaring, as the Jews have, that God is not a giving god. The best known Qur‘ānic image of bondage is the neck (jid) of Abū Lahab’s wife that will be fettered with a rope of palm fibers (masad).

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1218 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Qubūr, 93-5; Bayhaqī, ‘Adhāb, 135; Ibn Rajab, Ahwāl, 51-3; Suyūṭī, Khasā’īs, 1:513.
1220 Q69:30-2, 89:25-6.
1222 Q111:5.
The paraphernalia associated with bondage is relatively extensive; these include: \textit{salāsil}, \textit{aghlāl}, \textit{ankāl}, \textit{aṣfād} and \textit{ḥabl min masad}. \textit{Salāsil} (sing. \textit{silsilah}) are fetters that bind the feet as opposed to \textit{ankāl} that bind the hands.\footnote{Rāzī, \textit{Mafātīh}, 8:388-9 to Q74:4. Jeffery believes \textit{silsilah} is a borrowed from Syriac or late Hebrew; see \textit{Foreign Vocabulary}, 175-6.} \textit{Aghlāl}, a term that nowadays is used to mean chains, was used differently in our texts: Ibn Abī al-Dunyā describes \textit{ghull} as the act of chaining the hand to the neck and the \textit{ṣafad/aṣfād} as a manacle that handcuffs both wrists.\footnote{Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, \textit{Ṣifat al-nār}, 47; Suddī, \textit{Tafsīr}, 414 to Q38:38. Majīsī, on the other hand, describes the divine command of \textit{ghulūl} in Q69:30 as the chaining of either hand or foot to the neck; see \textit{Bihār}, 7:84.} Technically a \textit{ghull} is the collar to which a handcuff (\textit{qayd}) is attached.\footnote{ghulūl…hiya al-ḥadidah allati tjama’ yad al-asir ilā ‘unqihi; see ‘Aynī, ‘Umdah, 15:6; see also Ibn al-Jawzī, \textit{Ashbāb}, 100-2.} One encounters the gesture of \textit{ghull}, that of bringing the hand to the neck or the cheek, in scenes where the dying express penance.\footnote{Abū Yaqzān qāla lamānā iḥtuqdira ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ ja’ala yadahu fi mawdi’ al-ghull min ‘unqihi thumma qāla allāhumma innaka amartanā fa-faraṭnā wa-nahaytanā fa-rakibnā allāhumma innahu lā yasa’unā ilā raḥmatuka fa-lam yazal dhālika hijirahu ḥattā qubīq; see Ibn Qutaybah, ‘Uyūn al-akhbār, 2:334.} The verb \textit{nakala} means to punish in an exemplary way, to inflict chastisement (‘\textit{uqūbah}) and the noun \textit{nikl} (pl. \textit{ankāl}) describes a strong restraint fashioned of any material; in Jahannam these \textit{ankāl} are fiery chains (\textit{quyūd min nār}).\footnote{Q2:66, 79:25; Suyūṭī, \textit{Budūr}, 434. It is significant that the term \textit{nakāl} in the Medinan verse 5:38 refers to cutting off of thieves’ hands; see Raven, “Reward and Punishment,” 4:454-5.} One non-Qur’ānic term of significance is \textit{lijām} which is a mouth-piece, or a bit that forms part of a bridle destined to muzzle the ‘\textit{ulamā’ al-sū}’ who have deliberately withheld their knowledge.\footnote{Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, \textit{Kabā’ir}, 1:92; Mundhirī, \textit{Tarhib}, 1:73.}
Length is a definitive aspect of the qayd; the aʃf‹ad (both hands), in one opinion, are long chains (quyūd ʇiwāl). The Qur‘anic silsilah specified in the verse at seventy dhir‹ā‘ (cubits) drew much speculation; one single loop (ḥalqah) is made of all the iron in the world.1229 Scale is clearly a factor in the afterlife and many scholars have cautioned against applying our metric system; a dhir‹ā‘, in the opinion of Muq‹atil, would be the height of a primordial man (al-raʃul al-ʃawil min al-khalq al-awwal).1230 As mentioned, reinforcements are never far away: large black clouds airdrop additional fetters and chains;1231 all items are marked with the names of their owners.1232 The weight of these fetters and chains hampers mobility; as fiery blasts lift sinners upward, the chains pull them down in endless cycles.1233 Some are shackled to pegs (awt‹ad); others to gates or to the very bars that seal hell shut1234 — once fastened, these chains remain locked for all eternity (quyūd l‹a tuʃall wa-ʃallahi abadan).1235 In the medieval imagination şūfı̄s envisioned good ethics as a collar fastened to the gates of paradise with a chain while its antithesis (al-khulq al-sū) is a collar fashioned out of God’s anger that

1229 Ibn Abı al-Dunyā, Şifat al-nār, 93-4; Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 99; Suyūṭı̄, Budūr, 433.
1231 Ibn Abı al-Dunyā, Şifat al-nār, 52-3; Suyūṭı̄, Budūr, 435.
1232 Ibid., 434; Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 96. Ibn Ḥajar interprets the word musawwamah in Q11:83 and 51:34 as stones marked with the names of their intended victims; see Kabā‘ır, 2:140.
1234 Ibn Abı al-Dunyā, Şifat al-nār, 54. In interpreting Q104:8-9 Razı alludes to medieval stocks where the feet of thieves would be secured mithl al-maqaṭır fihā al-šuʃūs...al-maq̲tarah al-falaq wa-hiya khashabah fihā khrūq tadkhum fihā arjq al-mahbūsir; see Mafāthī̄l, 8:683.
1235 Ibn Abı al-Dunyā, Şifat al-nār, 55; Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 98; Dinawari, Mujālasah, 1:165-6.
drags its owners to hell.\textsuperscript{1236} Abū Hurayrah was said to dislike all dreams of chains and manacles since these were explicit references to the inhabitants of hell. In dream manuals a \textit{qayd} predictably signified (note the hand) avarice, unpaid \textit{zakāh}, imprisonment, sorrow, long illness or poverty; while chains, in a general sense, signified grave sins. A dream of a man shackled at the neck, however, foretold an impending matrimony to a bad-tempered woman (\textit{imra’ah sayyi’at al-khulq})!\textsuperscript{1237}

The inability to stand upright captures the indignity and disgrace that lies at the heart of bondage.\textsuperscript{1238} Chained at the wrists and feet and unable to shield their eyes from the blast, incoming sinners are blinded by the flames.\textsuperscript{1239} Blind and chained, eating becomes an ordeal as the sharp \textit{zaqqūm} spines poke their eyes, ears and noses.\textsuperscript{1240} All texts — the Qur‘ān included — discuss bondage in relation to the upper torso, to the neck and wrists as opposed to the feet.\textsuperscript{1241}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1236} Qurṭubī, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:550-1. The Prophet laughed at the thought of people being dragged to heaven in chains; see Ibn Hanbal, \textit{Musnad}, 2:302, 406, 448, 5:249, 256.
\item \textsuperscript{1237} Ibn Sīrīn, \textit{Aḥlām}, 136-7; ‘Āynī, ‘\textit{Umdah}, 24:154 and Nābulusi, \textit{Ṭa‘īr}, 363, s.v. \textit{qayd}.
\item \textsuperscript{1238} The indignity of being unable to stand upright has been captured in the medieval Arabic genre of lamenting the frailty of old age; see the excellent article by A. Arazi, “al-Shayb wa ‘l-Shabāb,” \textit{EJ} 9:383-9.
\item \textsuperscript{1239} Q39:23. \textit{[ḥaddathanā ‘Abd al-Rahmān Ibn Zayd qa‘la talqāhūm jahannam...wa-yalqāhūm wahajuhā qabī an yadhkhillūhā... ‘umyān maghlūlin fi aghlāl aydihim wa-arjulīhim wa-niqābīhim]; see Qurṭubī, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:482-3. For a variant see Sha‘rānī’s \textit{Mukhtaṣar},105; see also Ṭabarī, \textit{Jāmi’}, 23:136; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, \textit{Ṣifat al-nār}, 160-1.
\item \textsuperscript{1240} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘\textit{Azamah}, fols. 29b-30a.
\item \textsuperscript{1241} Q36:8, 40:71, 34:33, 13:5. Fredrick Mathewson Denny makes an unconvincing argument for the term \textit{arjul/rijl} having a negative connotation as opposed to \textit{qadam/aqdām}. The evidence does not bear this out. The emphasis on necks is related to visibility and \textit{ḥadīth}, for example, alludes to the long necks of muezzins in the \textit{qiyyāmah} as visible symbols of having accumulated good deeds and of being leaders; \textit{wa-l a’rāb taṣīf al-sādah bi-tūl al-a’nāq}. There is no article in \textit{EQ} on
Leashed, sinners are led to gorges that act as reservoirs in order to contribute their dripping blood and pus to the common pool. The idea of breaking free is a joke played on all who once mocked the Prophet — texts describe angels flinging open one gate encouraging sinners to make a go for it. Weighed down, they clank their way there laboriously only to have the gates slam shut in their faces.

Jahannam’s *silsilah* drew much speculation, particularly as verses Q69:30-32 are a sequential list of concise commands. Its length, seventy *dhirā‘*, had scholars speculate on the act of “threading” (the term *salaka* is in the verse). Texts describe the chain being inserted through the sinner’s backside and emerging from his mouth (in this order as traced to Ibn ‘Abbās). The head and feet are then bound so that the body of the sinner acquires a convex form that would then be strung through a stick. *Silsilah* sinners are then roasted “like locusts” until “only the souls remain hanging [on the chain].” The “sinners of the *silsilah*” have been compared to strung beads (*wa-yunāẓẓam fī ‘l-silsilah kamā yunāẓẓam al-kharaz fī ‘l-khayf*); their bodies get dipped once (*wa-yughmas necks nor is it discussed in the article by Qamar ul-Huda; see Mathewson Denny, “Feet,” *EQ* 2:198-9; Qamar ul-Huda, “Anatomy,” *ibid.*, 1:79-84; Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāyah*, 3:310, s.v., ‘unuq. 1242 *wa-qāla Ibn Ābī al-Dunyā ... ‘an Wahb... wa-jami‘ ahī al-nār fī salāsīl bi-aydī al-khazanah aṭrāfūhā yajdhībihūnahum muqbilīn wa-mudbihirīn fa-yasil ūṣadīhum ilā ḥafīrī fī ‘l-nār fa-dhairīka sharābūhum; Ibn Kathīr, *Nihāyah*, 2:299-300. 1243 Q5:37, 6:44, 83:34-36 often frame the scene; see Sulamī, *Waṣf*, 88; Qurtūbī, *Tadhkirah*, 1:523-4. For a short variant see Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘*, 30:111-12 and Zamakhshārī, *al-Kashshāf*, 4:723-4 to Q83:34-6, 2:23 to Q6:44. 1244 Ibn al-Mubārak, *Zuhd*, 84; Ibn Ābī al-Dunyā, *Silāt al-nār*, 58. 1245 Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 7:107; Suyūṭī, *Budūr*, 433; Ibn Rajab, *Takhwīf*, 100-1.
fi ‘l-nār ghamsah) in fires strong enough to strip the flesh. Their skeletal frames end up feeding the raging fires below.\textsuperscript{1246}

The image of adulterers paraded in chain-gang fashion had some exegetes take one step further to suggest that the entire population of hell was fettered to the \textit{silsilah}.\textsuperscript{1247} The benefit (\textit{fā’idah}) of this arrangement, in the opinion of Rāzī, was that it would guarantee a basic level of discomfort equally shared by all!\textsuperscript{1248} Any sinner would be unable to stand or move.\textsuperscript{1249} Medieval prison conditions were dismal; al-Ḥajjāj was said to be the first governor to fetter men and women together. Overcrowding was such that inmates could either all stand or all sit (\textit{idhā qāmū qa‘adū ma‘an wa-idhā qa‘adū ma‘an}).\textsuperscript{1250}

In our texts the inhabitants of hell become contortionists. When Q84:10 declares that a sinner at the \textit{qiya‘mah} will “receive his scroll behind his back,” exegetes manipulated the human form in the most convoluted way: the \textit{silsilah} is

\textsuperscript{1246} Ibn Kathīr, \textit{Nihāyah}, 2:250. Arabic has the term \textit{sahl} which is the act of paring, peeling, stripping, scrapping or removing an outer layer; for example, the winds eroding or stripping a layer of the earth or a road worn down by the feet of men and beasts is \textit{sahl}. The term is also applied to the act of lashing, whipping and to gossiping. In modern Arabic, \textit{sahl} is the act of dragging someone face downward and this is depicted in Ibn Abī al-Dunyā’s ‘\textit{Aṣamaḥ}, fols. 24 a-b without the term being used; see Lane, \textit{Lexicon}, 4:1319, s.v. \textit{sahl}.

\textsuperscript{1247} Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘\textit{Aṣamaḥ}, fols. 27 a-b.


\textsuperscript{1249} \textit{tasluk min dubrihi wa-takhruj min minkhārayhi ḥattā lā yaqūm ‘alā wajhihi}; Ṭabarî, \textit{Jāmī‘}, 29:64 to Q69:32; see also Rāzī, \textit{Mafātīḥ}, 8:288 and Ash‘arī, \textit{Shajarah}, 77.

threaded through the body as the left hand is chained to the neck and a shayṭān
added to the bundle.\textsuperscript{1251} Bondage particularly humiliates women: feet chained to
their breasts, their private parts are exposed to all.\textsuperscript{1252} On the other hand, the
rope associated with Abū Lahab’s wife was an exclusive item.\textsuperscript{1253} Exegetes
describe it as a metal chain so finely woven that it would appear as if (italics
mine) it were made of palm fibers (\textit{masad}).\textsuperscript{1254} This poetic license does little to
mask the humiliation of being dragged by the neck. Some interpreted the rope in
Q111:4 as the one she used in carrying the firewood!\textsuperscript{1255} Shī'ites pronounced
that this particular chain had the toughness of fiber, the heat of fire and the
weight of iron.\textsuperscript{1256}

\textsuperscript{1251} Samarqandī, \textit{Tanbih}, 23; for a simpler version, see Majlīsī, \textit{Bihār}, 7:96.
\textsuperscript{1253} \textit{{fī jidihā ġablun min masad yuqāl min masad ill fī al-muqī wā-hiyya al-silsilah allatī fī ‘īn-nār;}}
for his poverty when she would go out to cut wood and drag it with a rope.  God avenges the
insult so that in the afterlife the rope would be one of fire; see \textit{Tafsīr}, 2:993.
\textsuperscript{1254} \textit{futilat min al-ḥadīd fāṭlan muhkaman}; see Ibn Manẓūr, \textit{Lisān}, 13:102-4, s.v. \textit{masad}; Zayd b.
‘Alī makes reference to a necklace of seashells (\textit{qilādah min wada'}) which would support Uri
Rubin’s interpretation of Abū Lahab’s wife being a devotee of al-‘Uzzā; see \textit{Gharīb al-Qur‘ān},
506.
\textsuperscript{1255} Some have questioned how a rope could survive in hell’s fires and it was suggested that God
is capable of replacing it when it burns up (\textit{Allāh ‘azza wa-jallā qādir ‘alā tajdidihi kullamā
ihṭaraqā}); see Qurṭubi, \textit{Jāmi'}, 24:243.
\textsuperscript{1256} Abū Lahab’s wife, in this version, owned a magnificent pendant (\textit{qilādah fākhira}) that she
was willing to sell in order to fight the Prophet; see Majlīsī, \textit{Bihār}, 8:278.  See also Ṭabarī, \textit{Tafsīr},
7:401.
III. E. Hanging Props and other items

Jahannam’s vertical structures are also rudimentary. Our wine connoisseur is crucified on a fiery piece of wood (*khashabah min nār*). In the ‘Azamah sections of Jahannam are cordoned off as hanging arenas; the Mountain of Ghayy with its three thousand trees has nooses (*ma‘āliq*) from which sinners are strung upside down. In another text, fiery palm trunks, with snakes and scorpions afoot, function as poles. The most unusual are hot vertical rocks where sinners are made to hang from rings or knobs (*ḥalaq*) as their faces roast on these searing surfaces. Although texts describe women hanging by their eyelids or their breasts, no details are provided on how these hangings are conducted.

Querns (*raḥā*) are cited in some punishments. Once a feature of Neolithic farming, a millstone employs a runner stone that spins over a stationary bedstone. Olive presses applied the same principle with the addition of beams and an animal to perform longer and harder tasks. In pre-Islamic Arabia, a *raḥā* was a powerful metaphor for war and death; and it is no coincidence that it is

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1259 Samarqandi, *Qurrah*, 55.
1262 From the *Mufaḍḍalīyyāt*—xxxviii (33): “There our mill whirled, grinding their horsemen, and they became rotten bones, as though they had never been.” See Helmer Ringgren, *Studies in Arab Fatalism*, Uppsala: Lundequistska Bokhandeln (1955), 16.
a synonym for molars (wa-hiya aqṣā al-aḍrās) as well as large boulders. In Jahannam the raḥā grinds the brains of dishonest ‘ulamā’. Later the list of sinners destined for these millstones includes the qurrā, unjust rulers, their untrustworthy ministers and deceitful subordinates. Infernal caves, mentioned in chapter one, contain thousands of raḥā plugged directly into God’s wrath (yudiruḥā ghaḍab al-jabbār). The second application of the millstone principle is as a turn-table and, again, the tool is associated with corrupt ‘ulamā’. Seated on them, the raḥā rotates as it endlessly exposes these sinners to all who knew them. Waterwheels are yet another variant; here sinners are attached to fiery versions (nawāʾīr min nār) that circle with no break.

With iron chests (tawābīt) lining the lowest level of Jahannam, one can argue that hell is one large catacomb and that the degree of confinement is what distinguishes one level from the next. Locked chests are placed within a second larger unit such as ovens or fiery houses. It is here that we learn of locks and keys made of iron (ḥadīd) or fire, and how the outer units are

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1263 Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān, 5:175-7, s.v. raḥā; Lane, Lexicon, 3:1057-8, s.v. raḥā.
1264 This khabar is attributed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (inna fi jahannam raḥā taṭḥun khamsan al-‘ulamā’ al-fajarah wal-qurrā’ al-fasaqaḥ wal-jabābirah al-żalamazon wal-wuzāra’ al-żahawannah wal-urafā’ al-kadhabah); see Majlisi, Biḥār, 8:311.
1266 This khabar is attributed to Abū Hurayrah (inna fi jahannam arḥā’ tadūr bi-‘ulamā’ al-sū’ fa-yushriṭ ‘alayhim ba’ḍ man kāna ya’rifuhum fī l-dunyā); see Qurṭubī, Tadhkirah, 1:488; ‘Āyni, ‘Umdah, 24:203-4.
1268 Ibn Mubārak, Zuhd, 86.
padlocked for all eternity.\textsuperscript{1270} We also learn of nails in certain punishments, as with adulterers, but, more importantly, when hammering in the long poles that seal Jahannam’s gates shut (in one version).\textsuperscript{1271}

\section*{IV. Technology – An assessment}

These objects essentially illustrate conditions of imprisonment. The rudimentary technology explains the close contact the \textit{zabāniyah} maintain with sinners and here texts allude to physical violence with gestures such as slapping faces, pushing, shoving and flogging.\textsuperscript{1272} Gestures of contempt include biting and spitting — the spittle searing the flesh of sinners to the bone.\textsuperscript{1273} Those chained to their \textit{shayṭāns} are also slapped and spat on.\textsuperscript{1274} Sinners engage in their own rituals of self-abuse such as the double-faced hypocrite whose two heads (and two mouths) tirelessly spit on each other.\textsuperscript{1275}

The Qur’ān warns of the humiliation destined for those in the wrong. In Q55:41 sinners are grabbed by their forelocks and feet (\textit{al-nawāṣī wal-aqdām}) and pushed into hell. The verse is reworked to illustrate the image of threading

\textsuperscript{1270} Locks in Q47:24 are a metaphor to illustrate the indifference of non-believers to the message; it is as if they have locks on their hearts (‘\textit{alā qulūbin aqfāluhā}). The terms for keys (\textit{mafātīḥ/maqālīd}) are used to refer to God knowing all things; see Q6:59, 39:63, 42:12.


\textsuperscript{1272} Q47:27; 8:50; Samarqandī, \textit{Qurrah}, 54-5; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, ‘\textit{Aṣamah}, fol. 20b.

\textsuperscript{1273} \textit{Ibid.}, fol. 20a.

\textsuperscript{1274} \textit{Ibid.}, fol. 21a.

\textsuperscript{1275} \textit{Ibid.}, fols. 30b-31a.
the chain (*al-silsilah*) through their bodies. Bondage exposes the vulnerability of the human face as sinners are pitched headlong (*kubbat wujūhuhum/fa-kubkibū*) into hell; unprotected and blackened, their faces bear the signs of shame. This physical angle to humiliation, as we have seen, attests to the close proximity angels have with sinners in addition to the raw manner with which they exercise their power and aggression.

Within these rudimentary parameters, it is obvious that for the medieval mind divine anger was the closest thing to sustainable energy. The *zabāniyah*’s tireless intensity and their equipment, such as querns and knives, operate primarily through this agency. The very essence of hell, namely its fire, could bring the human body to boiling point. The image of Prophet’s uncle is one salient example of a man who steps into fiery shoes that cause his brain to bubble, his ears and eyes to glow like hot coals and his lips to smoulder. No image could be visually comparable to this type of raw energy until the age of steam and coal or the sixteenth century Ottoman imperial dockyards (*tersanā*,
arsenal) whose accounts of hardship, heat, sweat and toil could come closest to these images of boiling points.\footnote{1281}

It has become fashionable to think of hell as a precursor of the industrial revolution.\footnote{1282} The medieval world remained too poorly equipped to envision a setting on as large a scale as industrial factories. Energy was limited to man and beast; little progress was made beyond the screw, the wheel, the ratchet and the pulley which have been known since antiquity. A large number of iron tools such as axes, hatchets, augers and pruning knives were basically used for working on wood and the term “machine” was limited to siege machines.\footnote{1283} Mining furnaces appeared at the end of the thirteenth century and the earliest canons of the fourteenth century spread more terror through their noise than their capacity to kill. Any progress in metalworking and ballistics was eventually made in service the weapons of war.\footnote{1284} It is best to read “technology” in Jahannam as the face of power in relation to those who do not have it.

\footnote{1281} One line reads “Who was there in the organization [literally, hearth] of the Arsenal, whose liver had not been grilled, turning round and round in the fire of torment?” or “He had turned the organization of the Arsenal into a Hell;/He had set the Land of the Azabs [i.e., the soldiers of the Dockyards] on fire with its pain [Turk. ‘azeb].” Henry and Renée Kahane, and Andreas Tietze, \textit{The Lingua Franca in the Levant: Turkish Nautical Terms of Italian and Greek Origin} (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1958), 428-9, s.v. tersanâ.

\footnote{1282} In her preface to her anthology on Western visions of hell, Gardiner, who assumes that Europe had a nascent industrial technology, makes the following remark: “The images invoked for the descriptions of hell are very often related to the masculine images of work provided by the nascent industrial economy. Forges, furnaces, hammers, smoke and burning metals combine to present a picture that would certainly be hellish to a rural, aristocratic and agrarian audience”; see Gardiner, \textit{Visions of Heaven and Hell before Dante} (New York: Ithaca Press, 1989), viii.

\footnote{1283} Le Goff, \textit{Medieval Civilization}, 200-3; 218-19.

\footnote{1284} \textit{Ibid.}, 158-9.
V. Language and Dialogue in Jahannam

V.A. Arabic in the Muslim afterlife:

Although it was never doubted that Arabic would be the language of paradise,\(^\text{1285}\) the same cannot be said for hell. How could Arabic, the language of the divine, be spoken in the domain of the damned? And to say what exactly? Much thought was given to the languages of the afterlife. Adam, in the prophetic narratives of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*, spoke Arabic in paradise and Syriac after the fall. In the *qiyaṃah*, the reverse would occur — according to Zuhrī (d. 124/741-42) all of humanity will be resurrected speaking Syriac and switch to Arabic on entering paradise.\(^\text{1286}\) The challenge to the linguistic supremacy of Arabic came from the relativists; Ibn Ḥazm interpreted Q2:31 to mean that Adam was taught all languages, therefore they are all equally sacred.\(^\text{1287}\) Proficiency was an added concern; would *suʿāl al-qabr* be conducted in Arabic? Ibn Ḥajar, for whom Arabic was the primary language, maintained that non-Arabs will be able to understand what is being asked because such extraordinary circumstances would unleash extraordinary potential (*waqt tukhraq fihi al-ʿādāf*). Those entering paradise, in the opinion of the Persian mystic al-Biṣṭāmī (d. 260/874), will learn by inspiration (*ilhām*) and find themselves reciting the entire Qurʿān by heart even if they had


\(^{1287}\) *Ibid.*, 27.
never studied it. ‘Ulamāʾ will remain indispensable; as elocutionists they will instruct the inhabitants of paradise on the proper diction in addressing God!^1289

With this in mind, what linguistic options did the damned in hell have? A much contested hadīth proposed Persian (al-fārisiyah),^1290 which ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭālib called al-majūsiyyah. This anti-Persian bias was much older than the shuʿūbiyyah of the second century hijrī — the caliph 'Umar believed that knowing Persian would diminish a man’s muruwwah!^1292 The same Zuhrī, who maintained that Syriac would be spoken in the qiyyāmah, also offered “Hindi” (al-hindiyyah);^1293 others suggested Turkish (al-turkiyyah) or Kurdish.^1294

^1289 Āṭfayyish, al-Junnah, 134; ‘Idwī, Mashāriq, 323. For the high status of the ‘ulamāʾ at the hawd, see Ash’arī, Shajarah, 64.
^1290 Ibn Ḥabīb, Tārīkh, 24-5. Ibn al-Jawzī includes a hadīth that attempts to redress the anti-Persian bias by maintaining that a dialect of Balkh, al-Dariyyah, was the language around the Divine Throne, and claiming that God communicated through two languages: in Persian if He were pleased and in Arabic if He were angry; see Mawdūʿāt, 1:157; 158-9.
^1291 Majīlis, Bihār, 8:286.
^1293 Samarqandī, Bustān, 41. “Hindi” was sometimes suggested as the source for non-Arabic sounding words such as Ṭūbā which was believed to be the name of paradise in “Hindi”, see Iṣbahānī, Ṣifat al-jannah, 73.
^1294 Āṭfayyish, Junnah, 122. In his section on Abyssinia, Nuʿaym b. Hammād relates how Kurdish will the the language spoken in the Kaʿbah; see Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 664/1265), al-Malāḥim wal-fītaṣ al-ghāib al-muntazar (Najaf: al-Maktabah wal-Maṭba’ah al-Ḥaydariyyah, 1963), 78. The issue goes back to the origin of languages and the concept of Ursprache or primeval tongue. In the 17th century, the Swedish philologist Andreas Kemke suggested that Swedish was the language in the Garden of Eden, that Adam spoke Danish and the serpent French; see Avihai Shivtiel, “Onomatopoeia in Arabic,” in Classical Arabic humanities in their own terms: festschrift for Wolfhart Heinrichs on his 65th birthday, ed. Wolfhart Heinrichs and Michael Cooperson (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008), 138.
V. B. Dialogue in Hell

The paradox is that the Qur‘ān scripts the discourse of the ahl al-nār in the clearest of Arabic. Muqāṭil narrows down two instances where those in the wrong will speak the truth: during their private invocations at death,1295 and in their spontaneous expressions of faith (īmān) on beholding the punishments awaiting them in hell.1296 Discourse in the Qur‘ān is a complex subject; verses prefaced by the injunction “say”, for example, maybe in response to provocation or relate to doctrinal issues.1297 If all speech in hell is truthful, as Muqāṭil believed, then we should be able to compile a transcript of the thoughts, hopes and prayers expressed in Jahannam. Muqāṭil regarded such declarations of faith as pointless, which introduces another dimension crucial to infernal discourse, namely, that all statements made by sinners will fall on deaf ears. Moreover, there is a cutoff point to speech and, as we will see, these final lines — essentially prayers for release — are alluded to (euphemistically) in the Qur‘ān as nisyān Allāh. Placing dialogue on a timeline creates a narrational tension

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1295 Q23:99-100, 10:90, 4:18, 159.
1296 Q40:84-5, 21:14, 26:201-3, 10:51. The other modes Muqāṭil covers include God speaking directly without the medium of wahy as with Moses or the mode of wahy; see Muqāṭil, Ashbāh, 274-6, s.v. kalām.
1297 According to Matthias Radscheit, the imperative qul, which appears more than three hundred times in the Qur‘ān, is one of its more puzzling stylistic features. In a text where God is referred to in either the first or third person, qul introduces the Prophet into the narrative. Radscheit also covers the so-called tahaddī verses which are beyond the scope of this study; suffice to say this important article covers many aspects of discourse in the Qur‘ān; see “Provocation,” EQ 4:308-13. See also Issa J. Boullata, “Literary Structures of the Qur‘ān,” ibid., 3:192-205; Kate Zebiri, “Polemics and Polemical Language,” ibid., 4:114-25 and Angelika Neuwirth, “Rhetoric and the Qur‘ān,” ibid., 5:461-76.
between speech and that decisive cutoff point. The “divine deafness” that signals the abandonment of hell’s inhabitants to their fate is paralleled by a muteness on the part of its supplicants.

The cessation of speech in Jahannam, or the end of language, signals the futility of invocation. The closing of the gates mark the end of speech.\textsuperscript{1298} The Qur’ān pairs gratitude with remembrance and prayer — the mark of the faithful.\textsuperscript{1299} The indifference of those in the wrong is attributed to their hardened hearts that will be met with by indifference on the part of God. We have seen this before; Q36:43 reminds us how the screams of drowning evil-doers were ignored by God.\textsuperscript{1300} Anbārī notes that Divine hearing, in the Qur’ān, is paired with response to prayer which constitutes the cornerstone of \textit{du‘ā‘} or invocation.\textsuperscript{1301} His inclusion of \textit{nisyān} as one of the \textit{aḍḍād} serves to emphasize the intentional aspect of divine abandonment.\textsuperscript{1302} The Qur’ān reminds Muḥammad that nothing more can be done for those in the wrong; he is advised not “to sorrow, lament, be

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{1298} Qurṭubī, \textit{Jāmi‘}, 20:184-6.
\textsuperscript{1299} Q2:152 is an example; see Lamin Sanneh, “Gratitude and Ingratitude,” \textit{EQ} 2:370-3.
\textsuperscript{1300} Anbārī lists \textit{ṣarikh/ṣārikh} as one of the \textit{aḍḍād}; it could refer both to the one who screams and to the one who rescues the screamer; see \textit{Aḍḍād}, 51-2.
\textsuperscript{1301} Anbārī cites the formulaic \textit{sami‘a Allāh li-man ḥamidahu} to mean \textit{aǧāba Allāh li-man ḥamidahu}; see \textit{Aḍḍād}, 89; see also Q3:38 and 14:39 as examples. \textit{Sami‘} (All Hearing) is one of the divine attributes and the term is quoted in the Qur’ān a total of forty-two times, sometimes alone or as part of the composites “all hearing and all knowing” (\textit{sami‘un ‘ālim}) or “all hearing and all seeing” (\textit{sami‘un baṣīr}). The \textit{iǧābah} is mirrored on the human plane of “hearing and obeying” (\textit{sami‘na wa-ṣāna‘a}) in Q2:285, 4:46, 5:7, 24:51; see also Geert Jan van Gelder, “Hearing and Deafness,” \textit{EQ} 2:405-6; Rippin, “Seeing and Hearing,” \textit{ibid.}, 4:573-6.
\textsuperscript{1302} Anbārī, \textit{Aḍḍād}, 256; see also Muqātil, \textit{Ashbāh}, 234-5.
\end{footnotes}
overwhelmed, or kill oneself with mourning over his disbelieving people.”\textsuperscript{1303} This verse, as we will see, will be brought up in the context of his uncle Abū Ṭālib in hell. That all lamentations and prayers uttered in Jahannam are in vain signals the moment of divine abandonment;\textsuperscript{1304} the Prophet and the community of the faithful in paradise are exhorted to ignore all pleas for help.\textsuperscript{1305} This clean break captures the major loss (\textit{khusrān}) sinners face in the afterlife. We should examine the context of speech in Jahannam prior to the breakdown of language. This includes bargaining statements made by sinners desperate to escape their doom. Other themes include cursing, regret and lament, blame, the deceit of Iblīs and the abandonment of their own families in paradise. The last lines uttered in Jahannam are prayers for release before hell echoes with the noise of its flames.

V.B. 1. The Script: Statements made before entering hell

According to the apocryphal work ascribed to Ibn Isḥāq, in answer to the question of what speaks but lacks flesh and blood, Abū Bakr responds to the monks who come with this \textit{mas’alah} that it is Jahannam.\textsuperscript{1306} Indeed, hell arrives with much sound and fury. It is only at the conclusion of the \textit{ḥisāb} that God — who knows all — asks hell if it reached full occupancy to which it rhetorically

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1303} Q3:176, 5:26, 41, 68, 6:35, 7:93, 18:6, 26:3; and A. Mathias Zahniser, “Indifference,” \textit{EQ} 2:510.
\item \textsuperscript{1305} Q7:51.
\item \textsuperscript{1306} Ibn Isḥāq, \textit{All rāhib wa-rāhib}, 59.
\end{itemize}
responds by asking if there is more to come. Sinners, we are told, are in possession of their faculties and can comprehend the horrors ahead. In lamenting their transgressions, they acknowledge God’s justice; their declarations of faith, truthful as these may be, at this point are futile. Sinners wish they had never been born, they wish they were dust (turāb) — this line, Shi‘ites read as a desire to belong to their own group (Abū Turāb being one of the names of Imām ‘Alī).

Predictably, denunciation takes the form of cursing; sinners are greeted by negating their welcome (lā marḥaban bihim/bikum). Jahannam’s angels curse every arriving group (fawj) inquiring (rhetorically, of course) if a warner (nadhir) had not been sent to them to deliver the message. The qiyyāmah proves indeed to be a hard day (yawm ‘asir). The invective ranges from the general — a curse for perdition (ta’s) and distancing from the mercy of God (suḥq/bu’d) to the specific such as cursing the hands of Abū Lahab and his wife (tabbat). One should also include the many expressions of woe such as wayl, bi’s al-maṣīr

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1307 Q50:30; see also discussion in Anbārī, Aḍḍād, 125-6. Prosopopeia, or tašwīr al-jannah, convinced an early generation of missionaries and scholars that Muḥammad had no idea what he was describing; see Gardet, “Djanna,” 2:447. Samarqandi admits the theological difficulties of the verse and that some scholars have accepted it without analytical interpretation (nu’min bihi wa-lā nufassiruhu) see Samarqandi, Tafsīr, 3:272, 477-8; also Muqāṭīl, Tafsīr, 4:114.
1308 Qurṭubi, Tadhkīrah, 1:250; Q89:23-4, 26:201.
1309 Q26:201, 40:84-5.
1310 Majlisi, Bītār, 7:194.
Aggressive gestures such as shoving, spitting, biting are, in the opinion of exegetes, acts of cursing; the interactions between sinners or between the zabāniyah and sinners are dominated by violence and revulsion. Iblīs (al-rajīm) is the most extreme prototype; his denunciation and that of his followers is echoed throughout hell. In popular literature Iblīs is the first to don Jahannam’s fiery outfit which, once past his eyebrows, is tugged from behind by all his progeny who loudly lament and curse their imminent doom.

V. B. 2 Regret and Lament

In a world of losers and winners, disbelievers, on the day of remorse (yawm al-ḥasrah) proclaim their grave oversight (ghaflah). Those who have long relied on their power and wealth find that nothing can save them from impending doom. The appearance of Jahannam vindicates God’s true pledge (al-wa’d al-haqq) taking by surprise nay-sayers who, in spite of clearly discerning hell (‘ayn al-yaqīn), will still uphold their position by inquiring if what they are beholding might not be some sorcery, before admitting that the moment of justice (ḥaqq) has indeed arrived. Standing on Jahannam’s edge, sinners plead for a...
In their mawāʿiz, preachers imagine the regret (ḥasrah) that comes upon sinners in two ways. Those with worldly status, such as scholars or the rich, may find out on their way to hell how much better their dependants fared as a result of their noblesse.1323 There is also regret associated with lost opportunity. Sinners, ordered to paradise, take in the sights of opulence, “the odors and the air”, before a command is issued to send them to hell! Here ḥasrah is connected to the good fortune of others in contrast with the poverty of hell.1324

Gestures of regret such as the biting of hands capture the intensity of the moment.1325 Wayl (woe/misfortune), a noun that prefaces many lamentations, is also a form of invective whereby sinners simultaneously lament and curse their

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1322 Q6:27-8, 2:166-7. Grammarians disputed on whether wishing (tarajjū) and regretting (talalhū) were statements or even negative statements. One remedy was to say that one anticipates what is proximately possible (al-mumkin al-qariṭ) and wishes for that which is remotely possible (al-mumkin al-baʿid); see A. Zysow, “Tamanni If Wishes Were…. Notes on Wishing In Islamic Texts,” in Classical Arabic humanities in their own terms: festschrift for Wolfhart Heinrichs on his 65th birthday, ed. Wolfhart Heinrichs and Michael Cooperson. (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008), 526-32., 2008:


1324 Dhahabī, Kabāʾīr, 11; Qurtubī, Tadhkīrāt, 1:525; Samarqandi, Tanbīh, 5.

1325 Q25:27. Exegetes have explained that the sinner in the verse might be ‘Uqbah b. Abī al-Mu‘ayṭ, one of Muḥammad’s staunch opponents who is depicted as endlessly gnawing his hands to the elbows, though they continue to regenerate; see Majlīsī, Bihār, 7:151. Biting the hand in regret is been reported in the graves; see Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Qubūr, 102.
own fate. It is in this dual sense that one should read their admissions to having been transgressors (yā waylanā innā kunnā żālimīna). Repeated lamentation, referred to as thubūr, have sinners collectively engage in verbal flagellation. In Arabic words that express lament or sorrow begin with the sound w such as wayl, wayḥ or way. The Qurʾān describes remorse with terms such as ḥasrah, nadam, and asā. Nadam, originally associated in the Qurʾān with primordial bloodshed on the burial of Abel, is experienced in its intensity by unbelievers, who on appraising the torments ahead stand speechless “withholding regret (nadāmah) in their hearts.” For exegetes this is a teaching moment: Rāzī interprets the moment of silence as one of shock “such as when a person is being lead to the gallows” or as denial of the magnitude of what lies ahead lest they be harangued by their inferiors. This is also a moment of genuine repentance. ʿAyyāshī takes into account the schadenfreude of one’s enemies (shamātat al-aʿdā) as an incentive to keeping one’s chin up.

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1328 Q25:13-14, 84:11. The protective prayer reads aʿūduh bi-ka min daʿwat al-thubūr; the term thubūr here connotes perdition (halāk), loss (khusrān) and lament (wayḥ); see Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān, 2:81-2, s.v. thubūra.
1329 Shivtiel, Onomatopoeia, 143.
1330 The range is wide — the term asā in three cases is what the Qurʾān describes as the attitude the prophets and Muhammad would take when faced with the stubbornness of unbelievers.
1331 Q5:31, 52, 23:40, 26:157; and for sinners witnessing hell see Q10:54; 34:33.
1332 Rāzī, Mafātīḥ, 5:3 to Q10:54.
1333 ʿAyyāshī, Tafsīr, 2:123. Muhāsibi also takes into account the schadenfreude of one’s enemies should one be ordered to hell; see Tawāhil, 25.
gasp (shahiqū shahqatan) at the sight of hell reflects the fear that causes hearts to rise in throats, rendering sinners totally speechless.\textsuperscript{1334}

Expressions of remorse reveal the deep longings of hell’s inhabitants. One and all regret the past — the flippant sarcasm, the indifference toward God or the Prophet’s message, and sinners wish they had focused on their personal salvation.\textsuperscript{1335} In short, they long to be in the winners’ camp. As loosers — the Qur’ān is clear in that regard — they have forsaken their families and community.\textsuperscript{1336} Sinners regret wasting their lives,\textsuperscript{1337} they plead for a second chance, for another lifetime in order to demonstrate good behavior.\textsuperscript{1338} As despair overwhelms them, they wish they had never been born.\textsuperscript{1339} Despair (ya’s), as the Qur’ān makes clear, is directly correlated with indifference — in rejecting the afterlife, sinners have already written off divine mercy; man, by his very nature as the Qur’ānic verse reminds us, is a despondent creature (ya’ūs)!\textsuperscript{1340} The Qur’ān applies another stronger term to the despair of sinners, that of ablasa, which, among many things, implies a banishment on the part of

\textsuperscript{1334} Muqātil, \textit{Tafsīr}, 2:410 to Q14:43 and 3:709 to Q40:18.
\textsuperscript{1336} Q6:12, 7:9, 39:15, 42:45; see also Timothy Winter, “Failure” \textit{EQ} 2:161-2.
\textsuperscript{1337} Q39:55-56, 6:31.
\textsuperscript{1338} Q35:37, 23:99-100, 106-8, 26:97-102, 107; 63:10-11, 67:10, 42:44.
\textsuperscript{1339} Q78:40. Unbelievers wish they returned to dust which ironically is the same argument they used in their refutation of the existence of an afterlife; see Q13:5, 23:35, 82-3, 27:67, 37:16-17, 35, 50:3, 56:47.
\textsuperscript{1340} Q29:23, 60:13, 17:83. According to Muqātil the ḥasrah begins in the grave with ‘gradation al-qabr. The despair in 60:13, in his opinion, involves the Jews whose preview of their places in hell results in their ḥasrah; see \textit{Tafsīr}, 4:307-8.
God. In ḥadīth sinners cry a long time until blood, not tears, runs through furrows so deep that ships could sail through them!

V.B. 3 Contention and Blame

Nor does the Qurʾān underestimate man’s contentious nature — a verbal skill much employed in the afterlife. In apocalyptic literature, the world will come to an end as men stand and bicker. Hardship in the qiyāmah will uncover the more ungenerous side of human nature as people willfully disown their kith and kin, each seeking to argue his/her own way to salvation. The inhabitants of hell are by nature a contentious lot; when all their arguments fail, they begin to denounce (tabarruʾ/takfīr/laʾn/lawm) one another in search of scapegoats. Each ummah curses the one preceeding it into hell until the last one to enter curses the very first to set foot in the place. Sinners blame their elders/superiors for their current predicament demanding that their punishment be doubled (ʿadhāban ẓifan/ẓifayan min alʿadhāb) and, if not, at least bear a share (naṣīban) of their

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1341 Q30:12, 49, 23:77, 6:44, 43:75; Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān, 1:482-3, s.v. balasa. The term balasa encompasses sorrow, regret, lack of justification (inqitāʾ al-ḥujjah) and silence as a result of abandonment (al-matrūk al-mkhduḥ); see Ibn Qutaybah, Gharīb, 153 to Q6:44. To Ibn al-Mulaqqin, the term connotes despair and perdition; see Gharīb, 129 to the same verse, 269 to Q22:78 and 369 to Q43:76.

1342 Ibn al-Mubārak, Zuhd, 85; Ghazzālī, Iḥyāʾ; 4:533; Qurtūbī, Tadhkirah, 1:509; Ibn Kathīr, Nihāyah, 2:308. Images of repentence are a favorite motif; the prophet David, in seeking forgiveness, laid his cheek on the earth long enough to strip a layer of his skin as tears and blood rolled down his face; see Suyūṭī, Anis al-jalis (s.l.: s.n., 1291/1874), 60-1.


1344 Q23:101, 16:111.


subordinates’ torments. They demand for a ranking of sorts where those who have lead them astray — be they human or jinn — be placed beneath them. Tirelessly, sinners repeat the claim that they have been forced to disbelieve and that should they be given a second chance, they would secure their own freedom from all who led them astray the first time around. Superiors too deny responsibility by maintaining that all parties are equally culpable (mujrimin).

The greatest letdown is Iblis himself (wa-kāna al-shayṭān lil-insān khadhūlan) as he disowns followers and declares himself innocent of their unbelief. Muslim preachers framed this exchange in a scene where sinners in search of a spokesman (khaṭīb) to intercede on their behalf elect Iblis. Iblis stands up and blocks an entire corner of hell, and as he prepares for his speech emits a foul odor that stinks up the majlis. The extent of his treachery is soon revealed when he declares his disassociation (barā’ah) from his followers who have, in the end, no one to blame but themselves. Whereas God’s pledge was the truth, Iblis admits that his own was false and that now he too fears the

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1347 Q40:47.
1348 Q41:29.
1349 Q2:166-7, 34:33.
1350 Q34:31-4.
1351 Q25:29. The Qur’an alludes to the devil as Iblis and shayṭān; the former name figures mainly in stories of the creation, the latter in reference to temptation; see Rippin, “Devil,” EQ 2:524-5.
1352 Majlisi, Bihar, 63:161. Iblis also takes precedence by donning the garments (hullah) of hell and dragging his followers with loud laments echoed by all; see Muḥammad Šiddiq Khān, Yaqazat uli al-i’tibār fi dhikr al-nār wa-aṣḥāb al-nār (Bhopal: s.n., 1877), 78-9.
1353 Ibn al-Mubārak, Zuhd, 111.
retribution of the Almighty. Qur’anic verse thus acts as a testimony to Iblis’ own admission of betrayal by unmasking (in advance) the falsehood: Iblis’ promises are empty, he has nothing to offer but deprivation (faqır), having declared himself from the beginning of time to be man’s manifest foe (‘aduwwun mubin). Part of God’s original pledge to Iblis is that his followers will join him in hell; and as he was once cursed so all will be collectively cursed in Jahannam. The Āwā’il genre offers a neat summation of Iblis’ lifetime achievements: he was the first to sing (taghannā), to hum (zamzam), to croon to his camels (ḥadā) and to wail (nāḥ).

V. B. 4 Exchange with Paradise

The Qur’ān registers three exchanges between the inhabitants of hell and paradise. Dialogue acts as a teaching moment; the faithful address sinners in

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1354 Q14:22, 59:16-17, 8:48. Scholars discuss the timeline of this speech (Q14:22) and surmise that the line should be inserted when all justice has been done (lammā quḍiya al-amr), and that it makes sense to have it at the point when the ahl al-ṣalāt, or the Muslims, are released from Jahannam; see Rāzī, Matāʾith, 5:31.

1355 Q2:168, 7:22, 17:53, 43:62. One needs to point out Iblis’ impressively tenacious skills. Rippin notes that Iblis calls (Q31:21), speaks (Q14:22, 59:16), promises (Q2:268) and whispers (Q7:20, 20:120, 50:16, 104:4-5). Attributes such as “the deluder” (gharūr) in Q3:33, 35:5, 57:14 and “the one who slinks around” (al-khannās in Q114:4) have become synonymous with shayṭān, see Rippin, “Devil,” 2:526.

1356 Q26:94-95, 38:85. On the original pact between God and Iblis, see Q15:34-43.

1357 Q30:12, 49, 6:44, 23:77, 43:75. The death of Iblis is picked up in popular literature; the angel of death has difficulty capturing the elusive demon and asks for additional reinforcements. God provides him with seventy thousand infernal dogs (kilāb min nār) who accomplish the mission but only after additional reinforcements are sent in twice. It takes seventy thousand stabs of the angel’s spear and many infernal dog bites to put an end to Iblis, whose screams register the intense pain of his last moments. The angel of death personally hands over Iblis’ soul to Mālik; see Suyūṭī, Anīs, 111-12.

1358 Suyūṭī, Āwā’il, 126. On the mysterious hold of sound on human emotions, see ‘Askārī, Āwā’il, 88-9.
the third person as if they were on stage directing their words to a wider audience.\textsuperscript{1359} Exegetes place the first exchange on the \textit{ṣirāṭ} when the hypocrites ask the faithful to wait so that they can share some of their light. The sinners are told to step back [into the darkness] and look for their own light when a barrier descends separating the world of mercy from that of punishment.\textsuperscript{1360} This exchange establishes the polarities of light and darkness, of abundance and deprivation by having sinners request some benefits in this brief retort.\textsuperscript{1361}

The next two exchanges are equally brief and direct; then scholars have framed them as \textit{yawm al-tanādī} or the “day of calling out”.\textsuperscript{1362} Ibn al-Kharrāṭ imagines blasts lifting sinners high enough to glimpse paradise as God enhances their sight and hearing so that the existing boundary (\textit{ḥijāb}) should not be a hindrance.\textsuperscript{1363} Based on Q 7:44, believers who assert that God has indeed

\textsuperscript{1359} This is a rhetorical device known as \textit{iltifāt} when one speaker turns his back on the person he is engaged with in order to make a comment about him/her in the third person; see M. A. S. Abdel Halim, “Grammatical Shift for the Rhetorical Purposes: \textit{iltifāt} and Related Features in the Qur‘ān,” in \textit{http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/Text/Grammar/iltifaat.html}. I would like to thank Professor Hamori for this reference and the medieval clarification.


\textsuperscript{1361} Zamakhshārī quotes the story of a teacher who would seat the children of the wealthy in the shade and those of the poor in the sun, commanding the wealthy to spit on the poor by saying \\textit{yā ahl al-jannah ubzuqū ālā ahl al-nār; see Rabi’}, 1:522.

\textsuperscript{1362} Ibn al-Mulaqqin, \textit{Gharīb}, 347 to Q40:33; see also references made by Qurṭubi, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:269-70.

\textsuperscript{1363} Ibn al-Kharrāṭ, \textit{'Aqibah}, 292. Mālībārī suggests that sinners fly like sparks, probably meaning that they are as light in weight as sparks, managing to get a glimpse of paradise; see \textit{Istīdād}, 79. The second exchange has also been placed within the prophetic narrative when three days after Badr, the Prophet passed by the graves of the Meccans killed in battle and asked them if they had indeed found what God had promised them, then informed his Companions that the dead could hear but are unable to answer. Qatādah then comments: \textit{aḥyāhum Allāh hattā asma‘ahum qawlahu tawbikhan wa-taṣghīran wa-niqmatan wa-ḥasratan wa-nadaman}; see Muḥammad Nāṣir
fulfilled His promises, so has He done the same for them? After receiving an answer in the affirmative, a herald (munādī baynahum) curses the sinners. This exchange is inserted in the prophetic narrative when Muḥammad after the battle of Badr asked the bodies of Qurayshis if they had indeed found what God had promised them.\textsuperscript{1364} The third and last exchange occurs in the presence of witnesses when the men on the aʿrāf implore God to spare them the fate of the unbelievers.\textsuperscript{1365} Sinners call out to the faithful for water or for some of the bounty God has blessed them with. The reply comes back too short for comfort: God has forbidden these things to the unbelievers. Believers are ordered to ignore sinners who have taken this day of reckoning lightly.\textsuperscript{1366} This Qurʾānic scene is paraphrased by Muḥāṣibī when his imaginary protagonist calls out to his own family for water, and when ignored concludes that they cannot be blamed for rejecting him!\textsuperscript{1367}

In paradise, by contrast, discourse is free of envy and contention.\textsuperscript{1368} Clusters (zumār) of believers are met by welcoming angels who bless their safe arrival!\textsuperscript{1369} With gratitude as the virtue that crowns the faithful, it is no surprise

\textsuperscript{1364} Qurṭūbī, Jāmiʿ, 13:231 to Q 27:80 in allusion to Q 7:44.
\textsuperscript{1365} Muqāṭil sees this interaction as a continuation of a bet where the sinners hoped that the men on the aʿrāf would join them in hell; see Tafsīr, 2:39-40.
\textsuperscript{1366} Q7:44-51.
\textsuperscript{1367} Muḥāṣibī, Tawḥīthum, 29; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Ṣifat al-nār, 147-8.
\textsuperscript{1368} Q7:43; see also Ibn Ḥābib, Waṣf, 40.
\textsuperscript{1369} Q39:73.
that the head warden of paradise is called Riḍwān. In fact, these newcomers gush with thankfulness for guidance, for the truth of the divine promise, for sorrow having been done away with, for all the prophets who delivered the true message, for bounty and for deliverance. Here the approval (riḍwān) of God acts as an amnesty from His wrath where believers need never experience despair, fear, regret and pain. Believers desire the face of God and Q10:10 makes it clear that speech in paradise is one endless succession of praises.

The beginning and conclusion of all discourse in paradise is *tasbiḥ* and *taḥmīd.*

Discourse in hell, as it is discussed in afterlife texts, does not deviate from the Qur’ānic verses. One cannot say the same applies to its counterpart in paradise where speech goes off the Qur’ānic rails. Muḥāsibī’s protagonist

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1370 *Riḍwān,* as a noun, is one of the blessings of the afterlife; see Q5:119, 9:21, 72, 100, 58:22, 98:8, 3:15. One of its derivatives, *rādiyāh,* characterizes life in paradise; see Q69:21, 101:6–7, 88:9. Unbelievers reject *riḍwān Allāh*; without *riḍwān* there is no *shafā‘ah* in the afterlife; see Q47:28, 3:162, 9:72, 20:109, 21:28, 2:207, 265; see also Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Hādī, 131.

1371 Q39:74, 35:34–5, 7:43, 52:25–8. There are many understandings of the ḥuzn that the faithful are grateful to have been delivered from, such as worries about livelihood (*hamm al-khubz fi ‘l-dunya*); see Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, al-Hamm waḥ-ḥuzn, 40–1.

1372 Attributed to the Prophet as a ḥadīth qudsī: (*uḥillu ‘alaykum riḍwānī fa-lā askha† ‘alaykum ba’dahā abadan*); see Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Ṣifat al-jannah, 99–100.

1373 Q2:272, 6:52, 92:20; see also Amila Buturovic, “Wish and Desire,” EQ 5:484–8; for a quick review of happiness in philosophical discourse which essentially concurs with the Qurʾānic view, see H. Daiber, “Sa’āda,” EQ 8:657–61. Desire, in all its facets, is a complex subject. *Shahwa* in the Qurʾān connotes both negative and positive desires. It is applied to the desires of qawm Lūt in Q7:81 and 27:55, to the desires of the world in Q3:14, 19:59, and the desires of paradise are associated with savoring delicacies in Q21:102, 41:31, 43:71, 52:22, 56:21 and 77:42. Desire can be excessive, and the term *ahwā‘* has no saving grace; see Q20:16, 28:50, 42:15, 45:18.

1374 Scholars make it clear that these expressions are not part of prayer per se (*‘ibādah*) and that paradise is not a *dār taklīf.* The sight of a flying bird might tempt an inhabitant of paradise to desire food so that the *subḥānak allāhumma* that would land the fowl cooked onto one’s plate should not be regarded as a prayer; see Majlisi, *Bihār,* 8:86.
arrives in paradise to be met by a welcoming entourage of *wildān, ghilmān, azwāj* and seventy thousand *qahramāns* or stewards — these constitute his new “family” — and the discourse of *ḥūrīs* is one long soliloquy of desire. Pledges of eternal fidelity are inscribed on the breasts (many sizes) of *ḥūrīs*. More revealing are the new codes of propriety: attendants request permission, wait on cue or shield their masters from unwarranted intrusions and so on. These “de-regulated” versions of paradise’s pillow talk when compared to the tightly scripted Qur’ānic lines of Jahannam reveal the essence of *targhib* as a genre. *Targhib* sets out to offer listeners what modern advertisers excel at — selling excess, even if it goes beyond script, whereas in *tarhib* no voice commands as authoritative a *wa‘īd* as that of the Almighty.

**V. B. 5 Last words: the Final Exchange**

The two versions of the final exchange in Jahannam read like the last act of a play with lines broken by long stretches of silence (forty, eighty or a thousand years). Asad b. Mūsā maintained that the wait is doubled before the last line in Jahannam is delivered. Ibn ‘Abbās believed that six petitions (*da‘awāt*) are granted to sinners with one thousand year wait between each whereas Ibn Ka‘b al-Qurāzī restricted it to five. As the final scene unfolds, one *maw‘izah* draws attention to the cruel imbalance of power: the heartless Mālik

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versus the supplicants, deformed many times over from the fires, who find themselves seeking succour from one whose sole purpose is to harm them!\textsuperscript{1378}

Initially the sinners agree among themselves that patience (ṣabr) is best — a pre-Islamic virtue conjuring up reserves of fortitude and endurance. After five hundred years, they decide to lament, eventually giving way to jaza’ — to impatience, anxiety and despondency that lasts another five hundred years.\textsuperscript{1379}

Finally, they ask Mālik if God could put an end to their lives; and after one thousand years, the reply decrees that they are to remain in Jahannam.\textsuperscript{1380}

Mainstream texts identify Q23:108 where sinners are ordered to shut up as the cut off point of speech — an admonition likened to the tone of a king when he “denigrates, insults, hits or orders his servant to the gallows!”\textsuperscript{1381} Al-Ḥajjāj is said to have quoted this Qur’ānic verse when riding one Friday he heard a great clamor (ḍajjah ‘ažīmah). He was told that these were the prisoners (ahl al-sijn) deploiring their conditions, whereupon he turned and pronounced Q23:108 “Remain therein and speak not!” It was said that he died within the week.\textsuperscript{1382}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{1378} Ibid., 113-14.
\textsuperscript{1379} In al-Āṣmaʾiyāt v. 27 (fa-in jaziʿa fa-qad haddat muṣibatunā wa-in ṣabīnā fa-innā maʿshar al-ṣabr). Ringgren overlooked the similarity with Q14:21; see Ringgren, “The Concept of Ṣabr in Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Qurʿān,” in \textit{Islamic Culture} 26 (1952): 79.
\textsuperscript{1380} Asad b. Mūsā, \textit{Zuhd}, 55; Q14:21, 43:77.
\textsuperscript{1381} Shiblī, Ḥām, 157. The command khaṣaʿa in Q23:108 may amount to a curse; according to Ibn al-Athir it implies expulsion as one would kick out a dog; see \textit{Nihāyah}, 2:31, s.v. khaṣaʿa.
\textsuperscript{1382} Qalyūbī, \textit{Nawādir}, 138.
\end{flushright}
The version quoted by most texts is Muḥammad b. Ka'b al-Quraẓī’s five appeals; Ibn ʿAbbās lengthens this final dialogue by two lines and this is the version quoted here.\footnote{Quraẓī’s script is limited to Q40:11-12; 14:44; 35:37; 23:106-8. See Ghazzālī, Ḥyā’, 4:534; Ibn Rajab, 

1. Q32:12-13: “If you could see the evil-doers hanging down their heads saying, “O God, now that we have seen and heard send us back and we shall do good, now we are convinced.” God replies, “If it had been our will, We would certainly have given every soul its true guidance, but My words have come true: We will fill hell with jinn and mankind alike.”

2. Q40:11-12: “O God, twice you have caused us to be lifeless and twice you have brought us to life. Now that we acknowledge our sins, is there a way out?” God replies, “This is your predicament because when God alone was invoked you rejected Him and when others were associated with Him you believed in them; command belongs to God the sublime and majestic.”

3. Q43:77: “O Malik! Ask God to put an end to us!” (to which Mālik replies; “Here you shall remain!”)
4. Q14:44: (Sinners fearful with bent heads are unable to look up, with emptiness in their hearts they declare): “O God give us a little time; we shall answer your call and follow the messengers.” God replies, “Did you not swear in the past that your power had no end?”

5. Q35:37: As they call out, “O God let us out and we will do righteous deeds not what we did before,” God replies, “Did we not give you a life long enough to take warning if you were going to; a messenger came to you, now taste the result of your deeds for evil-doers have no supporters.”

6. Q23:106-8: “O God wretchedness has overcome us and we went astray; O God release us and if we go back to our old ways then we would truly be transgressors.” God replies, “Begone! Speech is denied to you!”

The command to shut up comprises the last words uttered in Jahannam. Scholars gave much thought to the subsequent state of speechlessness. Muteness, Ghazzālī surmised, can only signal extreme pain (wa-dhālika ghāyat shiddat al-'adhāb).

Zamakhshārī attributed the long silences in the above exchanges to overwhelming despair. In Arabic muteness is equated with isolation; Anbārī notes that abkam alludes both to being dumb (al-abkam al-
akhras) and to suffering from impaired cognition (al-maslūb al-fu‘ād alladīh lā ya‘ī shay‘an wa-lā yafhamuhu). With language absent, hell will reverberate with the sounds of barking and howling (‘uwā’) compared in pitch to that of dogs and wolves. We have a foreshadowing of this conclusion when women wailers (al-nā‘īḥāt) line up by the gates of hell barking as sinners file in. Excessive crying (al-bukā’ al-shadīd) or screaming (al-ṣiyāḥ al-shadīd) remains the only comfort (rāḥah). The fact that sound becomes cacophonous brings us back to the question of language in hell. Was the choice of Hindi or Turkish because their sounds resemble, to a native speaker of Arabic, a cacophony of incomprehensible speech? The Qur‘ān, as Ibn al-Jawzī notes, correlates mouths to speech (kalām) — the defaced sinner whose nose and mouth fuse into one slab of flesh reflects the horror of a world without words.

The sounds of hell — which the Qur‘ān describes as shahīq and zafīr — take over. Scholars pondered the source; Ibn al-Mubārak attributes zafīr to

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1387 Anbārī, Zāhir, 1:277.
1388 Majlisi, Biḥār, 8:821; Ibn al-Athīr, Nihāyah, 3:324, s.v. ‘uwā’. The image of hell's howling is attributed to Ḥārithah b. Mālik al-Anṣārī who related to the Prophet a dream in which he heard ‘uwā’ ahl al-nār. A man who desecrated the grave of al-Hasan b. ‘Alī was said to have gone mad and begun barking like a dog. Sounds of howling continued to be heard from his grave; see Suyūṭī, Sharḥ al-ṣudūr, 72.
1389 Samarqandi, Qurrah, 32-3.
1390 Dinawari, Mujālasah, 1:347; Anbārī, Zāhir, 1:137.
1391 Ibn al-Jawzī, Ashbāh, 94-5, s.v. alwāḥ; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Ṣifat al-nār, 73, 157. The erosion of facial features, especially the eyes, is referred to in the Qur‘ān as ṭams; see Ibn Qutaybah, Gharīb, 198; also Q4:47, 36:66, 54:37.
the sound of flames (zafîr al-lahab) and shahiq to the crying of sinners.\textsuperscript{1393}

Others relate both sounds to the endless cycles of sinners blasted upwards: zafîr is when they are thrown up and shahiq is when they are sucked down. Ibn Mas'ûd believed that zafîr is the muffled sound of sinners locked in the coffins that line the lowest level.\textsuperscript{1394} For Qatādah infernal noise resembled a donkey's bray: zafîr is how it starts and shahiq when it ends!\textsuperscript{1395} Râzî adds a few specifications of his own: zafîr is the louder because it is the breath trapped in the chest from intense weeping while shahiq is a wailing pitch brought about by calamity and sorrow (al-kurbah wal-ḥuzn). Breathing under such extreme conditions of misery (karb shâdid wa-ghamm 'âzîm) is no ordinary act. The terrified soul scampers and takes refuge in the heart, increasing the body's temperature so that zafîr is the inhalation of air to alleviate the heat and shahiq its exhalation.\textsuperscript{1396} In this post-linguistic world, Jahannam is engulfed in blackness, and the only sign of life is the laborious breathing of its inhabitants indistinguishable from the sound of flames.\textsuperscript{1397}

I would like to conclude with a modern follow-up of this stage of the infernal narrative. In a fable entitled “The Message of Forgiveness”, Abdelfattah

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\textsuperscript{1393} Ibn al-Mubârak, Zuhd, 96-7.
\textsuperscript{1394} Muqâtil, Tafsîr, 457 to Q21:100; see also Ğabarî, Jâmi', 115-17 to Q11:106-7; Ibn Kathîr, Tafsîr, 3:577-8; Zamakhsharî, al-Kashshaf, 2:430-1.
\textsuperscript{1395} Al-Ḍâhîkhâk, Tafsîr, 1:454; 'Aynî, 'Umdah, 15:162. Braying is also associated with women wailers standing on the edge of hell; 'Idwî, Mashâriq, 39-40.
\textsuperscript{1396} Râzî, Mafâtîh, 5:134.
\textsuperscript{1397} fa-idhâ sârû fi hawṣalatîhâ šahalat bihim wa-šahâlû bihâ shahiqat bihim wa-shahiqû bihâ wa-zafarat bihim wa-zafarû bihâ; see Majlisî, Bihâr, 7:127.
Kilito observes that sinners have nothing to read. They overcome their deprivation by sharing their šuḥuf, which the angel had set down. With confidentiality an issue and wishing to maintain anonymity sinners decide among themselves that, like the editors of Wikileaks, they will tear off the first page of their šuḥuf and share their material without anxiety. The question Kilito asks goes to the heart of alienation: what if the day comes when one has the desire to re-read one’s own book? In this anonymous mountain of šuḥuf, how would one repossess one’s own narrative? “In the interval, oblivion will have worked its ravages on their minds, and ineluctably there will come a day when they will be incapable of recognizing their book, of recognizing themselves.”

VI. Community in the Afterlife:

The qiyāmah, marked as yawm al-ḥāzāb, declares the winners to be ḥizb Allāh who, on seeing the fate of the other ḥāzāb, affirm that God has been true to His promises. Two communities are born: the winners (aṣḥāb al-jannah, aṣḥāb al-maymanah, aṣḥāb al-yamin) and the losers (aṣḥāb al-nār, aṣḥāb al-ḥāǧīm, aṣḥāb al-sāʾīr, aṣḥāb al-mashʿamah, aṣḥāb al-shimāl). A sacrificial

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ritual, referred to in the texts as *dhabḥ al-mawt*, inaugurates eternity when death in the form of a white ram (*kabsh amlaḥ*) is slaughtered between heaven and hell. A *munādī* declares the news (*khulūd wa-lā mawt ba’dahu*), at which the inhabitants of both domains experience either the deepest regret or the utmost jubilation.\(^{1402}\)

Community is central to the Muslim afterlife; when the Qur’ān designates the inhabitants of paradise as the inheritors (*al-wārithūn*), the counterparts are the disinherited.\(^{1403}\) Only true believers cross the finish line; *ḥadīth* recounts the Prophet’s bewilderment at the *ḥawḍ* when members of his community are dragged away — how could he have known how far they deviated from the *sunnah* after his death?\(^ {1404}\) Those pushed away from the fold are *ahl al-ahwāḥ* — seventy *firqas* of all stripes and hues.\(^ {1405}\) The Shī‘ites, on the other hand, have no ambiguity as to the identity of the disinherited. The boundaries are clear: whoever dies without recognizing or contracting a *bay‘ah* with his Imām dies a Jāhili death (*mītah jāhiliyyah*).\(^ {1406}\) At the *ḥawḍ*, ‘Alī stands as the triumphant claimant of his inheritance when along with the Prophet, he gives out water and


\(^{1403}\) Q23:10.


\(^{1406}\) Shahrastānī, *Milāl*, 82.
blocks his enemies (emphasis added) from gaining access to the āwād.1407 ‘Alī is šāhib al-a’rāf, and whoever had rejected (ankara) him in this world is summarily dragged away.1408 Entire levels of Jahannam are blocked out for the enemies of the Shi’ite community — Abū Bakr (Zurayq), ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (Ḫabtar), Mu‘āwiyyah, ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, ‘Ā‘ishah and others.1409 The same can be said about the Khawārij who denounced the elite promised paradise by the Prophet: ‘Alī, ‘Uthmān, Ṭalḥa, Zubayr, ‘Ā‘ishah and ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās.1410

The inhabitants of Jahannam have not only forfeited their own people but, more importantly, their paradisiacal rights. Thus to the victor go the spoils; believers acquire the homes (and/or the wives) of those banished to hell.1411 Sinners, as we have seen in their exchange with believers, will be able to survey their forfeited assets,1412 and deprivation, in the opinion of Ghazzālī, is the essence of punishment.1413 With no sense of community, Jahannam is made up of a wretched lot (ashqiyyā)1414 existing in a cantankerous atmosphere.1415 So

1407 Q67:27 frames this piece; see Majlisi, Biḥār, 31:480.
1408 Ayyāshī, Tafsīr, 2:17-18. ‘Alī is šāhib al-mīsam, possessor of the branding iron, with which he brands both the believer and the kāfīr; see Jazā’irī, Qiṣaṣ, 8; Thābit b. Dīnār al-Thumālī, Tafsīr, 169 to Q7:46.
1410 Shahrastānī, Milal, 52.
1411 For the reverse — that those in hell inheriting the homes of those sent to paradise — see Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, 18:5-6; Majlisi, Biḥār, 8:90-1; Qurṭubi, Jāmi’, 15:242-43; Tadhkirah, 1:525.
1412 Qurṭubi, Tadhkirah, 525; Majlisi, Biḥār, 8:91, 125-6.
1413 Ghazzālī, lḥyā’, 4:496 to Q34:54.
overwhelming are the infernal ordeals that each sinner will come to believe that hell exists solely for his own punishment.\textsuperscript{1416} More importantly, a disconnect between the two communities emerges as the inheritors, wrapped up in their pleasure, are unable to spare a thought for the misfortunes of relatives in hell. If one is curious, a view of boiling skulls can be accessed through a window — such wretchedness will, no doubt, heighten an appreciation of one’s good fortune!\textsuperscript{1417} Jahannam had altered features rendering sinners unrecongizable to their families, thus driving their estrangement further.\textsuperscript{1418} Paradise and hell are on different time zones; when the Prophet was asked where hell is in relation to paradise, he rhetorically countered by asking where the night is when the day comes.\textsuperscript{1419} Separation between the two communities appears to be final and is beautifully captured in a wa’āẓ addressed to the caliph ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz — who in paradise, he is asked, would be able to help him if he entered hell, and who in hell could ever harm him if he found himself in paradise? At this ‘Umar wept.\textsuperscript{1420}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{1418} \textit{wa-lawlā anna Allāh ‘arrafahu ‘a’zāh lamā ‘arrafahu la-qad ṭaghāyyyara wajhuhu wa-lawnuhu wa-ṭhayyara al-adhāb ashadd ṭaghīrīm}; see Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, \textit{Ḥādi}, 244.
\bibitem{1419} Suyūṭī, \textit{Khaṣṣā’is}, 2:132.
\end{thebibliography}
VII. Jahannam Celebrities

Jahannam can boast its cast of local celebrities. Among the A-list we find the pagan ‘Amr b. Luḥayy, two prominent enemies of the Prophet (Abū Lahab and Abū Jahl), his loyal but pagan uncle Abū Ṭālib and, from the Umayyad period, some would include, the infamous al-Ḥajjāj. Drawn primarily from ḥadīth, the relative shortness of this list can be attributed to a prophetic prohibition against denouncing Muslims as unbelievers. Those engaged in vilifying members of their community lose moral standing in the qiyyāmah.\(^{1421}\) The exception, according to scholars, lies in the clear-cut cases of kufr such as the pagan ‘Amr b. Luḥayy and, with a few exceptions, with those whose bid'ah or fisq turns Muslims away from the sunnah. Muʿāwiyah b. Abī Sufyān, in the opinion of Ibn Taymiyyah, is a ṣaḥābī off-limits to laʾn.\(^{1422}\) Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī went further to bar the non-ḥarbī kāfir and Yazīd b. Muʿāwiyah from malediction. It is one thing to curse a general category such as the kāfirūn or a collective (the Khawārij or usurers) but a firm line is drawn in the case of individuals.\(^{1423}\) The Sunnī mainstream position would come to adopt the Murjiʿī line in that as long as the individual did not desert his faith laʾn is not applicable. The Muʿtazilah who regarded the fāsiq as a deserter maintained that he was deserving of laʾn. Ibn Ḥazm noted the tendency to pair denounced groups (ahl al-ahwā) with different


\(^{1422}\) Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Fatāwā, 4:216-17; also Nawawī, Adhkār, 126-7.

faiths (*milal*) — the Qadarîs are described as the Zoroastrians of this *ummah* or the Râfiqîs as the Christians and so on.\(^{1424}\) A Jahmî who slandered Abû Bakr and ‘Umar was seen in a dream naked in hell alongside the Christians.\(^{1425}\) The Prophet’s alleged depiction of the pre-Islamic poet Imru’ al-Qays as carrying the banner of the poets (*liwā’ al-shu’arā*) and leading them into hell can explain the license Ma’arrî took in populating al-Ghufrān’s Jahannam with poets of his choosing.\(^{1426}\)

A. ‘Amr b. Luḥayy

In a vision, the Prophet sees ‘Amr b. Luḥayy, the legendary chief of the Banû Khuzâ’ah, dragging his intestines (*quṣbahu*) in hell.\(^{1427}\) ‘Amr b. Luḥayy is known for single-handedly corrupting the Abrahamic faith by being the first to introduce *aṣnām*, idols of carved stone, into Arabia, particularly that of Hubal. He is also known for initiating pagan rituals as well as the practice of *azlām* or divination with arrows.\(^{1428}\) The image of a sinner dragging his insides in hell predates canonized *ḥadîth* and has been seen in Asad b. Mūsâ’s *Zuhd.*\(^{1429}\)

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\(^{1424}\) Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 88. Due to its complexity, it is impossible to do justice to the issue of *takfîr*. With *nilâq* being called *al-shirk al-asghar*, what should the position of the *munâfiq* be? Having been monotheists (*muwaḥḥidūn*) at the time of the Prophet, their *takfîr* is related to their *kabâ’îr* not their *shirk*; *ibid.*, 58.


\(^{1429}\) Asad b. Mûsâ assigns this image to the sinner who fails to uphold ritual purity; see *Zuhd*, 64.
Hadith also applies it to a man who once robbed pilgrims.\textsuperscript{1430} Thus the motif is not original nor is it specifically tailored to ‘Amr b. Luḥayy. As we will see, it is recycled and has been applied to al-Ḥajjāj and to ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān.

B. Abū Ṭālib:

Our first contemporary of the Prophet on hell’s celebrity list is his uncle Abū Ṭālib who, in the Sunnī view, died without converting to Islam. A man asks the Prophet whether the good deeds of their fathers who died in the Jāhiliyyah would benefit them in the afterlife. Muḥammad replies that all their fathers are in hell but that the good deeds would lessen their torment.\textsuperscript{1431} As we will see in the next chapter, one of the Prophet’s five shafā’ahs involves upgrading Abū Ṭālib from the bottom of hell (al-darak al-asfah) to a place where he can stand only ankle deep in fire (ḏiḥdāh min nān).\textsuperscript{1432} Another variant depicts Muḥammad’s uncle with a boiling brain.\textsuperscript{1433} Again, this motif pre-dates canonized hadith; in Asad b. Mūsā’s Zuhd a (nameless) sinner steps into a pair of infernal slippers causing his brain to percolate, his ears and gums to smoke, his lips to blaze and his intestines to collapse onto his feet.\textsuperscript{1434} Q9:113 was revealed when Muslims

\textsuperscript{1430} Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, 3:318.
\textsuperscript{1431} Muqātil, Tafsīr, 4:51-2 to Q47:34; Ibn Sa’d, Ṭabaqāt, 1:141, 77-8; Albānī, Aḥkām al-janā’iz, 198.
\textsuperscript{1433} Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, Musnad, 1: 206, 207, 210; 3:8-9; 30, 35; Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, 2:209.
\textsuperscript{1434} Asad b. Mūsā, Zuhd, 56-7.
saw the Prophet pray for forgiveness for Abū Ṭālib after his death and wanted to do the same for their polytheist kinsmen. Ibn ‘Abbās explains that the prohibition against asking for divine forgiveness in the case of polytheists (mushrikūn) is permitted (jā‘iz) as long as they are alive since istighfār implies a hope in their conversion. Death marks the cut-off point to reaching out to them.\footnote{Qurṭubī, \textit{Jāmi‘}, 8:272-4 and Ibn al-Jawzī, \textit{Zād al-masīr}, 3:507-8 to to Q9:113.} Predictably, the afterlife of the Prophet’s uncle was politicized; the ‘Abbāsids found it to their benefit to emphasize Abū Ṭālib’s punishment in order to contest the impressive martyrology of the Muṭṭalib clan.\footnote{Ibn ‘Abbās suffered from blindness at the end of his life which frames the following exchange between him and Mu‘āwiyah who told him: \textit{antum yā bani Hāshim tuṣābūn fi abṣārīkum fa-qāla lahu Ibn ‘Abbās wa-antum yā bani Umayyah tuṣābūn fi baṣā‘irakum; abṣār refers to eyesight and baṣā‘ir to insight; see Ibn ‘Āṣim al-Andalusī, \textit{Ḥadā‘iq}, 47.} That Abū Ṭālib was destined to suffer regardless of his service to Islam had Shi‘ites, in turn, highlight the Prophet’s \textit{shafā‘ah} that spared him from a worse fate.\footnote{Montgomery Watt, “Abū Ṭālib,” \textit{EJ1}:152-3; Fred McGraw Donner, “The Death of Abū Ṭālib” in \textit{Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope}, ed. by John H. Marks and Robert M. Good (Guilder, Conn.: Four Quarters Pub. Co., 987), 239-40.}

Much ambiguity exists with regard to how the early Muslim community handled its recent pagan past.\footnote{For an excellent review based on Qur‘ān see Patricia Crone, “The Quranic Mushrikūn and the resurrection (Part I),” \textit{BSOAS}, 75, 3 (2012): 445-72.} We have conflicting reports on whether ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb imposed the \textit{ḥadd} for slander (\textit{qadḥf}) in the case of a man who insulted another’s mother who had died in the Jāhiliyyah.\footnote{\textit{Ṣan‘ā‘nī, Muṣḥannaf}, 7:435-6.} There are also cases of good pagans; the Prophet, for example, prohibited the cursing of As’ad al-Ḥimyarī who was the first to outfit the Ka‘bah with its \textit{kiswa}h or covering.
Another is ‘Abd Allāh b. Jud‘ān acclaimed for his generosity to guests, the old and the poor; and again the Prophet remained unequivocal in that such generosity would prove worthless as long as he had never asked God to forgive his sins for the impending yawm al-dīn.\textsuperscript{1440}

The issue closest to home pertains to the Prophet’s parents, both of whom died long before his calling. Q9:113 is a clear injunction that the Prophet and his followers should not request clemency for the mushrikūn. Muḥammad was given permission to visit his mother’s grave only with this condition in mind.\textsuperscript{1441} Later the issue of the Prophet’s parents came to be known as the mas‘alat al-wālidayn, and Ibn al-Jawzī quotes the Prophet declaring himself dissociated (barī’) from Āminah in the same way that Abraham did from his father. In his Mawḍū‘āt, Ibn al-Jawzī cites a forged ḥadīth where during the mi‘rāj Muḥammad’s parents are resurrected giving him the opportunity to invite them to the faith and thus securing their release from Jahannam.\textsuperscript{1442} Texts do not explain why the exemption of the ahl al-fatrah did not include the Prophet’s parents.\textsuperscript{1443} Popular stories extend such post-mortem conversions to the mothers of the Prophet’s


\textsuperscript{1442} Ibn al-Jawzī, Munṭazam, 3:250-1, Mawḍū‘āt, 1:345-6. Suyūṭī composed a tract on the Prophet’s parents and one version is included in his fatāwā; see Ḥāwī, 2:202-33. See also Qurtūbī, Jāmī‘, 14:339 to Q35:22 and Rāzī, Mafātīḥ, 3:624 to Q9:113-14. Exegetes interpret the istighfār of Abraham as inviting his parents to the faith.

\textsuperscript{1443} Asad b. Mūsā includes a category of ahl al-fatrah and this will be discussed at greater length in the next chapter; see Zuhd, 88.
Companions. In one, Muḥammad successfully converts Abū Bakr’s mother during her sleep so that she awakens with the _shahādah_ on her lips.\(^{1444}\) It should come as no surprise that modern Wahhābī _fatāwā_ on funerary practices adhere to the strictest guidelines — any visitation to the graves of _kuffār_ is solely for reflection ( _itti‘āz_ ) and contemplation on their ongoing punishments ( _wa-tadhakkur mā huwa fīhi min ‘adhāb_ ).\(^{1445}\)

C. Abū Jahl

The afterlife of Abū Jahl who, as we have seen, mocked the Prophet’s description of the _zaqqūm_ of Q44:43, has a different context. Several reports mention sightings amid pre-Islamic graves of a man emerging in chains, ablaze and thirsty. Texts would come to embellish his humiliation at death, the whipping marks on his shoulders having been administered by angels ( _darb al-malā‘īkah_ ).\(^{1446}\) The motif is recycled and, in some versions, the same “apparition” is said to belong to another who failed to honor the codes of generosity in the Jāhiliyyah.\(^{1447}\) The Shi‘ites also apply this image to Mu‘āwiyah’s afterlife.\(^{1448}\)

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1444 wa-da‘ā [Muḥammad] lahā fa-qāl ba‘d man kāna ḥādiran wa-llāhi la-qad sami‘nāhā tanṭuq bi ‘l-shahādah wa-kalimat al-ikhlāṣ wa-hiya nā‘imah; the text does not explain why Abū Bakr’s mother had to be asleep to be converted but it also notes that stories of this nature are legion; see Hurayfish, _al-Rawḍ al-fā‘iq_, 3-4.


Abū Lahab and his wife are Jahannam’s proverbial loosers.\textsuperscript{1449} The *kunyah* that alludes to a natural ruddiness\textsuperscript{1450} belongs to ‘Abd al-‘Uzzā Ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, an uncle of the Prophet, who along with his wife, is the subject of a Qur’ānic *sūrah* devoted to their malediction.\textsuperscript{1451} Exegetes discuss the nature of the loss (*khusrān*) implied in the strong Qur’ānic wording of the curse (*tabbat*) without offering any illustrations to his condition in hell. Abū Lahab was an outspoken opponent who had little patience for Muḥammad’s warnings.\textsuperscript{1452} That he is paired with his wife, “the wood carrier”, could indicate — in the opinion of Ibn Kathīr — that she will be actively involved in feeding the flames that burn him. Logging all that wood would explain the usefulness of that rope!\textsuperscript{1453}

### D. Abū Lahab and his wife Umm Jamīl bint Ḥarb

However, two dreams of Abū Lahab reveal part of his condition in the *barzakh*. His manumission of a slave woman, Thuwaybah (never short on symbolism here — the name is a diminutive of *thawāb* which means the reward

\textsuperscript{1449} As in the phrase *atabb min Abī Lahab* and *akhsar min ḥammālat al-ḥatab*; see ‘Askarī, *Jamhurat al-amthāl*, 1:285, 431; and see Montgomery Watt, “Abū Lahab,” *EI* 2:136-7.
\textsuperscript{1450} *li-anna wajnatayhi kānatā ḥamrāwayn ka-annāmā yaltahib minhumā al-nār*; see Muqāṭil, *Tafsīr*, 4:903. Qurṭubī cites four reasons for the use of the *kunyah*: that the book of God does not include the name of a single idol and Abū Lahab’s name is ‘Abd al-‘Uzzā; that a person is better known by his *kunyah*; that a name is always more prestigious (e.g. *Allāh ta’ālā yusammā wa-lā yukannā*) and therefore a *kunyah* is an explicit put down; and finally that it should be understood to indicate an association (*nasab*) between Abū Lahab and hellfire; see *Jāmi’* 24:236-7; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 4:399.
\textsuperscript{1451} Q111:1-5.
\textsuperscript{1452} The Prophet, as a *nadhir*, calls to his closest of kin to the assembly of Mecca to warn them of God’s punishment, at which Abū Lahab admonishes him saying *tabban laka sā’ir al-yawm a-lihādā da’awtanā?*; see Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’*, 30:336-7.
\textsuperscript{1453} Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 4:400.
for a good deed) — on the day of the Prophet’s birth had earned him a thimble measure of water as a reward. In another dream we are told that he was given a respite every Monday — the day the Prophet was born — on account of this charitable act.

Umm Jamil bint Ḥarb, ḥammālat al-ḥaṭab, is the sister of Abū Sufyān. In Muqātil’s reading, Umm Jamil set out to (unsuccessfully) attack Muḥammad after the first verses of Q111 were revealed. As mentioned in chapter one, the “wood” is interpreted as an allusion to gossiping and exegetes felt free to embellish her image with other deficiencies such as her being one-eyed (‘awrā) and stingy (bakhila). The infernal rope (ḥabl min masad) is said to replace a beautiful necklace (qilādah). Because of the verse’s focus on the neck, tafsīr threads the infernal silsilah through Umm Jamil’s body to end up coiled around her neck. Precisely how the Sufyānids dealt with the burden of such a damning legacy can be seen in the following anecdote. Mu‘āwiyah b. Abī Sufyān was said to have hailed his cousin ‘Uqayl saying “Here comes ‘Uqayl and that uncle of his Abū Lahab!” to which his cousin retorted, “And there is Mu‘āwiyah

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1454 Ibn Sa’d, Ṭabaqāt, 1:67; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Manāmāt, 124, 154; Suyūṭī, Khaṣṣā’iṣ, 1:518; Ibn al-Jawzī, Ṣifah, 1:34.
1455 Ghazzālī, Ilḥā‘; 4:507. Thirst is a theme that runs through all early barzakh dreams and apparitions; see Abū Jahl and the story of the girl whose hand was paralyzed for attempting to give water to her thirsty mother in hell; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Kitāb mujābī al-dawh, 59-60.
1456 Muqātil, Tafsīr, 4:905.
1457 Qurṭubī, Jāmi‘, 24: 239, 240, 242; see also Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, 3:388-9; Ibn al-Athīr, Niḥāyah, s.v. ‘unuq, 3:312.
This anecdote best illustrates Mu’āwiyah b. Abī Sufyān’s ḥilm in accepting what one cannot change especially when documented in the Qur’ān! A modern footnote to these proverbial loosers was noted in a London subway near Hyde Park in the late 1970’s where a graffito attacking the Ba’athist regime read: “Every Ba’athist man is Abū Lahab, every Ba’athist woman is a carrier of firewood.”

E. The Umayyads

During the reign of the ‘Abbāsid al-Saffāh (r. 749/131-754/136), the graves of the Umayyads were desecrated. The body of Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 724/105-743/125) was beaten and burned. With the exception of the pious Marwānid ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, the afterlives of the Umayyads and their governors are gleamed from grave lore. Many criticized Mu’āwiyah; al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī mentioned four traits (khiṣāl) any one of which would have deemed to be a grave sin (mūbiqāt) that included appointing the ignorant or foolish (ṣufahā’) such as the drunkard Yazid and killing the companion Ḥujr b. ‘Adī in 671/51. Other Muslims disapproved of his decree to curse ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib from Friday
pulpits. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), the sixth Shi'i Imām, maintained that Mu'āwiyyah, *al-shāmī al-mal'ūn*, would be the first to receive the scroll in his left hand. Shī'ites allotted *Laẓā, Saqar* and *al-Hāwiyyah* as exclusive Banū Umayyah portals (*huwa lahum khāṣṣah lā yuzāhimuhum fihi aḥad*) and another gate (unspecified) — the largest and the hottest portal — for those who hate, fight and humiliate (*mubghiḍūnā wa-muḥāribūnā wa-khādhilūnā*) the *ahl al-bayt.* Shī'ite texts also cite Q17:60 as endorsement; the accursed tree is no other than the Banū Umayyah line. In Sunnī texts Umayyad graves were said to be filled with corpses whose heads were turned against the *qiblah* — al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik was seen in the grave with his knees tied to his neck. A snake was reportedly eating through the skull of the governor ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād, responsible for the killing of Ḥusayn.

Scholars as late Ibn al-Jawzī's time debated on whether it was permissible to curse someone like Yazid Ibn Mu'āwiyyah. Although it might be best to remain

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1463 ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭālib will be the first to receive the scroll in his right hand. One opinion suggests that the *ašḥāb al-yamin* will be Muslim children; see Isaac Hasson, “Left and Right Hand,” *EQ* 3:176-80; also Majlisī, *Bihār*, 8:518.
1464 Ibid., 31:443.
1465 Ibid., 31:438; for a description of ‘Umar’s character, see *ibid.*, 31:211-12.
1466 Suyūṭī, *Sharḥ al-ṣudūr*, 72. The fall of the mighty is a favorite theme in *adab* as when the head of the last Umayyad, Marwān b. Muḥammad, was brought in, and a cat pulled out (*qala‘a*) his tongue and started gnawing it, when someone commented *law lam yurinā al-dahr min ʿajāʾibih illā īlā lisan Marwān fī fam hirrah la-kafānā*; see Thaʿalībī, *Laṭā‘if*, 145.
silent about his fate in the afterlife, Ibn al-Jawzī, citing precedence, answers in the affirmative. Ibn Ḥanbal cursed the Muʿtazilah and one of the Jahmī groups (al-Waqīfah) and supported al-Ḥasan al- Баšrī’ s cursing of al-Ḥajjāj arguing that he was an evil man (wa-Aḥmad yaqūl al-Ḥajjāj rajul sū). In Ibn al-Jawzī’s opinion Yazīd’s political legitimacy that boasted the bay’ah of five of the Companions was invalid since it was given in fear. A rebuttal to these arguments was written by Shams al-Dīn Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 953/1546) who, in placing Yazīd within the frame of the first century, labeled by the Prophet as the best of times, should grandfather the caliph. Ibn Ṭūlūn cites a dream where Yazīd denies having killed al-Ḥusayn and informs the dreamer that God has forgiven him and granted him paradise.

F. Al-Ḥajjāj:

Al-Ḥajjāj becomes a literary trope of the insolent, brash, unapologetic, ruthless governor. Two men argued about his status: one said al-Ḥajjāj was a kāfir, the other that he was a muʾmin ḍāll (erring believer). Al-Sha’bī (d. 103/721)


1469 Yazīd lacked the qualifications for ruling (shurūṭ al-imāmah) which were manifest in al-Ḥusayn and legal scholars have agreed that the wilāyat al-mafḍūl should never supercede that of the fāḍil. On citing the generosity of Yazīd, Ibn al-Jawzī retorts that money paid in order to prevent people from discrediting him (kāna yaʿṭī al-nās li-yakutū ʿanhu); ibid., 77-8; 88-9.


1471 Al-Ḥajjāj often boasted how he was a blight (naqmah) on the people of Iraq or that he was one of the wicked Thamūd; see Balkhi, Bad, 6:27-8; Ibn Abī al-Dunya, ʿUqūbāt, 50; Ishraf, 145.
settled the argument by saying that al-Ḥajjāj was in fact a believer (*muʾmin*) in *al-jibt wal-ṭāghūt* and a *kāfir* in God! The ḥadīth transmittor Ḥassān b. Hishām (d. 145/762) said that if every nation on Judgment Day produced its most evil person, al-Ḥajjāj would exceed all their evil combined. The irresolution about al-Ḥajjāj’s fate in the afterlife is illustrated in the anecdote where his former scribe is asked by the caliph Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 715-717) if he thought his dead master, al-Ḥajjāj, was at the bottom of hell or still winding his way down. The scribe answered that at the *qiyyāmah*, al-Ḥajjāj will find himself between the addressee’s brother (al-Walīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik) and father (‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān), so it is up to the caliph to place him wherever he wants!

Yet some accounts depict a penitent al-Ḥajjāj who on his deathbed would plead for God’s forgiveness uncertain as to whether it would be granted. Shiʿite lore, on the other hand, describes screams heard from al-Ḥajjāj’s grave and how in dreams (as a reminder of his character) he looses none of his insolence and brashness. Two images describe him in hell; the first is the more conventional where al-Ḥajjāj is paired with ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān as both

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1472 *al-Ḥajjāj* *muʾmin bīl-jībt wa-l-ṭāghūt kāfir bī-llāh aʿzīm*; see *ibid.*, 52; Ibn ‘Āṣim, Ḥadāʾiq, 72.
1473 *thumma akhrājna al-Ḥajjāj la-ghalabnāhūm*; see Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm Yazīd*, 82-3.
1474 Ibn ‘Āṣim, Ḥadāʾiq, 51.
lug their intestines around.\textsuperscript{1477} In the second dream 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azîz passes by a malodorous corpse and is told to kick it to find out whose it is. Al-Ḥajjâj declares that he has been killed so many times for all those he had slaughtered in his lifetime.\textsuperscript{1478} A variant ends with al-Ḥajjâj anxiously awaiting God's verdict.\textsuperscript{1479}

G. Abū Muslim al-Khurasânî

The most unusual afterlife case involves the ‘Abbâsid governor Abû Muslim al-Khurasânî (d. 137/755). In a dream his victim Ibrâhîm al-Ṣâ‘îgh, who had challenged his authority as governor and was subsequently killed, relates seeing Abû Muslim being punished on a broiler (\textit{miqâlîh}) in hell. To authenticate this information, the dreamer is told that in other provinces of Khurasân, in Samarqand and Jûrjân, on that night someone else would have received the same vision.\textsuperscript{1480} Another version by Ibn ‘Asâkir portrays Yazid al-Nâhiwî, seated on a \textit{sarîr}, witnessesing the “frying” of Abû Muslim. The dreamer is told that a pious man (\textit{rajul şâliḥ}) had seen the dream which was also dreamt by others in

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\textsuperscript{1478} Ḥurayfîsh, \textit{Rawd}, 140-1; Suyûṭî, \textit{Sharḥ al-ṣudûr}, 121; Damîrî, \textit{Ḥayawân}, 1:242. For killing the šâhâbî Sa‘îd b. Jûbayr, al-Ḥajjâj experienced the pain of death seventyfold. Lore has it that whenever al-Ḥajjâj attempted to sleep, he would dream of Sa‘îd b. Jûbayr clutching his clothes; see ‘Askârî, \textit{Awâ’il}, 319.
\textsuperscript{1480} Ibn Abî al-Dunyâ, \textit{Manâmât}, 84; Suyûṭî, \textit{Sharḥ al-ṣudûr}, 121; also see Michael Cook, \textit{Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3. According to Sam‘ânî, Ibrâhîm’s tomb was known and visited centuries later in the city of Marw.
Balkh, Samarqand and Jurjān. This “livestream” special is peculiar in light of the cult-following Abū Muslim achieved after his death in the eastern provinces. Many Khurasānīs continued to revere Abū Muslim, denying that he had died and claiming that he would return as the mahdī. What better way to debunk Muslimī Khurramism than to depict Abū Muslim as being punished in hell and inform us that the vision was being simultaneously “broadcast” across the provinces where he had a solid following?

The gates of hell are perilous zones and various Muslim figures of authority are either shoving or pulling people away. Ḥudhayfah b. al-Yamān, who related a sizeable number of apocalyptic traditions, alludes to last minute du‘āt at the gates of hell and whoever responds to them is shoved in! Ka‘b al-Aḥbār alleged that ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb would be standing at one of the portals preventing people (al-nās) from dashing to their doom. The image of a Muslim leader at the gates of hell found its way into majālis al-wa‘ẓ; Shaqīq al-Balkhī in counseling Hārūn al-Rashīd regarding his immense responsibility as leader of his flock positions him at the gates of hell. The prototype of this

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1481 Suyūṭī, Shahr al-ṣudūr, 121.
1483 Isbābānī, Hīlyah, 1:272.
1484 Ibn Sa‘d, Tabaqāt, 3:240; Qurṭubī, Tadhkirah, 1:661; Sha‘rānī, Tadhkirah, 155; Suyūṭī, Tārīkh, 140.
1485 God has a lodging-place called Hell ... He has appointed you its doorkeeper, and has equipped you with three things — wealth, sword and whip. ‘With these three things,’ He commands, ‘ keep the people away from Hell ... If you do not these things, you will be the leader
image can be found in the parable where the Prophet compares his mission to that of a man standing by a fire unable to stop flies (firāsh) from falling into the flames.\textsuperscript{1486}

**VIII. Shī‘ite Enemies:**

As said earlier, Shī‘ites entertain no ambiguity on the fate of their adversaries. One cannot underestimate the emotive resonance the tragic deaths of the ahl al-bayt. Entire levels are blocked out for Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, Mu‘āwiya and ‘Ā’ishah not to mention the Banū Umayyah.\textsuperscript{1487} It is in the raj‘ah literature that we find the specifics. ‘Umar, referred to by his epithet Ḥabtar (fox), will be forced to climb the mountain of Ṣa‘ūdan. Made of brass, the surface melts to his knees each time he attempts to walk up the slopes. Assigned to Saqar, Ḥabtar is exposed for “all the people in the East and West” to witness his torment.\textsuperscript{1488}

*Barā‘ah* to mean disassociating from those who did not follow a group’s definition of sin was first practiced by the Kharijites who made it a doctrinal tenet after they dissociated from ‘Alī when he agreed to arbitration following the battle of Ṣiffin. The Imāmī doctrine of *barā‘ah* developed in stages; faith according to

\textsuperscript{1486} wa-antum tuflūn min yadī fa-taghibūnī taqtaḥīmūn fihi; see Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 4:1789; and various variants in Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 3:392, 2:244, 312; ‘Ayni, ‘Umdah, 23:76-7.

\textsuperscript{1487} Majlisī, *Bihār*, 8:285.


Ja’far al-Ṣādiq included the *walāya* to the Imām’s friends and the *adāwa* to or the *barā’ah* from his enemies. The list includes the first three caliphs, ‘Ā’ishah, those who have wronged the *ahl al-bayt*, those who have fought against ‘Alī in Siffin and Nahrawān, along with Mu‘āwiyyah, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, Abū Mūsā al-Ash’arī and his followers. The enemies of the *ahl al-bayt* were referred to as idols (*tawāghi*); al-Ṣādiq had the custom of cursing after every obligatory prayer four men (Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and Mu‘āwiyyah and four women (‘Ā’ishah, Ḥafṣah, Hind, and Umm al-Ḥakam who was Mu‘āwiyyah’s sister).¹⁴⁸⁹

Death scenes, like movie trailers, are previews of the afterlife. Those who conspired against ‘Alī after the Prophet’s death on *yawm al-saqīfah* glimpse with their last breaths the torments awaiting them.¹⁴⁹⁰ The dying ‘Umar — for added veracity this *khabar* is attributed to his son, ‘Abd Allāh — reveals the caliph’s premonition of finding himself trapped in an infernal coffin along with Abū Bakr and Mu‘ādh b. Jabal. In another such scene, ‘Umar wishes he had the gold (and silver) of the earth with which to ransom himself from the horrors he sees ahead.¹⁴⁹¹ A *khabar* attributed to ‘Alī reiterates the pairing of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar’s punishment in the tomb as taking place in the well of Barahūṭ in

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¹⁴⁹⁰ This scene is supposed to explain Q2:167; *ibid.*, 38.
¹⁴⁹¹ *ibid.*, 108-9; 112.
Another text alludes to inhabitants of cities at the edges of the world, east and west, who tirelessly curse Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.

Shi‘ite animosity toward the caliph ‘Umar finds its lively expression elsewhere. In a thorough article, Devin Stewart argues that the usage of the name ‘Umar in the radḥ genre or vulgar slanging match between women is a plausible remnant of Fātimid Egypt. Expressions such as yā ‘Umar or aḥḥa yā ‘Umar are used when the female performer challenges what is assumed to be an effeminate adversary. Stewart also notes that the term ‘umari in Iran and south Lebanon is derogative for “Sunni”. The festival of Umar-kushān in Iran reenacts Umar’s murder by Abū Lu’lu’ with participants taking a stab at a “Umar-cookie” filled with pomegranate syrup that represents his blood. Shi‘ite tradition exaggerated ‘Ali’s masculinity to offset the representation of ‘Umar as effeminate, a passive homosexual, a coward (gabān), a wimp or a sissy — hence the provocation that the radḥ is challenging.

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1492 Majlisī, Biḥār, 27:306; Mūsawī, Jazā‘a‘dā‘, 6305.
1493 There were many speculations on who inhabited the cities at the edge of the world; they were vanished peoples, the remnants of ‘Ād and Thamūd, or angels; see Wensinck, Ocean, 31-4; Mūsawī, Jazā‘a‘dā‘, 103.
1494 Radḥ is a woman’s reaction to feeling cheated, mocked or exploited where the recipient is usually a female neighbor. Often radḥ is part of an ongoing feud where the female performer accentuates the breasts, moves the hips, gathers the skirt and thrusts the pelvis forward indicating a sexual challenge. The closest English equivalent to aḥḥa yā ‘Umar is “f--k you!”; as an exclamation the word aḥḥa is understood as the sound uttered by women during sex; “Popular Shiism,” 45, 50.
1495 Ibid., 45-52.
IX: Conclusion

A glance at the power hierarchy in Jahannam would reveal an imprisoned community supervised by Mālik, the head guardian and his angels, the zabāniyah. Obedient warriors of God, the mission of these angels is to punish all who have transgressed His commands. Exegetes have compared them to prison wardens whose primary responsibility is vigilance; Mālik’s majlis is at the center of Jahannam connecting to everywhere. As we will see in the next chapter, no sinners get release without his consent. Backed with an arsenal of chains, manacles, batons and other subjugating paraphernalia, the zabāniyah enforce the punishments and humiliate their charges. An inventory of their tools and how they use them best illustrates their assignments.

The notion of sinners as an imprisoned and, to a greater extent, an enslaved population is the subtext that underlies an analysis of the power dynamics. In dreams, chains and manacles are explicit signifiers to the inhabitants of hell. It is with chains that the message of bondage is made clearest. It was suggested that the entire population of Jahannam could be fettered to the one long silsilah. The inability to stand upright captures the indignity and disgrace that lies at the heart of bondage. It is an arrangement, as Rāzī would point out, that would ensure that all experience a basic level of discomfort. As we have shown, bondage particularly humiliates women.
Helpless under chains, the zabāniyah slap, push, drag, curse, flog, and then there is the biting and spitting — gestures of revulsion and aggression.

There comes a time in Jahannam when no words will be spoken, signalling the futility of prayer. Scholars believed that the enormity of what lay ahead made sinners speak the truth. Ironically, it is the Qur’ān — the most truthful of texts — that provides us with a “livestream” (to use a neologism) of Jahannam’s discourse full of regret, hope, sorrow and blame. Desperate to escape their fate, sinners begin with bargaining. They acknowledge God’s justice, declare their faith and ask for a second chance. They also curse and blame. Silences are interpreted as moments of shock and awe. They lament then they despair. It is in their pleas for help to their relatives in paradise that sinners finally realize the extent of their alienation. The theme of loss, as we will see in the final chapter, stimulated the debates on the final status of Jahannam. Discourse in Jahannam does not deviate from Qur’ānic verse in sharp contrast to paradise where speech goes off the Qur’ānic rails. *Targhib* sets out to offer listeners excess beyond any scripted narrative whereas in *tarhib* no voice commands as authoritative a *wa’id* as that of the Almighty.

The final chapter reviews justice in the *qiyamah* and the debates on the status of the Muslim sinner. The power dynamics and the alienation of the Muslim sinner provide the background to questions such as: should the Muslim
sinner in hell be equated with an unbeliever? Should he be released and, if so, under what conditions? The *wa‘id* begins to offer a way out framing the release in terms of manumission and ransom. Without covering the stage of siege, the humiliation, the hopes and fears of Jahannam’s inmates, the initiative exhibited in the next step of the infernal narrative would not be fully appreciated.
Chapter Five: Justice and the Fate of Jahannam

I. Introduction

The ħisāb is a showcase for God’s justice. Its many itineraries attempt to work out the process of accountability. Given how little is in the Qur’ān as to how sinners end up in Jahannam, these versions are crucial to registering changes in the structure of “sentencing”. In this chapter I argue that a parallel exists between the evolution of the sinner’s identity as law-breaker, seen in chapter three, and the ħisāb’s judicial format. One must bear in mind that the structure for a legal “formatting” was in place; the Qur’ānic moral universe is framed as a covenant where Muslims are accountable and duty bound. The ħisāb’s master narrative would come to display a complex system of checks and balances. Some aspects such as the final status of Jahannam were debated as late as Ibn Taymiyyah’s time. Objections to this master narrative are relegated to the dissenter’s understanding of divine justice. As we will see, the Mu’tazilah had difficulties accepting the anthropomorphism of nutq al-jawāriḥ. Belief in the final judgement being one of tenets of Muslim creed, this chapter traces some developments in this master narrative as it relates to the fate of those ending up in Jahannam.

1497 Rāzī, Mafāṭīḥ, 7:364-6.
II. Mithaq: Boundaries and Obligations

A covenant (mithaq/‘ahd) between God and man frames the Qur’anic moral universe of reward and punishment. Although the Jews (banū Isrā‘īl) famously pledged one such oath, Q7:172 draws attention to an older covenant between God and Adam.1498 This primordial pledge, which Ṭabari calls al-mithaq al-awwal ‘alā al-fiṭrah, establishes the basis of taklif (obligation) and forms the primary impetus to any moral act.1499 A reciprocal logic guides the dynamics of this covenant: God’s generosity, manifested through His many blessings, institutes a claim on mankind which is repaid by acting according to the Almighty’s wishes.1500 Judgment Day is framed as the time when all, mankind and jinn alike, would be held accountable for any breach of this contract.1501

Within these parameters, disobedience is defined as any transgressive act that

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1499 Wadad al-Qadı argues the relevance of this verse to understanding the Qur’anic vision of human history. In Q7:172, the Verse of the Covenant, man promises God to worship Him alone. He would forget his promise and on the Day of Judgement would be judged in accordance with his compliance or lack thereof. In this light, the breach of monotheism is a major sin. Messengers are sent forth to remind men of the covenant. To the faithful, the prophets are bearers of good tidings and to those who refuse, they are stern warners. See “The Primordial Covenant and Human History in the Qur‘an,” Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 147 No. 4 (2003): 332-5; see also Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī’s distinction between mithaq and ‘ahd, Fatāwā, 44-5.
1500 Ḥādi ‘Abd al-Jabbār believed that a mukalla‘f, an adult of sound mind, could discern these obligations through reason. Gratitude for benefaction (shukr al-ni‘mah), abstaining from injustice, repaying debts or returning what has been entrusted to one’s custody are some examples. Whatever motivates a believer to fulfill the obligations of God’s taklif is a manifestation of lutf or divine assistance; see Heemskerk, Suffering, 144; 149.
challenges the boundaries of God (ḥudūd Allāh). The lessons of the Israelites were not lost on the Muslims; the people of Moses experienced much humiliation and wretchedness because they persisted in repeating their transgression (‘udwān).\(^{1502}\) The Qur’ān offers other examples such as arrogance (takabbur) which appropriates a divine prerogative for only God is Supreme (al-kabīr al-‘ālī) and Exalted (al-kabīr al-muta‘ālī); He alone possesses all pride (kibriyā) in the heavens and earth.\(^{1503}\) In this light, the Qur’ān depicts Pharaoh’s legendary arrogance as defiance (‘udwān) and usurpation (ẓulm).\(^{1504}\)

The absence in Islam (as in Judaism) of a doctrine comparable to that of original sin promotes the role of human agency. All deeds are judged according to their sincerity so that intention (niyyah) is elevated to a religious responsibility. Sinful thoughts, on the other hand, are not counted as long as the deed is not committed.\(^{1505}\) Repentance (tawbah) plays into the reciprocal logic of the mithaq;

\(^{1502}\) Q2:61, 3:112, 4:14, 5:78. In Q2:93 and 4:46 the Israelites twice say samīʼnā wa-ʼaṣaynā (we heard and disobeyed). The mithaq with the Banū Isrā’īl is referred to in Q2:63, 5:12, 70, see also U. Rubin, “Children of Israel,” 1:3037.

\(^{1503}\) Q45:37; al-kabīr al-‘ālī appears in Q4:34, 22:62, 31:30, 34:23, 40:12, whereas al-kabīr al-muta‘ālī is mentioned in Q13:9. See also the ḥadīth qudsī where God says al-‘izz izārī wal-kibriyā’ ridā’ī fa-man nāza’anī ʻadhhabtuḥu; see Mundhirī, Ṭarḥīb, 4:16.


\(^{1505}\) A ḥadīth maintains that the deeds of the following three will not be recorded ‘an al-nāʼim ḥattā yastayqīz wa-ʼan al-ṣabi ḥattā yablugh wa-ʼan al-majnūn ḥattā ya‘qil; see Dārīmī, Sunan, 2:255. A niyyah is a declaration by theperformer, audibly or mentally, that he/she is going to perform any of the religious duties (‘ibādāt) without this pronouncement these acts would be invalid (bāṭil). Lunatics, because they are incapable of pronouncing a niyyah, are not held accountable for their acts. Bukhārī begins his collection with the tradition innamā al-a’māl bi ʻl-niyyāt which translates as “deeds are rendered efficacious by their intention”; see Wensinck, “Niyya,” EF 8:66-7; Nasr Abū Zayd, “Intention,” EQ 2:549-51.
its etymology (t-w-b; to return) underscores the resumption (after a presumed withholding) of blessings to the sincere penitent, for God, when all is said and done, is the ultimate forgiver (al-tawwāb).1506 An error is not treated as a sin as long as one does not persist in repeating the act after becoming aware of its sinfulness.1507 This dialectic operates within a temporal framework; one of the apocalyptic signs, along with the sun rising from the West, is the closing of bāb al-tawbah (the door/gate of repentance). Needless to say, no tawbah will be accepted on Judgment Day; all one could hope for is forgiveness (maghfirah).1508

The terms of the primordial mithāq, however, would prove difficult to uphold; the Qur‘ān describes man as manipulative,1509 ungrateful, tyrannical,1510 hasty, weak and ignorant1511 — with such character defects, overstepping the boundaries of God was unavoidable.1512

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1506 Q66:8, 9:102, 39:53, 25:70-1. The Qur‘ān also uses awwaba in 17:25 and 50:32 with its sense of return to mean repentance. Tawbah is a process that is meant to be repeated in a Muslim’s life; see Uri Rubin, “Repentance and Penance,” EQ 4:427.

1507 It is for this reason that the idea of ikhlās al-niyyah acts as a safeguard from the seductions of Iblīs; see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, “Sin, Major and Minor,” 4:25. Šūfis delineated two types of repentance: when the masses (al-‘awāmm) sought repentance it was for forgiveness from infractions (dhunīb) while the tawbah of the elite (al-khawāṣṣ) was from temporary inattentiveness (ghaflah); see Qushayrī, Risālah, 11 and 61 for further delineations between tawbah, inābah and awbah.

1508 Q4:18 makes it clear that those who wait till the last minute will find that their tawbah will not be accepted. On the bāb al-tawbah, see Abū al-Shaykh, ‘Aẓamah, 286; Ibn al-Mubārak, Zuhd, 388.


1510 Q17:1, 3:34, 22:26.

1511 Q21:37, 4:28, 33:72.

1512 Q12:53.
Believers, as defined by the Qurʾān, are those who adhere to the creed of the one God and the day of resurrection.\textsuperscript{1513} The mithāq makes it clear that a Muslim is duty bound; Islam, like Judaism, is a religion of orthopraxy; a believer needs to find out what his duty is and do it.\textsuperscript{1514} The ṣūfī al-Faḍl al-Raqqāshī (d. 182/798) pragmatically boils it down to four basic points: know your God (an taʾrif a rabbaka); know what He will do to you (mā yaʾṣnaʿ bīka), what He wants of you (taʾrif mā arād minka) and how you can eliminate your sins (mā yūkhir yūk min dhunūbīka).\textsuperscript{1515} By the first half of the tenth century the great majority of Muslims had come to identify themselves as adherents of the sunnah, of a religion of law, duties and correct beliefs.\textsuperscript{1516} The first part of this chapter speaks to the first requirement — know your God — as the Qurʾān presents Him on Judgment Day. The second answers the question what happens to those who fail to meet their obligations.

\textsuperscript{1514} Christopher Melchert in his astute study of Ahmad ibn Hanbal makes this interesting comparison: “Whereas a Christian is likely to approach God as a forgiven sinner and a Hindu as a proud host, a Sunni Muslim goes to God as an obedient servant. The chief need is to find one’s duty and then to do it; that is, to elaborate and execute the law. I think this is the principal source of the personal dignity that is repeatedly identified as the distinguished characteristic of devout Muslims: they know their duty and do it, unlike hand-wringing Christians who continually lament their inability to live as they ought.” See Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006), 60.
\textsuperscript{1515} Dinawari, Mujālasah, 1:243.
\textsuperscript{1516} The groups Ibn Hanbal rejected in his Creed include the Murjiʿah, Qadariyyah, Muʿtazilah, Nuṣayriyyah, Jahmiyyah, Ṭaʾifah, Khawārij and Shuʿubiyyah; see Melchert, Ahmad, 89-93.
III. The *Qiyāmah* narrative:

A. The Court of Allāh: the Qur’ānic version

God is the one and only judge on the Day of Reckoning (*yawm al-dīn*).\(^{1517}\) With no power capable of repelling His judgment (*lā mu’aqqiba li-ḥukmiḥi*), He alone commands justice (*’adl*) and upholds fairness (*qā’iman bil-qist*).\(^{1518}\) An effective reckoner (*sarı’ al-ḥisāb*),\(^{1519}\) God’s judgment (*ḥukm Allāh*) is compared to the pre-Islamic version (*ḥukm al-jāhiliyyah*) and the Qurʾān rhetorically asks who could be fairer in judgment than God (*wa-man aḥsanu min Allāh ḥukman*).\(^{1520}\) All Muslim groups agree on the premise that divine justice is perfect and ideal; the Mu’tazilah, “the partisans of justice and oneness” (*ahl al-’adl wal-tawḥīd*), in upholding justice as one of their five principles, regarded it as an expression of the divine essence. Not only is God just, He can do no injustice.\(^{1521}\)

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\(^{1518}\) Q2:202, 13:41, 26:113, 16:90, 6:115, 3:18. Nowhere in the Qurʾān is God referred to as *al-’ādil*; Abūlātho lists *qist* as one of the *ad-dād* to mean either justice or tyranny; see *Aḍḍād*, 36-7. Bishr al-Marisi, a Hanafi theologian at the beginning of the third century *hijrī*, regarded the names and attributes given to God as *mustā‘ār*, “borrowed”, in that they were not coined by God but are transferred onto Him by man; see Josef Van Ess, “Verbal Inspiration? Language and revelation in classical Islamic theology,” in Stefan Wild (ed.), *The Qurʾān as Text* (Leiden, New York: E. J. Brill, 1996), 181; Gerhart Böwering, “God and his Attributes,” *EQ* 2:321-2.

\(^{1519}\) Q26:113, 13:41, 2:202. It was believed that Judgment Day would be over by noon in time for the people of paradise to be taking their afternoon naps in their new abode; see Sufyān al-Thawri, *Tafsir*, 186 to Q25:24; also Muqāṭil, *Ashbāḥ*, 176-7, s.v. *sarı*.

\(^{1520}\) Q5:50.

\(^{1521}\) Khadduri, *Islamic Conception*, 44-5.
The narrative of the *qiyāmah* is designed to make it clear that the *mithāq*’s terms attest to God’s sovereignty and man’s weakness. As party to the contract, God acts as the guarantor (*kafīl*) of the fulfillment of this covenant’s terms. God, this most just of arbitrators, is described in the Qur’ān as self-sufficient (*al-ghanī*), powerful (*al-qādir, al-qawi, al-jabbar, al-qahhār*) and with the ability to amass (*al-jāmi‘*) humanity on Judgment Day. He alone is the patron (*walī*) who protects (*yujīr*) and requires no protection (*wa-lā yujāru ‘alayhi*); believers (*awliyā‘*) need not fear. As a witness (*shāhid*), God is all knowing (*‘alīm*), all hearing (*samī‘*), all watching (*al-ḥāṣib*). Other verses emphasize the stealth with which God tracks down His enemies, mocking, deriding and eventually ignoring them in hell. God’s judgment (*qaḍā‘*), with the prerogative of pardon, testifies to His absolute power. Believers are exhorted to keep the faith, for the Almighty is forgiving (*al-ghāfīr*), oft-forgiver (*al-ghafūr*), all forgiving (*al-ghaffār*) and pardoner (*al-‘afuww*). In *zuhd* texts this last aspect is known as ḥusn al-ṣann bi-‘llāh in that these are attributes that would inspire hope for a favorable outcome.

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1522 Q7:172.
1523 Q16:91.
1527 Q7:182, 68:44, 7:99, 3:54, 2:15, 106, 9:79, 67. These verses are a sample of those where the terms *istihzā‘*, *makr*, and *sakhira* are used.
The Qur’anic *wa’id* is framed as a reminder (*tadhkirah*) of the inevitability of this appointment (*mī’ād*) and the perilous predicament of those in the wrong. The main points so far are straightforward: God rewards His faithful, idolatry nullifies good deeds, and on discovering (too late) that idols, intermediaries, wealth and offspring offer no protection, the polytheists (*mushrikūn*) will not be granted an appeal—the divine verdict is final. That God’s anger is cast as vengeance raises the stakes against those in the wrong; the Qur’ān pairs vengeance with rage: the Exalted in Might (*al-jabbār*) is the Avenger (*dhū intiqām*) whose destructive wrath has been witnessed before, and who threatens a grander display of force on Judgment Day, inflicting shame (*khizy*) and humiliation (*dhalal*).
Hunting metaphors attest to the zeal with which God stalks His enemies on Judgment Day.\textsuperscript{1538} He snares them so that they appear like startled asses (\textit{humurun mustanfira}) fleeing from a mighty lion.\textsuperscript{1539} Those who fail to heed God’s scheming powers (\textit{makr Allāh}) do so at their own peril.\textsuperscript{1540} Divine wrath is mitigated through violence with terms like \textit{batsh} (vengeance)\textsuperscript{1541} and \textit{ţams} (to obliterate).\textsuperscript{1542} All God’s messengers proclaim fear for their own communities;\textsuperscript{1543} and Q13:40 makes it clear that Muḥammad’s responsibility ends with delivering his message (\textit{fa-innamā ‘alayka al-balāgh wa-‘alaynā al-ḥisāb}). At any rate, for some all will be revealed too late when naysayers will behold Jahannam and the might of God (\textit{ba’s}) with their own eyes.\textsuperscript{1544}

According to the Qur‘ān, afterlife justice is conducted in an open court where evidence is based on testimony. Order and ranking preside; mankind,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1538} Q89:14. The \textit{la-bi ‘-mirşād} in the verse is a derivative of \textit{r-ṣ-d} which is to keep a vigilant watch and also used in reference to \textit{Jahannam} as snaring tyrants in Q78:21-2. Muqāṭil places the hunting episode on the \textit{ṣirāt}; see \textit{Tafsīr}, 6:689; see also Ibn al-Jawzi, \textit{Ẓād al-masār}, 8:154. Hunting poems are known as \textit{ṭardiyyāt}; for an excellent review of the genre see G. Rex Smith, “Hunting Poetry (\textit{Ṭardiyyāt})”, in \textit{‘Abbasid Belles-Lettres}, 167-84.
\item \textsuperscript{1539} Q7:182, 68:44, 74:50.
\item \textsuperscript{1540} Q7:99, 123; 10:33, 35:10, 43; also Allāh as the fastest of schemers (\textit{asra’ al-mākirin}) in Q13:42; \textit{makr Allāh} as it is associated with \textit{intiqām} in Q14:46-7. \textit{Makr Allāh} results in inflicting calamity (\textit{balā‘}) on enemies. Ibn al-Athīr quotes the prayer \textit{allāhumma umkur lī wa-lā tamkur bī}; see \textit{al-Nihāyāh}, 4:365, s.v. \textit{makr}.
\item \textsuperscript{1541} Q44:16, 54:36, 85:12, 50:36, 43:8; also see Muqāṭil, \textit{Ashbah}, 319, s.v. \textit{batsh}.
\item \textsuperscript{1542} Q4:47; 54:36; 36:66. The term \textit{ba’s} refers to divine might and in two instances is used in conjunction with hunting metaphors; see Q7:98-99, 21:12.
\item \textsuperscript{1543} As in the case of Ṣāliḥ, see Q11:63, and in the case of Muḥammad, see Q10:15, 6:15, 39:13. These personal prayers link \textit{‘isyān} (disobedience) to \textit{‘adhāb} (torment).
\item \textsuperscript{1544} Q102:6-7, 19:75, 26:201, 2:165-6, 10:54, 28:64, 34:33, 42:44, 46:34. With regard to witnessing the \textit{ba’s} of God, see Q40:84-5; for \textit{ba’s} in \textit{wa’id} verses, see Q4:84, 18:2, 6:147-48, 12:110.
\end{itemize}
angels and *jinn* stand as God grants permission to speak.\textsuperscript{1545} This is the stage known as *al-`arđ* (the survey).\textsuperscript{1546} Here God assumes multiple roles: judge, party (and guarantor) to an agreement (the *mithāq*), and primary witness to the deeds of mankind.\textsuperscript{1547} As each *ummah* is called forth, its messenger is the first to testify to having delivered his message.\textsuperscript{1548} Muḥammad’s *ummah* is given the privilege of acting as a mediator and a distinguished status (*maqām maḥmūd*) is extended to the Prophet.\textsuperscript{1549} Shi‘ites situate ‘Alī at this point in their narrative between the Prophet and Abraham as he testifies that Muḥammad did indeed deliver the message — a testimony endorsed again by ‘Alī’s sons and grandson.\textsuperscript{1550} God also calls forth other intermediaries (*shurakā*) as witnesses against their followers, thus affirming the monotheistic principle (*tawḥīd*).\textsuperscript{1551} Here the polytheists will interject to argue that God should give equal punishment to those who had led them astray.\textsuperscript{1552} The final testimony is given by the sinners themselves whose organs, in what becomes known as *shahādat al-jawārīḥ*

\textsuperscript{1545} Q18:48, 78:38, 89:22.
\textsuperscript{1546} Q11:18, 18:48, 69:18.
\textsuperscript{1547} Q58:6, 85:9, 3:18, 98; 4:79,166; 13:43.
\textsuperscript{1548} Q4:21, 159; 5:116-117, 7:6, 16:84, 89, 28:75, 39:69, 40:51. An estimated 124,000 prophets have been sent to warn their communities, out of which 135 were messengers; see Crone, *Medieval Islamic*, 10.
\textsuperscript{1549} Q2:143, 17:70, 22:78, 40:51, 50:23.
\textsuperscript{1550} Ahwāzī, *Zuhd*, 161-2; ‘Ayyāshi, *Tafsīr*, 2:311-2. ‘Alī’s sons and grandson act as witnesses and in Islamic legal courts the man who endorses the shāhid ‘adl is known as a *muzakkī*; see Khadduri, *Islamic Conception*, 147-8.
\textsuperscript{1551} Q6:94, 10:28, 11:18, 25:17, 28:62-6, 41:47. Mustansir Mir is correct in pointing out that Arabian polytheism is also a henotheism which is the belief in the existence of many deities alongside the supreme God; see “Polytheism and Atheism,” 4:160; Gerald R. Hawting, “Idols and Images,” *ibid.*, 1:481-3.
\textsuperscript{1552} Q16:86, 28:62.
(testimony of organs), confess to past acts\textsuperscript{1553}—seven organs corresponding to the seven gates of hell. Other witnesses to the proceedings are angels, privileged Companions like al-‘Abbās, Ḥamzah, ‘Alī and Ja‘far; the good (qawmūn šāliḥūn), believed to be jurists and scholars (fuqahā’, ‘ulamā’), and, more amazingly, a category known as notarized witnesses or ‘udūl al-qiyāmah—all prominently placed on the a‘rāf.\textsuperscript{1554}

The Qur’ān makes reference to written evidence; deeds are recorded in books or sheets (kutub, šuḥuf) that will be laid open.\textsuperscript{1555} Sinners will be handed their records in their left hands or behind their backs.\textsuperscript{1556} The balances of justice (al-mawāzīna al-qīṣa) will weigh each man’s acts with good deeds tipping the scales.\textsuperscript{1557} Later versions incorporate the bridge, al-ṣirāṭ (always with the definite article) as the final stage in afterlife justice. Although the Qur’ān mentions the term thirty-three times, the inclusion of the ṣirāṭ in the ḥisāb’s judicial process is effectively a postscript.\textsuperscript{1558}

\textsuperscript{1554} Khūbawī adds more witnesses: angels, earth, time (zamān), the two recording angels (al-malikān al-kātibān) and the diwān; see Khūbawī, \textit{Durrat al-nāṣiḥīn}, 250-1. For a list of witnesses on the a‘rāf see Qurṭubi, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:386-7; Mar’ī b. Yūsuf al-Ḥanbalī al-Maqdisī, \textit{Tahqiq al-khilāf fī aṣḥāb al-a‘rāf}, ms. Princeton University Library, Yahuda 2992, fols. 269 a-b. A shāhīd ‘adl, according to al-Shāfi’ī, must demonstrate two qualities: truthfulness and good behavior; see Khadduri, \textit{Islamic Conception}, 145.
\textsuperscript{1556} Q69:19-25, 84:10-1.
\textsuperscript{1558} G. Monnot, “Ṣirāṭ,” \textit{EF} 9:670-1; Hasson makes the mistake of assuming that the ṣirāṭ as the bridge across Jahannam is mentioned as such in the Qur’ān; see Hasson, “Last Judgment,” 3:141.
The Qur’ān alludes to several modes of judgment (such as al-su‘āl, al-mīzān) without indicating the point at which a final verdict is announced.

Although the humiliation of polytheists is described at great length, the Qur’ān fails to reveal how sinners end up in Jahannam.\textsuperscript{1559} Tradition refers to critical junctures in the ḥisāb; the Prophet promises to be present on the širāt, by the mīzān (scales) and at the ḥawḍ (pond) outside the gates of paradise.\textsuperscript{1560} The Shi‘ite narrative also situates Imāms at similar critical junctures; the seventh Imām, ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (d. 203/819) can be found in the midst of the mayhem when the sheets are distributed (\textit{idhā taṭayarat al-kutub shima’lan wa-yaminan}), at the širāt and the mīzān.\textsuperscript{1561} It was up to the traditionists to bring order to these several modes of adjudication. Thus, the qiyāmah would come to be composed of several stations (mawaṭīn) where different batches of sinners would get culled.

In the opinion of Ibn ‘Abbās, some stations are designed to rebuke and castigate (\textit{tawbīkh wa-taqri’}).\textsuperscript{1562} Qurṭubī divides the afterlife narrative into five stations (mawaqqif wa-ahwāl): resurrection from the grave (\textit{ba’th}), the passage to the ḥisāb (al-sawq ilā mawdī’ al-ḥisāb), the ḥisāb itself, the passage to the final destination (ḥāl al-sawq ilā dār al-jazā’) and existence in their eternal abode.\textsuperscript{1563}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[1559]{Q40:60, 17:18, 39; 52:13, 25:24, 14:43.}
\footnotetext[1561]{Majlisī, \textit{Biḥār}, 102:34; Qummi, \textit{Manāzil al-akhirah}, 225-6.}
\footnotetext[1562]{Q55:39, 28:78, 4:42, 6:23; see Suyūṭī, \textit{Budūr}, 311.}
\footnotetext[1563]{Qurṭubī notes the contradiction in Q19:85-86, 17:97 and 25:34 where the kuffār are resurrected blind, deaf and dumb when in another verse are they recognize one another and}
Much uncertainty dominated the initial ǧisāb itineraries to warrant anxiety. This is reflected in the biographies of early ascetics who expressed their fear of how a few forgotten sins could suddenly do away with a lifetime of piety.\textsuperscript{1564}

One can see here that evidence (\textit{al-bayyinah}), comprised of oral and written testimony, is central to the final verdict.\textsuperscript{1565} Intercession (\textit{shafā’ah}) is an appeal for leniency or forgiveness and remains the only way of redressing the verdict, which will only be granted if God so wishes.\textsuperscript{1566} Some Arabian practices were transferred to the narrative such as the priority given to blood feuds and the practice of publicly disgracing wrongdoers (\textit{tashhīr}).\textsuperscript{1567} At the qiyyāmah traitors will be identified by standards (\textit{a’lām}) that proclaim their treasonous behavior.\textsuperscript{1568} In Islamic legal practice,  \textit{ta’zīr} — a discretionary penalty for crimes not subject to  \textit{ḥudūd} or \textit{kaffārah} — functioned like \textit{tashhīr}.\textsuperscript{1569} The afterlife abounds with \textit{tashhīr} — in the ‘Aṣamah unjust rulers are paraded on mules which is a common  \textit{ta’zīr} curse their fate; see \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:250. A tradition attributed to ‘Alī claims fifty stations each lasting a thousand years; see Qummi, \textit{Manāzil}, 57; Ibn Nāṣir, \textit{Minhāj}, 115.\textsuperscript{1564} See Christopher Melchert’s comprehensive article “Exaggerated fear in the early Islamic Renunciant Tradition,” \textit{JRAS} 3 (2011): 283-300.\textsuperscript{1565} An appellate system is deemed irrelevant in the Islamic judicial system. \textit{Qādis} can choose to reverse judgment if a procedural error is detected.\textsuperscript{1566} Q2:254, 7:53, 10:3, 20:109, 21:28, 74:48.\textsuperscript{1566} Ibn al-Mubārak, \textit{Musnad}, 51; \textit{Zuhd}, 478; Ibn Abī ‘Āsim, \textit{Awā’īl}, 16; Jarrā’i, \textit{Awā’īl}, 69.\textsuperscript{1567} In his study on \textit{muruwwah} Goldziher points out that faithlessness (\textit{ghadr}) represents “the sum total of all that is loathsome to the pagan Arabs” and that the practice of marking the dwellings of the perfidious is a pre-Islamic custom; see \textit{Muslim Studies}, 1:22-3; see also Qurṭubī, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:356-7; Ibn al-Mubārak, \textit{Musnad}, 20; Ṣan‘ānī, \textit{Muṣannaf}, 11:346-7; Muslim, \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ}, 3:1360-1; Bukhārī, \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ}, 4:378-9; Kharā’ī, \textit{Masāwi’ al-akhlāq} 181-2; Mundhirī, \textit{Tarḥīb}, 4:43-4; Dhahabi, \textit{Kabā’ir}, 168; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytami, \textit{Kabā’ir}, 1:82.\textsuperscript{1568} M. Y. Izzi Dien, “Ta’zīr,” \textit{EI} 10:406.\textsuperscript{1569}
Another export is the *munādis*, or callers, who fetch the individuals whose names have been summoned and who proclaim the court’s decision. The Archangel Gabriel was believed to be the principal *munādī* on Judgment Day. As we have seen in the section on angels, Muḥāsibī’s fictional protagonist watches with horror as *munādis* manhandle those sentenced to hell.

**B. The Ḥisāb: Deeds and Personal Accountability**

Personal accountability marks the new moral order; the Qur‘ān applies the term *sa‘ala* (to question) to highlight individual responsibility. On the day where lineage (*ansāb*) will not guarantee protection, humanity will dispute, argue, accuse and blame. Mankind’s actions will be in accord either with the way of God (*sabīl Allāh*) or with the way of error/idols (*sabīl al-ghayy/ṯāghūl*). Those

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1571 C. E. Bosworth, “Munādī,” *EF* 7:557; al-Khaṣṣāf (d. 261/847) in *adab al-qāḍī* describes the function of the *munādī* as one who calls out the name of the defendant and examines the charges against him. Al-Khaṣṣāf was a great believer in the merits of *tashhīr* and quotes the *ḥadīth* where the judges at the *qiyamah* will have their records publicly read (*‘alā ru‘ūs al-khalā‘ic*). As early as Ibn Abī al-Dunyā it was believed that the first to be summoned to the ḥisāb would be the judges; see al-Khaṣṣāf, *Adab al-qāḍī*, 64, 31-2; Dinawārī, *Mujālasah*, 1:304.
1572 Q50:41.
1575 Q6:164, 17:15, 34:25, 39:7. Each person is responsible for his/her actions; Qur‘ānic verses that are generally cited to support free will are: 18:28, 73:19, 79:37 and 88:23; those that support predestination include 13:27, 14:14, 35:8, 42:46. Q18:54 describes man as argumentative: the *qiyamah* is undoubtedly the day of disputation (*khiṣām, jidāl*) — the first blow of the Trumpet has all mankind break into arguments (Q23:101, 36:49); the idolators look for someone to plead their cases for them (Q4:109).
1576 Q4:76, 6:55, 7:142, 146; 10:89.
who do not believe in the one God will go to hell regardless of their record. The terminology for accountability and human agency circulated early; takliif, for example, in reference to human responsibility and religious obligation was already in use by Abū Ḥanīfah’s time (d. 150/797) and kasb (to emphasize human agency) was first applied by Ḍirār b. ʿAmr (d. 200/815). Muqātil describes a širāṭ of seven crossings where man would be made to account on each for specific obligations. This has been collectively labelled as amānah (duty or behaving with integrity when something is entrusted to a person) which Ibn al-Jawzī would define, based on the original mithāq, as all actions that relate to faith such as ablution, prayer, fasting, zakāt, forbidding wrong and doing good, respect for consanguinity ties (ṣilat al-raḥim), matters related to speech, honoring one’s neighbor (ḥīfẓ al-jār) and honesty. Shi‘ites would add one checkpoint (‘aqabah) their position on the mandate of ʿAlī and the Imāms. Afterlife narratives have come to depict the amānah in relation to the sinner as an illusive object slipping away the moment he confronts God. The sinner chases and

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1578 Q21:47, 31:16. Kasaba is used a total of forty-nine times in the Qur’ān while iktasaba is used only three times in Q2:286; 24:11 and 33:58; the Qadaris who endorsed free will used the term extensively to reflect the direct connection between man’s actions and his fate; see also Abū Zahrah, Imām Zayd, 145.
1579 Muqātil, Tafsīr, 6:689; Masā’il ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām substitutes ʿumrah with al-amr bī l-maʿrūf wal-nahy ʿan al-munkar, see Masā’il, 141-2.
1581 Qummi, Manāzil al-ākhirah, 90.
almost catches it on the edge of Jahannam where it slips again dragging him deeper into hell.\textsuperscript{1582}

That the şirāṭ should be set up as an adjudication mode without a definitive Qur'ānic verse (naṣṣ ṣarīḥ) reflects initiative on the part of those constructing the narrative.\textsuperscript{1583} Scholars like Qurṭūbī would argue in favor of two şirāṭs, with the first, al-şirāṭ al-akbar, as a major culling point. In his waʿẓ sermons Ibn al-Jawzī would come to elaborate on its thin, razor-like sharpness that would be no other than an eyelash of Mālik balanced precariously across Jahannan.\textsuperscript{1584} Those who succeed in making it will find themselves facing a second bridge, a şirāṭ khāṣṣ, outside the gates of paradise. On both bridges individuals engage in transactions known as iqtiṣāṣ al-mazālim, a type of barter where they negotiate what they owe one another. Debtors (in the general sense) end up carrying the burdens of those they have failed to repay. Once clear of the major şirāṭ, the function of iqtiṣāṣ on the second bridge (şirāṭ ākhar khāṣṣ) has been explained as a healing ritual that frees believers from personal grudges (ghill) before setting foot in the abode of happiness.\textsuperscript{1585}

\textsuperscript{1582} Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī, Kabāʾir, 1:269; Dhahābī, Kabāʾir, 150; Mundhirī, Tarḥīb, 3:21-2. In an image reminiscent of Sisyphus, the mudayyiʿ al-amānāh is forced to carry the heavy load to the top of Jahannam when it falls off and tumbles to its pit; his punishment consists of endlessly repeating the ascent and descent (fa-lā yazāl hādhā ʿadhābahu ilā mā shāʾ Allāh); see Ibn al-Jawzī, Bustān, 54; also in Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Ahwāl, 257.
\textsuperscript{1583}Q19:71 and 11:98 where humanity will experience hell in some measure is what prompted the idea of a bridge spanning Jahannam; see Ashʿarī, Shajaran al-yaqīn, 70-2; Suyūṭī, Budūr, 341-5.
\textsuperscript{1584} Ibn al-Jawzī, Bustān, 44-5; see also Monnot, “Şirāṭ,” 9:670-1.
\textsuperscript{1585} Qurṭūbī, Tadhkirah, 1:408-9; Suyūṭī, Budūr, 381-2.
That sin is depicted as weight goes back to the original mithāq. The Qurʾān compares deeds to a load or burden (iṣr) placed on those who accept the covenant. Burdens, awzār (sing. wizr), become synonymous with sin, and each person will be held accountable for his own. The Qurʾān describes those who have led their followers astray as having falsely promised to carry their burdens (athqāl) for them. The qiyāmah is the day when people will be looking to pile the weight of their sins on anyone they can! The metaphor of sin as weight is further qualified in the Qurʾān with terms such as ḥabat or khāba that conjure the notion of descent. One glaring paradox, however, exists when the Qurʾān reverses the order in the case of the scales (mīzān) so that the

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1586 Q3:81. Q2:286 is a prayer for lightening the iṣr of believers, unlike those who had gone before them.  
1587 Q47:4-5.  
1588 Q6:164, 17:15, 24:54, 35:18, 39:7, 53:38. See also Muqātil, al-Asbāḥ, s.v. wāžirah, 279; Patrick D. Gaffney, “Load or Burden,” EQ 3:227-9. Anbārī suggests that the vizier (wāzīr) is so-called because he carries the burdens of the king (li-annahu yataḥammal athqāl al-malik); see Addād, 1:207).  
1589 Q29:12-13. Other similar verses will be dealt with in the section on dialogue.  
1590 inna dhāka la-yawm ‘azīm yawm yaḥtāj al-nās ilā man yaḥmil ‘anhum min azwārihim, see Kharāʾīṭ, Masāwī, 252-3. Muqātil depicts the sins of the kāfir as a disfigured, foul smelling, ugly black figure (ḥabashi) riding on his back: fa-yaqūl anā ‘amaluka al-khābit qad kuntu aḥmiluka fī-‘l-dunyā bil-shahawāt wa-ladhdhāt fa-ḥmilnī al-yawm fa-yaqūl wa-kayfa utiqu ḥamlaka fa-yaqūl kamā ḥamaltuka fa-yarkab zahrahu; see Tafsīr, 1:557-58 to Q6:31. It can also go the other way, Ghazzālī muses that good deeds in the mahshar take the form of ships (safīnah), mules, donkeys, or obstinate goats that can occasionally throw riders off their backs (tāratan yahmiluhu wa-tāratan yulqih); see Durrah, 46-7.  
winners are those whose deeds tip the scales downward. Faith (i̇mān) in the opinion of some scholars is what would tip the scale in favor of the winners.\textsuperscript{1592}

The predominance of commercial terms in the Qur'ānic ā́isāb framed this narrative in the mind of early Western scholars as the grand creation of a Meccan merchant.\textsuperscript{1593} Although recent scholars have questioned Mecca as a thriving trade center, linguists, on the other hand, have noted that it is not unusual for accounting metaphors to frame moral issues.\textsuperscript{1594} The Qur'ān describes the qiyāmah as a day where no transactions will be carried out;\textsuperscript{1595} it is yawm al-dayn (the day of debt) as well as yawm al-ā́isāb (the day of reckoning) where deeds will be counted (ahṣā), placed in a balance (mīzān) and weighed (wazana) down to the smallest measure (mithqāl).\textsuperscript{1596} Deeds are redeemable: the Qur'ān uses terms such as jazâ' (recompense), thawāb/mathūbah (reward);

\textsuperscript{1592} Idwī, Mashāriq 288-9. It is beyond the scope of this study to cover the divisive issues of freedom and pre-destination, nor would a cursory mention do the subject true justice. Al-Asān al-Asānī is reported to have said that “guidance comes from God but wrong-doing from man”; see Khadduri, Islamic Conception, 31-2; Dmitry V. Frolov, “Freedom and Predestination, EQ 2:267-71.

\textsuperscript{1593} C. C. Torrey was one of the first in 1892 to point this out and his ideas were picked up by in the works H. Lammens, Maxime Rodinson and Montgomery Watt. Torrey depicts a thriving spice trade which, at the time of the Prophet, begins to change. Patricia Crone challenges this position by proving that the flourishing trade in the early days of Islam was more modest than the wealth and luxury items imagined to fulfill “the appetites of the surrounding empires”; see Rippin, “Trade and Commerce,” EQ 5:314-5.

\textsuperscript{1594} George Lakoff discusses this “system of arithmetic”: well-being, for example, is conceptualized as wealth; we talk of action being “profitable”, of consequence as “cost”, of “owing” someone a favor, of being in “debt” to that person or of retribution as “pay back”; see Lakoff, Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2002), 44-54.

\textsuperscript{1595} Q2:245, 14:31.

\textsuperscript{1596} The term ā́jīr in the Qur'ān is used to mean thawāb; other Qur'ānic meanings are wages, payment to milk mothers or dowry; see Ibn al-Jawzī, Nuzhat al-uyūn, 112-14, s.v. ā́jīr.
ajr/ujūr (wages); waffā (to pay dues); thaman (price); rabiḥa (to profit) and kasaba (to earn). Those who fare well are the ones who have engaged in sharā/ishtarā (buying/selling); bā‘a (selling); tijārah (trading). Good deeds are sound investments; they are loans that will be doubled or more in remittance with terms such as: rahin/rihān (pledge); aslafa (pay in advance) or qaraḍa (loan). Those, on the other hand, who have not fared well have lost (khasira), defrauded themselves (bakhasa/alata) or have had their gains diminished (naqaṣa). Judgment Day is also known as the Day of Fraud (yawm al-taghābun) when unbelievers will learn that they have cheated themselves out of a place in paradise. Although the ḥisāb primarily accounts for deeds, later Muslim scholars took to factoring in and rewarding niyyah (intention), a declaratory statement made prior to any act, thus inflating their afterlife “dividends.” The late šūfī Sha‘rānī relates the dream where Zubayda, Hārūn al-Rashīd’s wife, announces that she has been forgiven and rewarded for her niyyah. He

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1597 Anbārī lists both bā‘a and ishtarā as aqdād and they are used as such in the Qur‘ān. In one of Tanūkhī’s stories it was common for the Khawārij to refer to themselves as shurāt in reference to Q2:207, disliking the term khawārij; see Abū ‘Alī al-Tanūkhī (d. 384/994), Nishwār al-muhādarah wa-akhbār al-mudhākarah (Damascus: al-Majma‘ al-‘Ilmi al-‘Arabi, 1930), 8:41-2.
1598 Q2:245; 57:11; 64:17.
1600 Nawawi relates a ḥadīth qudsī according to which if a believer intended to do a good deed, he would be awarded a full point (ḥasanah kāmilah) and if he did accomplish it, he would be awarded from ten to seven hundred points. On the other hand, if he wanted to commit a bad deed and did not, he would be awarded a full point (for desisting) and if he did commit the act, it would be ranked as one bad deed only; see Nawawi, al-‘Aḥādīth al-qudsiyyah, 3:12. Also in describing the privilege the poor have over the rich in the ḥisāb, al-Khūbāwī states that the poor are awarded more thawāb for doing the same deed as the rich and if they desire something they cannot have, that should count as a bonus (ajr); see Durrat al-wā‘īzīn, 143.
comments that if Zubaydah were more precise she would know that she did not deserve *thawāb al-niyyah* since intention is granted by God!  

Not everyone was taken with the language of trade; many ascetics rejected the metaphors outright, demonstrating a moral superiority to the wrangling masses. Ma'rūf al-Karkhī describes those who only seek the rewards of the afterlife as traders, those who act in fear of God as slaves but those who seek no recompense for their deeds as the truly free (*aḥrār*). His student Sarī al-Saqaṭī (d. 253/867) believed that the less people engage in the world, the less they owe anything, thus gaining in the end a hassle-free ḥisāb.

**C. Jinn in the afterlife**

The *jinn*’s conversion to Islam subjects them to *aḥkām al-taklīf*, making them accountable according to the *mithāq*. Several Qur’ānic verses explicitly allude to their punishment in the afterlife. None of the texts consulted here have included *jinn* among the sinners. They did pose, however, a problem for paradise. Those who argued that their fiery nature is incompatible with the paradisiacal surroundings proposed the *aʾrāf* as a substitute whose rivers, trees

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1603 According to Ibn Ḥanbal *al-aghniyāʾ yuḥāsabūna wa-yumaḥḥaṣūna*; see *Musnad*, 5:259. A student of Maʾrūf al-Karkhī sums this ḥisāb shortcut (*taʾriqu muḥtasaran*) as: lā tasʿal min aḥadin wa-lā taʾkhudh min aḥadin Shayʿan wa-lā yakun maʾaka Shayʿ tuʿtī minhu aḥadān; see Qushayrī, *Risālah*, 13. That the poor have a lighter ḥisāb is an early motif; see Wakiʾ b. al-Jarrāḥ, *Zuhd*, 1:375-7, 399-400; Ahwāzī, *Zuhd*, 68.

1604 Q32:13, 7:38, 72:15-16.
and fruits are an extension of paradise. With regard to rewarding the *jinn*, Abū Ḥanīfah saw that escaping hellfire should suffice. Another alternative was for them to share the fate of animals by returning to dust. Muḥāsibī suggested the *jinn* might undergo a role reversal whereby they would be visible to humans and that they would have their own fiery *hūris*.

D. Animals in the *ḥisāb*

Unlike the *jinn*, animals are not subject to accountability (*taklīf*). Their fate rests on a divine command that would return them to dust. It is God, not the angel of death, who captures the souls of animals. In the *ḥisāb* animals emerge as witnesses against those who have evaded tithing on their livestock (*ʿushr*). It is on the *ṣirāṭ* that the evader is forced to confront and carry the weight of the enormous farm animal obstructing his path. In *ḥadīth* animal cruelty is punished in the afterlife; the Prophet in a vision witnesses a Jewish woman — in one version she is a ʿIrākatite — chastised for tying up a cat and starving her to death. The Muʿtazilah took the position that animals are resurrected for God to compensate them for the pains they suffered in the *dunyā*, after which they

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would be ordered to turn to dust. Animals who have demonstrated commendable loyalty in prophetic fables, however, would be admitted into paradise; Ibn Nujaym (d. 971/1563) lists five: the dog of the seven sleepers of Ephesus, the sacrificial sheep of Ismā‘īl, the camel of Šāliḥ, the donkey of ‘Uzayr and the burāq of Muḥammad. Other favorites were later added such as the calf of Moses, the whale of Jonah, the ant of Solomon, the wolf of Joseph (for not eating him) and the hoopoe of Bilqīs, Queen of Sheba.

E. Justice at the qiyāmah: initial texts

E. 1. Muḥāsibī’s Tawahhum:

Judgment Day in Muḥāsibī’s Tawahhum is a straightforward account and should be read as a sample of the early wa‘īd where the fear of God and the shame of public humiliation should coerce us to behave morally. It opens with a loud cry (nidā‘) summoning all of humanity before God (al-‘arḍ ‘alā Allāh ‘azza wa-jalla) as heavenly hosts descend in orderly rows to surround an arena packed with nations, jinn and beasts. The wait is long and communities begin to seek the intercession of their prophets in the hope that they might relieve them of the

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1609 Majlisi, Biḥār, 7:276, 90-1.
1610 The dog of the seven sleepers will be granted his own elevated garden (rawḍah) whence he can spot his owners wherever they are; see Ṣaffūrī, Nuzhat al-majālis, 1:68.
1611 The image is a reference to Q89:22. Nargis Virani correctly points out that in early works ṣaff (pl. ʂufū‘), which is the term used for a row, is used to draw distinctions as opposed to emphasizing egalitarianism; see Virani, “Ranks and Orders,” EQ 4:348-50; also see C. E. Bosworth, “Ṣaff,” EI² 8:793-4.
intense heat and thirst.$^{1612}$ Every prophet gives an excuse to avoid the mandate and at this point Muḥammad steps forward and humbly kneels to submit the petition on behalf of his community. A second divine summons brings hell out in full view, driving all to prostrate in terror amid loud cries and prayers. Hell proclaims that it has arrived to take vengeance on those who have disobeyed the Almighty.

The prophets are the first witnesses and God asks whether they have indeed delivered their message. Overcome with fear, they are unable to recollect but God is all knowing! With the ḥisāb looming and good deeds as credit, people avoid eye contact with family and friends who at this critical moment would seek their best interest by asking for their due. A stream of fire (‘unuq) emerges from hell to claim its first batch of sinners who evidently will not undergo the ḥisāb. The scales are set and those whose deeds are weighed learn their fate as a munādī announces the results.

The ḥisāb takes place in an open forum with each name being called and the person dragged through the throngs. All look on as the candidate “shakes like a newly born kid”. With his scroll in one hand, he faces the Almighty and reads aloud his own deeds including many forgotten sins. God examines and

$^{1612}$ The Prophet is granted five shafā‘āt of which the first is described as a release from the terror of waiting and a speeding of judgment (al-irāḥah min hawl al-mawqīf wa-ta‘jīl al-ḥisāb wa-hiya mukhtaṣṣah bi-Muḥammad); see Mālibārī, Isti‘dād ill-mawt, 67.
verifies every single action before reminding him of His many blessings (the mīthāq again). Muḥāsibī is explicit that this is a direct exchange between man and God involving no veil (ḥijāb) and no mediator (turjumān). Everyone gets an audience.

The verdict is either divine approval (riḍā) or anger (ghaḍab); consequently, the candidates are either suʿadāʾ (saved) or ashqiyāʾ (damned). Muḥāsibī’s first example has a happy ending; angels hold up the fortunate winner by his locks announcing the outcome to the entire mawqīf. A scroll is then handed to him, like a graduation certificate, which he clutches in his right hand (emphasis added). The real reward, in our narrator’s opinion, is escaping public humiliation. God’s anger is soon revealed in the next case where a man learns that he is not getting away with any of his vices. Pardon is denied and the angels of hell are summoned. The zabāniyah roughly grab the hapless sinner by the neck as he wails and clutches his scroll in his left hand (emphasis added). The verdict is issued: “So-and-so has been sentenced to the utmost wretchedness and will never know joy again.” Muḥāsibī commiserates and can only imagine the terrible letdown experienced by all who had trust in the goodness of this sinner, not to mention the immense gratification of those who had never liked him!

At this point, the šīrāt bridge across Jahannam is introduced. Mayhem breaks out amid the smog, the bubbling sounds and the angels demanding to
know who should be allowed to pass. Here the Qur’anic metaphor for deeds as weight is played out as each person carries a burden across the ascending bridge. All want to lighten their load by looking for those who owe them credit, which is settled by disposing of some of their weight. Many slip, others slide and angels grab sinners by their hair and beards. On the širāf ankles get tangled in hooks as their owners are dragged down. It is at this point in the narrative that our imaginary protagonist slips and tumbles into hell.  

E. 2. Asad b. Mūsā’s Zuhd:

Composed roughly fifty years earlier, justice in Asad b. Mūsā’s account of the qiyāmah is a labyrinth of trials and tribulations. Privilege marks the Muslim community. The elite are entitled to exemptions; seventy thousand — primarily the afflicted (ahl al-balā) and the pious — will be spared the scales (almizān). The rank and file of the faithful comprise those already lauded in the Qur’ān — they are the devout whom neither sleep nor trade would distract from prayer, as well as those who pay their alms (zakāḥ) and are grateful for God’s many blessings (ḥammādūn).

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1613 Muḥāṣibī, Ṭawāḥhum, 5-28.
1614 See Virani, “Ranks,” 4:350; Mālibārī, Ḩarām, 67. The maxim “first among equals” is a paradox because the concept of “first” implies a relationship of precedence over what follows it. One of the Prophet’s five shahādāt is used to upgrade individuals in paradise.
1615 Asad b. Mūsā, Zuhd, 78. The pious are described as those who pray, perform the pilgrimage and give alms (ahl al-ṣalāt, ahl al-hajj and ahl al-ṣadaqah). See also Bukhārī, Ṣahih, 4:239-40.
The sinners in this text are the unjust oppressors, the enemies of the Prophet, painters, corrupt Qur’ān reciters, gossips, debtors, those who were careless with ritual cleanliness, the wanton,¹⁶¹⁷ the Prophet’s uncle Abū Ṭālib, and ‘Amr b. Luḥayy.¹⁶¹⁸ A third “borderline” category, the ahl al-fatrah, can plead extenuating circumstances; these are the old who received Muḥammad’s message late, the deaf and dumb, the mentally delinquent, and all who died prior to Islam. Their fate is contingent upon undergoing an ordeal by fire where those who boldly leap into the flames will find themselves among the blessed.¹⁶¹⁹

Asad b. Mūsā’s ḥisāb is detailed and chaotic.¹⁶²⁰ The order in some cases is reversed; the scrolls are distributed prior to the questioning stage (al-su‘āl) and function like identifying markers so that those receiving their records in their right hands receive a lighter trial. The “testimony of the organs” (shahādat al-jawāriḥ) — not found in Muḥāsibī — is designed to silence argumentative sinners.¹⁶²¹

¹⁶¹⁷ Ibn al-Mubārak includes the same categories, see Zuhd, 93-4.
¹⁶¹⁸ It is important to point out that the Shi‘ites drew up a list of their enemies leading their followers on the širā‘ and falling off into hell: Mu‘āwiyah, his son Yazīd, Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, ‘Abd al-Malik and his son al-Walīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik; see ‘Ayyāshī, Tafsīr, 2:310-13; Majlisi, Biḥār, 2:312-13.
¹⁶¹⁹ Fatrah is an interval of time between two prophets or two successive messengers and generally applies to the time between Jesus and Muḥammad; see Charles Pellat, “Fatra”, EI² 2:865; Asad b. Mūsā, Zuhd, 88.
¹⁶²⁰ Asad b. Mūsā’s Zuhd was composed when the barzakh, the period between death and resurrection, lacked the eschatological definition it was later to acquire. Sins such as gossiping and lack of ritual cleanliness, which he places in hell, are reassigned to the punishment in the grave. The barzakh was not formed too much later; Ibn Ḥabīb al-Sulamī, for example, quotes the ḥadīth regarding ‘adḥāb al-qabr as well as the interrogation of Munkar and Nakīr; see Waṣṭ al-firdaws, 120.
¹⁶²¹ In this ḥadīth, the kāfir will be recognized by his repeated denial of any wrongdoing against the evidence of his neighbors, family, tribe. At this point, God silences all and tongues declare the truth that implicates the sinner; see Zuhd, 85-6.
worst-case scenario, *ṣū‘ al-ḥisāb*, is described as an impasse where God refuses to grant pardon or give credit for a person’s good deeds. Both Muḥāṣibī and Asad b. Mūsā are clear that the ḥisāb is a direct exchange between man and God. Traditionists upheld the direct contact with God in the afterlife as one of the principles of their creed; the danger lay in going too far — the *mushabbihah/mujassimah* or “corporealists” at times described God as a beautiful young man.\(^{1622}\)

There is no linear narrative in Asad b. Mūsā’s *Zuhd*; the text offers short descriptions that highlight accountability as the hallmark of the ḥisāb. Three arches (*qanāṭir*) on the *ṣirāṭ* act as checkpoints where believers are questioned on issues related to consanguinity (*raḥim*) and duty (*amānah*).\(^{1624}\) The third arch is described as a hunting zone for God to entrap His sinners — an image dropped in subsequent versions.\(^{1625}\) Reference is made to a special bridge (*ṣirāṭ khāṣṣ*) designed to cancel out personal grudges between the faithful prior to their


\(^{1623}\) L. Gardet, “Allāh,” 1:411; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Taḥbīs*, 96. Nābulusi includes an entry in his dream manual with various scenarios in terms of proximity, speech, modes of seeing God, degree of wellness and so on — for the dreamer to see a ḥijāb (barrier) between himself and God implies that he is committing *kabār*; likewise to experience amazement (*dahash*) or fear (*ra’d*) on seeing God is an indication of wrongdoing; see *Ṭaʿfīr*, 33-4, s.v. Allāh taʿālā.

\(^{1624}\) Asad b. Mūsā, *Zuhd*, 67. Ahwāzī noted that the first organ (*jāriḥah*) to speak is the womb demanding to be honored; see *Zuhd*, 74.

\(^{1625}\) Q89:14.
entering paradise. More importantly, God declares that He has given the inhabitants of paradise His own riḍā so they need never fear His wrath.\textsuperscript{1626}

\section*{E. 3. \textit{Shajarat al-yaqīn}:}

A third ħīsāb discussed here is the popular \textit{Shajarat al-yaqīn/Daqāʾiq al-akhbār} where men and women emerge from their graves as marked sinners.\textsuperscript{1627} Humanity is divided into three groups — believers, hypocrites (\textit{munāfiqūn}) and unbelievers (\textit{kāfirūn}). As all are directed to stand under a cover (\textit{ẓill}); the believers find themselves in the light, the hypocrites in the heat and the unbelievers engulfed in smoke. This text also endorses, like Asad b. Mūsā, an early admissions policy to paradise and only after the elite’s entrance is secured does the ħīsāb begin.\textsuperscript{1628}

Paradise is placed to the right of God’s Throne and hell (\textit{jaḥīm}) to the left. The scales (\textit{mīzān}) are the centerpiece in this ħīsāb. Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad stand to its right as God commands the guardians of heaven and hell to open their doors. A \textit{munādī} directs all to keep their eyes on the \textit{mīzān}! In this version, the \textit{ṣuḥuf} drift like snow-flakes (\textit{ka-taṭāyur al-thalj}) as

\textsuperscript{1626} When the people of paradise are granted what their hearts’ desire, God would ask them if there is anything more to which they incredulously reply \textit{yā rabbanā wa-hal baqīya shay’ illā wa-qad ni‘māhu? fa-yaqūl na‘am ridā‘ī fa-lā askhaṭ ‘alaykum abadār}; see Iṣbāhānī, \textit{Ṣīfāt al-jannah}, 108; Ibn Ḥabīb al-Sulami, \textit{Waṣf al-firdaws}, 55.

\textsuperscript{1627} Ash’arī, \textit{Sharajat al-yaqīn}, 52-5.

\textsuperscript{1628} The groups are \textit{ahl al-fadl}, \textit{ahl al-ṣabr} and \textit{al-mutahābbūn fi ilāh}; these are swiftly admitted (\textit{wa-hum yasirūn sirā‘an ilā al-jannah}); \textit{ibid.}, 60-2.
a munādī directs each individual as to whether he should take the scroll with his right hand (the believers), left hand (the hypocrites) or from behind (the unbelievers). It then follows that there are three types of ḥisāb: a light one (yasīran) for the good (al-atqīyā‘), a ḥisāb where the kuffār will perish (yuḥlakūn) and a third for Muslim sinners (al-‘ūṣāh min ummat Muḥammad) who will eventually be spared (yuḥṣabūn wa-yunāqashūn thumma yanjūn). It is not clear whether this release (najāh) is gained after having done time in hell or whether they will be spared that altogether. In a later section the Prophet succeeds in releasing Muslim sinners. The širāṭ is given more definition; humanity will be asked to account for seven aspects of their lives: faith, prayer, zakāh, fasting, pilgrimage (major and minor), ritual cleanliness and birr al-wālidayn. Ranking dominates — those with the speed of thunder finish first across the širāṭ against six other categories — the record of the finalist is twenty-five thousand years.

One explanation for the obsession with ranking in this later version may be a confidence acquired with the shari‘ah. As seen in chapter three, sinners emerge from their graves indicted as law-breakers — a remarkable turn from Muḥāṣibī’s “innocent until proven guilty” principle. Another example of this shari‘ah-confidence is the jurist’s (Samarqandi) text Qurrat al-‘uyūn that

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1629 The scroll is handed from behind because the right hand is chained to the neck and the left to the back; see Majlisī, Bihār, 7:96. One of the prayers reads Allāhumma lā tu‘ti‘ī kitābī bi-shimā’ī lā min warā‘ zahrī wa-lā taj’ālah maghūlah lā ‘unuqī; see Qummī, Manāzil, 227.
1630 ibid., 64-5; 67-8; 74.
customizes the ḥisāb of ten types of sinners. Through tashhīr much detail (and pageantry) is added to the narrative; the shaming Muḥāṣibi’s protagonist was so worried about has been amplified tenfold. No one escapes publicity in the qiyāmah — the good, the bad or the ugly. The ḥisāb displays ranking with numbers and bullet-points: in Shajarat al-yaqīn humanity is divided into three groups, four categories of the good on minbars of light, believers mounted versus kuffār on foot and so on.\(^{1631}\) As sinners become villains, believers become heroes paraded and admired. This “credit rating” ranks the Muslim ummah as first among nations.\(^{1632}\) The ḥisāb becomes a celebration with visibility as its trademark: mosques take the forms of white camels (bukht biḍ) navigated by muezzins and imāms.\(^{1633}\) We not only see a community in the lead but, as will be seen with the release of the Jahannamiyyūn, one that takes care of its own. One khabar that reflects the “shari’ah confidence” describes the Prophet ascending the širāṭ to turn and ask the multitude behind who they are. When they reply they are from his ummah, he inquires if they had followed his shari’ah. When they answer in the negative, he declares his disassociation (barā’ah) from them and abandons them to hell.\(^{1634}\)

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\(^{1631}\) The Prophet advised ‘azzīmū ḍaḥāyākum fa-innahā yawm al-qiyāmah ilā al-jannah matāyākum; see ibid., 59-60; 34.

\(^{1632}\) Awā’il literature is replete with examples; Muslims are the first to cross the širāṭ, Muḥammad the first to knock on the gates of paradise and the first intercessor, sayings like nahnu al-ākhirūn al-awwalūn ākhir man yub’ath wa-awwal man yuḥāsab abound; see Ibn Abī ‘Aṣīm, Awā’il, 12, 7, 4.

\(^{1633}\) Ibid., 72.

\(^{1634}\) Ibid., 71.
F. Three Ways to End Up in Hell

From these accounts, there are three principal ways to end up in hell. First, an early admissions policy allows its candidates to forgo the ḥisāb. Those destined for hell are selected by a “stream of fire” (‘unuq al-nār). In some versions this stream is endowed with sight and speech (lisān faṣih — fluent Arabic) and its discerning thoroughness among the throngs of humanity is compared to that of a bird pecking sesame (simsim). The ahl al-nār in this “legacy” group include oppressors, those who have harmed the Prophet, painters, killers, polytheists (man idda‘ā ma‘a Allāhi ilāhan ākhar) and those who never believed in Judgment Day. All accounts concur on an early admissions policy without the ḥisāb.

The second way is to undergo the ḥisāb and fail. We have several descriptions: Muḥāsibī’s “innocent until found guilty” trial, Asad b. Mūsā’s notion of gridlock (sū‘ al-ḥisāb) and being handed the šuḥuf in the left hand anticipates how the trial would end. Ḥadīth would eventually voice the opinion that any

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1635 Muqāṭil interprets it as a fire that circles and contains sinners, see Tafsīr, 4:545 to Q77:29-30.  
meticulous examination might not bode well.\footnote{The matn of this hadīth is man nūqisha al-hisāb halaka; see Suyūṭī, \textit{Budūr}, 302-3.} Scholars distinguish between ḥisāb al-munāqashah where God would inquire the reasons behind actions (\textit{limā fa’alṭa kadhā}) and ḥisāb al-‘arḍ, a cursory questioning for Prophets and ṣaḥābīs (\textit{fa’alṭa kadhā wa-‘afawtu ‘anka}).\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 313. Prophets, Muslim children and the ten ṣaḥābīs promised paradise are exempt from the ḥisāb.} The \textit{su’āl} is not the only critical stage, one can fail at any of the several modes of adjudication (\textit{shahādat al-jawāriḥ}, the \textit{su’āl}, the scales, the ṣirāṭ). For Shi‘ites failing to answer correctly on the \textit{wilāyat} of ‘Alī and the \textit{ahl al-bayt} at the first ṣirāṭ crossing would land one directly into hell.\footnote{\textit{Saqāṭa ‘alā umm ra’sihi fi qa’r jahannam wa-law kāna ma’ahu min a’māl al-birr ‘amal sab’in šiddīqan}; Majlisī, \textit{Bihār}, 7:331-2.}

The categorization of deeds into two clear categories of just and unjust became more nuanced. Those who surmized three types of \textit{dawāwīn} on Judgement Day were redefining injustice or \textit{ẓulm} on whether the act is done to God, to man against himself or to other fellow-men. The first \textit{diwān} pertains to unjust acts toward the God (e.g. polytheism) which He would never forgive; the second to unjust acts the believer commits against his best interest such as disregarding prayer or fasting which God could choose to ignore (\textit{lā ya’ba’ Allāh bihi shay’an}! The third \textit{diwān}, which God would persecute (the term \textit{qiṣāṣ} is used) pertain to those acts against fellow men.\footnote{Qārī’, \textit{Tabīd al-‘ulumā’}, 115-16.}

\begin{itemize}
\item[1638] The matn of this hadīth is man nūqisha al-hisāb halaka; see Suyūṭī, \textit{Budūr}, 302-3.
\item[1639] \textit{Ibid.}, 313. Prophets, Muslim children and the ten ṣaḥābīs promised paradise are exempt from the ḥisāb.
\item[1641] Qārī’, \textit{Tabīd al-‘ulumā’}, 115-16.
\end{itemize}
conclusion of this chapter, such redefinitions chip away at the hardline wa’id scholars have maintained.

The reasons for setting up several modes of adjudication are not clear. Texts are selective in highlighting some over others; *Shajarat al-yaqin*, for example, makes the *mizân* the center-piece of its *ḥisāb* with a verdict publicly announced by a *munādi*.

1642 This was the most contentious station of the *ḥisāb*; scholars differed on whether the deeds of the *mushrikun/kuffār* would be weighed as much as they differed on the number of scales.1643 ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Ābidin believed the *mawāzin* to be exclusively for the *ahl al-Islām*.1644 Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, based on the plural in Q21:47, concluded that every person will have his own scales, whereas others assigned a *mizân* for each of the accountable organs (seven in all).1645 Suyūṭī was of the opinion that while some *kuffār* will be expedited to hell others will have their deeds weighed. A *khabar* attributed to Ḥudhayfah names Gabriel as *ṣāhib al-mizân* controlling the debit/credit deed-bartering we have seen associated with the *ṣīrāt*.1646 Truth (*al-ḥaqq*), ‘Alī b. Abī

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1645 Ibn al-Jawzī argued for one *mizān*, other scholars suggested that the plural in *mawāzin* signifies magnification, *taʃkhīm*; ibid., 20-1.
1646 ibid., 113.
Tālib allegedly said, is as heavy in the *dunya* as it will be in the *mizān* whereas *baṭil* has no value — it is as light in this world as it will be in the next.\footnote{Ibid., 17-21, 96, 110.}

The third way to end up in hell, according to *ḥadīth*, is to run out of credit (or good deeds) on the *ṣirāṭ*. On the day when everyone looks out for himself, credit is collected from those who caused harm or injustice. A person’s name is called out for claimants to step forward. If no good deeds (or credit) are available, the fair resolution would be to pile onto that person their victim’s bad debt. Ibn Mas‘ūd remarks how at that moment a woman would be happiest (*fa-tafraḥ al-mar’ah*) to claim back her due from son, brother and husband!\footnote{Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *Kabā‘ir*, 2:123.} This can lead to a condition the *ḥadīth* aptly describes as bankruptcy or impoverishment (*taflīs*) — the Prophet warns that one could still end up in hell after presuming he/she has been cleared.\footnote{Kharā’itī, *Masāwi‘*, 33; Suyūṭī, *Budūr*, 384; Ash’arī, *Shajarat al-yaqīn*, 56.} The *ṣaḥābī* Abū Umāmah believed that a wrong-doer (*al-ẓālim*) would be able recognize his victims and account for his cruelty and injustice.\footnote{Ibn al-Mubārak, *Zuhd*, 499.} The lengthy list of claimants includes wives, neighbors, beggars, former slaves and so on. A married couple (*rajul wa-imra’atuhu*), according to a *ḥadīth* in Ṭabarānī, would be among the first to argue and settle their personal scores!\footnote{Suyūṭī, *Budūr*, 382.}
Later scholars would hold out hope for those Asad b. Mūsā pegged in the sū’ al-ḥisāb category by relegating them to the temporary limbo of al-a’rāf.1652 Shi‘ites paid special attention to the a’rāf, ‘Allā is šāḥib al-a’rāf as well as the one to separate sinners from believers (qasīm al-jannah wal-nār).1653 Thābit b. Dīnār al-Thumālī (d. 148/765) interpreted the a’rāf in Q7:46 as a derivative of ya’rifūna “they know” and maintained that the aštāb al-a’rāf are no other than the Imāms who from their vantage point separate humanity into two groups: those who recognize them enter paradise while those who do not are destined for hell. In a gesture of generous patronage, Shi‘ites mapped out penned areas (khaḍā‘ir) between heaven and hell for the good jinn and their own sinners (fussāq al-Shī‘ah).1654

G. The Raj‘ah: the Shi‘ite doctrine of ḥashr khāṣṣ:

Much to the objection of Sunnī scholars, the Shi‘ite doctrine of raj‘ah, the return to life of some of the dead prior to the qiyyāmah, became known as ḥashr khāṣṣ or “specific resurrection”.1655 Shi‘ite enemies, namely, some Qurashīs or Umayyads, will be brought to life at the end of time to confess to their killings and undergo a variety of torments such as decapitation, crucifixion, cutting off of the

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1653 Ayyāshi, Taṣfir, 2:17-8.
1654 Majlīsī, Bihār, 63:81-2.
1655 The raj‘ah has also been referred to as al-‘adhāb al-adnā with the larger ‘adhāb al-akbar being in the qiyyāmah; see Aḥsā‘ī, Raj‘ah, 170.
hands or legs or gouging of the eyes.\footnote{Qur’ānic verses that were seen as supporting the doctrine are 25:85; 2:243, 259; 17:6; 24:55; 28:5-6, 27:83; 3:185; also see E. Kohlberg, "Radj’a," EI 8:371-3. Aḥṣā’ī maintains that al-qawl bi il-raj‘ah is not one of the principles of Islam but of complete faith (innamā hāya min sharā‘īt al-imān al-kāmil), that it is not open to the populace (al-‘āmmah), and that not being aware of it should not affect a person’s status as a Muslim. It should be treated as one of the divine secrets (sīr rābār Allāh fa-il imān bihi mukammil ill-imān); see Aḥṣā’ī, Raj‘ah, 28.} In one version, under the charge of the Mahdī, a trial begins with Abū Bakr and ‘Umar pulled out of their shrouds and crucified. Humanity is divided into those in favor and those against. The two caliphs get pulled down, undergo resurrection (iḥyā‘) and are made to listen to a history of humanity’s unjust killings starting with the first bloodshed on earth. They acknowledge (ya‘tarīfūn) each and every killing and anyone present who has cause to accuse them will get the right to execute his qiṣāṣ. Both caliphs are then crucified a second time after which a fire burns them (along with the tree) and a wind casts their ashes into the sea.\footnote{Muhammad Mu’min b. Dūst Ḥusayn al-Āstarābādī (d. 1087/1677), al-Raj‘ah (Qumm: Dār al-l’Tishām, 1415/1994), 118-21; see also Aḥṣā’ī, Raj‘ah, 161-4; 34, 43-5. There follows the qiṣāṣ a thirty month period after which all die in a single night; their dying is referred to in Shi‘ite texts as al-ḵashr al-awwat; see ibid., 19.} This pre-qiyyāmah justice raised a valid concern, namely, whether the iḥyā‘ of Yazid or Ibn Muljam could lead to their repentance, thus freeing them from la‘n and eternal damnation. In other words, would the raj‘ah give the enemies of Shi‘ism the opportunity to escape eternal punishment? Scholars responded that these are not true repentants (yatūbūn ‘an ṣiddq), that the raj‘ah takes place in the dār al-taklīf not the dār al-jazā‘, and that the Qur‘ān makes clear that they are destined for eternal
damnation. Whoever deliberately kills a believer is subject to la'n and tabarru’ — there is no further discussion of the matter.\footnote{Aḥsāʿī, 
Raʿah, 24-8. Some Muʿtazilah have argued that the rajʿah would constitute an enticement to disobedience, ighrāʾ bi l-ʿiṣyān, if the evildoers know in advance that God would reject their repentance, thus creating a situation where there is no deterrence from adding to their evil deeds. Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) replies that since only some will be brought back to life, it is not known who they are and therefore no one can act on the above assumption; see Kohlberg, Radja, 8:372.}

IV. Intercession: the Prophet’s Personal Appeal

The Muslim community can count on their Prophet to be given the privilege of five shafāʿāt (intercessions) in the qiyyāmah.\footnote{The Prophet alludes to his roles as anā Muḥammad wa-Aḥmad wa l-Muqqaṭṭa wa l-Māḥī wa l-Ḥāshīr wa-nabī al-lawbāh wa l-malḥamah; al-māḥī is the he who wipes out kufr; see Ibn al-Jawzī, Šifat al-ṣafwah, 1:31, 82.} Both Muḥāsibī and Asad b. Mūsā allude to the first, later known as the “general intercession” (shafāʿah ʿāmmah), when the aḥl al-mawqif request an end to their long wait and the Prophet steps forward to plead their case.\footnote{Muḥāsibī, 
Tawāhum, 8-11; Asad b. Mūsā, Zuhd, 73-6; Qurṭūbī, Tadhkira, 1:294-6.} The second pertains to the exemption from the ḥisāb for those admitted early to paradise.\footnote{Asad b. Mūsā, Zuhd, 78.} Two additional shafāʿāt relate to hell: those who should go to hell (istawjabū) and obtain a reprieve (the Muʿtazilah and Khawārij object to this one) or to those who are already in hell and are eventually released (the Jahannamiyyūn). The fifth is an upgrade to a higher manzilah in paradise. Qurṭūbī adds a sixth shafāʿah for lessening (takhfīf) Abū Ṭālib’s condition.\footnote{Qurṭūbī, Tadhkira, 1:294-301.} Other privileges accorded to the Prophet in the qiyyāmah have also been classified as shafāʿāt such as carrying...
the standard (liwāʾ al-ḥamd) or being seated next to God, as in Muḥāṣibī’s account.

Modern scholars note that little is known of how intercession works as an Islamic judicial principle. In the afterlife narrative, shafāʾah is an appeal made at critical junctures: at the beginning of the ḥisāb or at the gates of hell once the ḥisāb is complete. Those entitled to the Prophet’s personal shafāʾah include his relatives, the tribe of Quraysh, the Anṣār, all who die in Medina and those who visit his grave and pray for him. The list of those banned from receiving the Prophet’s intercession grew over time and has come to include — in the view of some — the Murji’ah, the Qadarīs, cheaters, wrongdoers, religious extremists (ghāli fı ’l-dīn māriq minhu), hypocrites and those who have never endorsed the efficacy of shafāʾah in the first place.

Other individuals, apart from Muḥammad, also have the authority to intercede. In addition to angels and prophets, these include the good, martyrs, scholars and Muslim children (dharārī al-Muslimīn). ‘Ulamāʾ can petition for their students “even if they are as numerous as the stars” — a privilege restricted in other groups: a martyr petitions for seventy, a pilgrim for four hundred and the


\(^{1664}\) Suyūṭī, Budūr, 357.

\(^{1665}\) Ibid., 360-5.
believer who reads the Qur’an for ten of his immediate
families.

In some texts the Ka‘bah or even the Qur’an act as effective advocates. Shi‘ite texts accord Fāṭimah a shafā‘ah; she has a special station at the gates of hell where she requests God’s mercy on her shi‘ah. When crossing the širāt, Fāṭimah leaves her cape (mirf) behind. Those who successfully grab its edges are dragged into paradise.

V. The Muslim Sinners’ “Right of Release”

The final chapter of the infernal narrative revolves around the ultimate fate of sinners and the duration of Jahannam. The Qur’an’s unsparing wa‘ıd threatens eternal punishment for God’s enemies. Tradition frames the release of Muslim sinners as ‘itq or manumission and the Jahannamiyyūn, as these have

1666 Ahmad b. Ḥanbal emerges in dreams as standing by the gates of paradise interceding for Muslims who maintained the doctrine on the uncreatedness of the Qur’an; see Ibn al-Jawzī, Ṣifat al-ṣafwah, 1:528-9, 535, 548.
1667 Ibid., 365-74.
1668 li-Fāṭimah waqfah ‘alā bāb Jahannam fa-idhā kāna yawm al-qiyāmah kutiba bayna ‘aynay kull rajul mu’min aw kāfir fa-yu’mar bi-muḥībb qad kathura dhunūbuhu ilā ‘l-nār fa-tqra’ bayna ‘aynayhi muḥībban fa-taqūl ilāḥī wa-sayyidī sammaytanī Fāṭimah wa-fatamta bi man tawallānī wa-tawallā dhurriyati min al-nār...God answers: wa-innamā amartu bi-‘abdī hādhā ilā al-nār li-tashfa’ī fihi... The conclusion is: fa-man qara’at bayna ‘aynayhi mu’minan fa-jadhabat bi-yadihi wa-adkhalathu al-jannah; see Majlisī, Bihār, 8:51; Muhammad Jawād al-Ṭabāṣī, Ḥayāt al-ṣiddiqah Fāṭimah ‘alayhā al-salām: dirāsah wa-taḥlīl (Qumm: Mu’assasat Bustān, 2002), 20-1; 31-2; 54-7.
come to be known, are the beneficiaries of this divine amnesty. Texts would also offer examples such as that of the “last sinner” granted a final reprieve against all odds. Before long “special cases” cropped up, and exemptions from the hisāb (or punishment) began to be extended to the old, to those who die on Fridays or Saturdays, to those interred in sacred ground (e.g. in Najaf or Jerusalem) or to those who regularly recite specific Qur’ānic verses. More importantly, texts begin to add a new dimension — hardship and adversity in this dunyā could be exchanged for the one in the next. Thus was born the term kaffārah, or atonement, in its afterlife context.

A. Kaffārah and the role of hardship

Adversity (al-balā‘) in this world, according to religious texts, comes in three types: as revenge and punishment (naqm wa-‘uqūbāt), as a means of purification through difficulties (tamḥīs wa-kaffārāt) or as a trial of a person’s moral fiber as in the case of prophets and messengers. It is not easy to construct a doctrine of atonement based on the Qur’ān alone. In Q5:45 a voluntary meritorious act can atone for past sin; kaffārāt originally appeared in

\[1671\] According to Imām al-Šādiq whoever visits the grave of al-Ḥusayn during Ramadān and dies on the journey will be exempt from the hisāb; see Qummi, Manāzil al-ākhīrah, 85-6.

\[1672\] Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj al-Ṭūsī (d. 378/988), Kitāb al-luma’, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Ṭāḥa ‘Abd al-Bāqī Surūr (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadīthah, 1960), 300. ‘All al-Khawwāṣ, Sha’rānī’s sūfī master, accepted his quarrelsome wife as a personification of his bad deeds. All the awliyā‘ are afflicted with bad wives so that when she died al-Khawwāṣ mourned her by saying that he gained much credit for putting up with her; see Latā‘if, 382; al-Akhlāq al-Matbū‘iyah, ed. Mani ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1976), 2:239-40.
connection with oaths or hunting in a state of ritual consecration (iḥrām). Zakāh, as we have seen in chapter three, was initially conceived as payment to cancel out minor sins. It is in hadīth where we find other categories listed as kaffārāt: fever (al-ḥummā), for example, is described as a kaffārah; the Prophet prohibits Muslims from cursing it for it draws its heat from the vehement raging of the heat of hell (fayḥ jahannam) and expiates a person’s minor sins (dhunūb). Scholars regarded ḥudūd as kaffārāt; a person would be spared punishment in the afterlife if the hadd had already been applied in the dunyā.

Kaffārāt give believers a moral lead; scholars agree that the mu’min cannot be equated with the kāfir in hell. Even the hardline Muʿtazilah, the ahl al-wa’d wal-wa’id, for whom the šāhib al-kabīrah is eternally damned, believed that faith should count for something and that a mu’min is entitled to a lighter deal

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1677 The position of Jahm b. ʿAfwān (d. 124/741) was: man irtakaba kabīrah wa-māta ‘alayhā min ghayri tawbatin ‘ūqība ‘alā dhālika wa-yajib an yakhruj min al-nār fa-laysa min al-adl al-taswiyyah baynahu wa-bayna al-kuffār fī ’l-khulūd; see Shahristānī, *Milal*, 37.
than the kāfir.\textsuperscript{1678} This endorsement of the believer, or of faith, is the changing variable that framed the discourse of ‘itq and release from hellfire. We later read of debates on whether Muslims would be spared the ordeal of thirst by drinking from the Prophet’s ḥawd prior to entering hell.\textsuperscript{1679} Ghazzālī, despite some inconsistencies in his writings, believed that God’s mercy would encompass Christians who never heard of the Prophet or who earnestly investigated the message without converting.\textsuperscript{1680} Similarly, the Prophet’s shafā’ah reserved for the ahl al-kabā’ir promoted the improbability of a Muslim’s eternal damnation (khulūd) based on the faith element.\textsuperscript{1681} ‘Itq or release is framed as a triumphant moment for the true faith (al-jawhar al-ašlī) in Jahannam.\textsuperscript{1682} Much ink was spilled on what exactly the ahl al-salaf endorsed; al-Ḍaḥḥāk believed that an appeal (rajā’) is granted to Muslims (the ahl al-tawḥīd) in the first level to the exclusion of all other groups in Jahannam.\textsuperscript{1683} Muqāṭil’s Muslim sinner (mu‘min ‘āšī) does not even set foot in Jahannam; his sins could simply be expiated on the šīrāt — en route to paradise.\textsuperscript{1684}

\textsuperscript{1678} wa-idhā kharaja [al-mu’min] min ghayr tawbah ‘an kabirah irtakabāh īstāḥaqqa al-khulūd fī ‘l-nār lakin yakūn ‘iqābuh akhaff min ‘iqāb al-kuffār; see ibid., 21.

\textsuperscript{1679} Muḥāṣibi offers no benefits for Muslims entering hell; their requests for water are denied; see Tawḥīhum, 31-2; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Kabāʾir, 2:246.


\textsuperscript{1681} Shahrastānī, Milāl, 43.


\textsuperscript{1683} Al-Ḍaḥḥāk, Tafsīr, 1:508.

\textsuperscript{1684} anna al-mu’min al-‘āšī rabbahi yu’adhhab yawm al-qiyāmah ‘alā al-šīrāt wa-huwa ‘alā matn jannaham yuṣibuhu lafhu al-nār wa-harruhā wa-lahibuhā fa-yata’alām bi-dhālika ‘alā qadr ma’ṣiyatihi thumma yadhkhul al-jannah; see Shahrastānī, Milāl, 61.
That adversity in this life can substitute for punishment in the next was not initially on the books. Not everybody subscribed to Muslim advantage in the afterlife. Those who die on Friday, as one scholar stubbornly mused, will be subject to ‘adḥāb al-qabr on Saturday! That adversity, in its many forms, could expiate sin is an argument discussed at great length in later texts. It drew primarily upon ḥadīth’s definition of the Muslim community as the one selected for divine mercy (al-ummah al-marḥūmah) — the raḥmah tailored to swapping adversity in this world for better treatment in the next. Thus adversity in the dunyā acts like a credit line or an advance that works to the benefit of any Muslim. Later texts talk openly about a “reward advance” — good deeds can be “cashed in” in the dunyā in the form of wealth or an absence of calamities. Sha’rānī in the tenth century hijrī would advise the sick not to rush for relief. Consulting a clairvoyant wali could diagnose the condition as divine punishment, as a kaffārah or as an opportunity to add to the sick person’s afterlife “credit line”. Death, which the Qur’ān describes as a calamity (muṣibatu ’l-mawt) is added to the list of kaffarāt. An “easy death” for the hardened kāfir is a quick payback for the little good he did in this life. The inverse is also true, a “difficult death” for a believer is a tribulation that cancels out his sins. Kaffārah

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1686 Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, Fitan, 361-2.
1687 Aḥsāʾī, Rajʿah, 197.
1689 Q5:106 (muṣibatu al-mawt); Dīnawari, Muḥālasah, 1:137.
1690 Suṣūlī, Sharḥ al-ṣūdūr, 6-7; 11-12; ʿIdwī, Mashāriq, 32-3. Mawt al-fajʾah or the sudden death for the believer is a relief and for the kāfir a matter of regret (mawt al-fajʾah rāḥah lil-muʾmin waḥasrah lil-kāfir); see Ibn Bābawayh, Mawāʾīq, 27.
has come to encompass not only the hardships of life and death but the compulsory pressure of the grave, *daghtat al-qabr*, as well.\(^{1691}\)

\(^{1691}\) *Qummī, Manāzil al-ākhirah*, 140; Majlisī, *Bihār*, 6:221, 230.

Hadīth also introduces the concept of ransom (*fidā*) illustrated in the *qiyāmah* when every Muslim will be handed an infidel to cast into hell as his replacement.\(^{1692}\) Nominees for this last minute hostage-swap include Ya’jūj and Ma’jūj, Jews or Christians.\(^{1693}\) In light that *fidā*’ would nullify the principles of afterlife justice (if not the entire *tarnhib* narrative), a scholar like Qurṭūbī commented that such *ḥadīths*, some with dubious *isnāds*, should not be taken as the general rule but as case-specific to those whom God has chosen to forgive.\(^{1694}\)

B. The language of ransom and manumission

The language of ransom and manumission pervades much of the commentary on *kaftārah* and sin. The ascetic Abū ‘Imrān al-Jawnī (d. 123/741) disliked people using the term ‘*itq* when articulating an *istijārah* because it implied


that one was already in hell.\textsuperscript{1695} The term, however, was in circulation; Abū Bakr al-Šiddīq was known as the ‘\textit{atīq} in order to endorse its opposite — that he would never know hellfire.\textsuperscript{1696} Similar claims are made with the name Fāţimah.\textsuperscript{1697} In the language of Islam as submission, Abū Dharr compared the ingrate to a runaway slave (\textit{ābiq}) who has to be brought back to his master.\textsuperscript{1698}

Affiliated to the world of ‘\textit{itq} and \textit{fidā’} is the term \textit{barā`ah/ijārah}. In afterlife texts, \textit{barā`ah} pertains to a certificate of manumission that acts as a voucher of protection or amnesty.\textsuperscript{1699} Its most famous recipient is the caliph ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz or ‘Umar II (r. 717-720); his is described as a sheet (\textit{ṣaḥīfah}) wherein God declares protection (\textit{amān}) from hellfire.\textsuperscript{1700} Many \textit{ijārah}s appear in early şūfi hagiography. The biographical entry on the ascetic Āminah al-Ramlīyyah who prayed for Bishr al-Ḥāfi and Ibn Ḥanbal relates how an \textit{ijārah} falling from the

\textsuperscript{1695} Kāna yakrah aḥaduhum an ｙaṣqūl allāhumma a’tiqnā min al-nār li-annahu innamā yu’taq minhā man dakhalahā wa-yaqūlūna nastajir bi-ilāhā min al-nār nasta`īdh bihi minhā; see Munāwī, \textit{Kawākib}, 1:160.


\textsuperscript{1697} li-anna Allāh `azza wa-jalla qad faṭāmahā wa-dhurriyatahā ‘an al-nār yawm al-qiyāmah and in another version \textit{wa-ḍaḥama man aḥabbahā}; the verb \textit{faṭāma} means to wean; see Ṭabās, \textit{Ḥayāt}, 20; Mūsawī, \textit{Jazā` a’dā’}, 237.

\textsuperscript{1698} Qummī, \textit{Manāzil al-\-akhirah}, 15.

\textsuperscript{1699} \textit{Barā`ah} in the Qur`ān is used to mean a breaking of ties or repudiation, more specifically written documents that imply financial and administrative discharge. Brunschvig is unable to find an explanation for \textit{laylat al-barā`ah} which is essentially \textit{laylat al-`itq}; see “Barā‘a,” \textit{EF} 1:1026-7 and Uri Rubin, “Barā‘a: A Study of Some Quranic Passages,” \textit{JSAI} 5 (1948): 13-32. The Khawārij used this term to repudiate the \textit{kāfirūn} of both worlds, the unjust \textit{imām} and those who have committed grave sins; see Rubinacci, \textit{ibid.}, 1:1027-8.

skies declares God’s protection of all three (fa-idhā waraqah min al-hawā’ fihā bism Allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm qad ājarnākum wa-ladaynā mazīd).\footnote{1701} In order to validate its divine authorship, these barā’ahs include Qur’ānic phrases such as wa-ladaynā mazīd in Q50:35. In one story, the angel of death authorizes a barā’ah.\footnote{1702} Shi’ite narrative also incorporates barā’ah vouchers from ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib securing safe passage for his followers across the șirāṭ.\footnote{1703} Later sūfī hagiography abounds with walis boasting rosters of recently released followers.\footnote{1704} It is important to note how pervasive the ‘itq theme becomes in later hagiography.\footnote{1705} The claims made by the masters of al-‘ilm al-ladunī allege that their personal prayers (tasbīḥ/wird) would guarantee a “buy-back” of anyone’s soul (ishtarā nafsahu) so that the person would rightly be called ‘atīq Allāh.\footnote{1706} Release from the punishment of the grave also became known as ‘itq. We learn through dreams that the burial of Maʾrūf al-Karkhī (d. 200/815) freed thirty

\footnote{1701}{Munāwī, Kawākib, 1:166; there is Dhū ’l-Nūn’s story of a ruq’ah that falls on a prayerful youth in the Ka’bah that read min al-ʿAzīz al-ʿGhafūr ilā ʿabdī al-ṣādiq inṣārīf maghfūrān laka mā taqaddam min dhanbika wa-mā taʾakhkhar; see Ḥurayfish, Rawḍ, 71.}
\footnote{1702}{Ash’ārī, Shajarat al-yaqin, 26-7.}
\footnote{1703}{Majlisī, Biḥār, 7:332.}
\footnote{1704}{Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn ‘Ayyād al-Shāfīʿī (d. 1153/1740), al-Mafākhīr al-ʿaliyyah fi al-maʿāthir al-Shādhiliyyah (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-ʾĀmirah al-Sharqiyyah, 1314/1896), 19. Barā’ah became commonplace so it is not unusual to read that teaching a boy to recite the Muslim shahādah will guarantee a barā’ah for the pupil, his parents and the teacher; see Qurṭubī, Tadhkiraḥ, 1:101; Hurayfish, Rawḍ, 5.}
\footnote{1705}{A barā’ah “materialized” on Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān al-Baṣrī’s (d. 198/813) shirt that said bism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm barā’ah li-Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd wa-bashshir bi-amān min Allāh taʿālā yawm al-qiyāmah, see Munāwī, Kawākib, 1:322.}
\footnote{1706}{In the popular masāʾīl of Abū Yazīd al-Bīstāmī, he posed the question what it was that God created then bought back. The answer was the soul of the muʾmin based on Q9:111; see Hurayfish, Rawḍ, 187. These claims made by those Michael Dols termed, “latter day saints” with their emphasis on al-ʿilm al-ladunī as the basis of their knowledge were not endorsed by the ‘ulamāʾ; see a case illustrated in Ghayṭī, Miʿrāj, 6-7.}
thousand from ‘adḥāb al-qabr on either side of his grave.\textsuperscript{1707} ‘Ītq is an ongoing phenomenon; Friday night in popular lore is known as laylat al-‘ītq where God releases six hundred thousand (or one hundred thousand in another version) from hell. ‘Ītq also has its heroes; ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Ābidīn has the mandate to release sinners throughout Ramaḍān and larger numbers on its last night.\textsuperscript{1708} The cancellation of sins becomes known as barā‘ah; the 15\textsuperscript{th} of Sha‘bān is one of the nights in which sins are cancelled.\textsuperscript{1709} Other auspicious times are the months of Rajab and Ramaḍān.\textsuperscript{1710} Moreover, we see the term captive (asīr) coopted in the ‘ītq dialectic and applied to exemption categories. A ḥadīth, vehemently refuted by Ibn al-Jawzī, maintains that on reaching the ripe age of ninety a man is called asīr Allāh fī ’l-arḍ (God’s captive on earth) — a tenure with benefits that include the cancellation of all sins and the shaf‘a‘ah on behalf of members of his family.\textsuperscript{1711}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1710}Angels gather on the mountain of Qāf throughout Rajab to pray for forgiveness for Muhammad’s ummah, Ṣaffūrī, \textit{Nuzhat al-majālis}, 143; 175-6; Ibn Ḥanbal, \textit{Musnad}, 5:256; 1:526.
\item \textsuperscript{1711}fa-idhā balagha al-tis‘īn ghafar Allāh lahu mā taqaddama min dhanbihi wa-mā ta‘akhkhara wa-summiya asīr Allāh fī ’l ard wa-shafā‘a fī ahl baytihi; see Bayhaqī, \textit{Zuhd}, 244; Ibn Ḥabīb al-Sulamī, \textit{Tārikh}, 50; see also Ibn al-Jawzī, \textit{Mawdū‘āt}, 1:279, 282-6.
\end{itemize}
The Jahannamiyyūn, Muslims released from hell, acquire epithets that reflect their newly manumitted status; they are also known as ʾṭulaqāʾ,1712 ʾutaqāʾ al-raḥmān/jabbār or ʾutaqāʾ Allāh min al-nār and emerge burnt to a crisp (ʿimtuhishū wa-ṣārū ḥumaman). Their charred bodies mend by a spring (ʿayn al-ḥayāl) outside paradise after which they enter with the label stamped on their foreheads.1713 Eventually, and on their request, the stigma is erased.1714 It is relevant to point out that the Jahannamiyyūn are not the only paradisiacal gatecrashers. The ahl al-ʾarāf also recuperate by the nahr al-ḥayāḥ before being admitted to paradise. White marks on their chests (šāmah fī nuḥūrihim) separate them from the inhabitants of paradise and become known as masākıň ahl al-jannah.1715

C. Manumission in action

Rescue stories that capture the dramatic release of Muslims from Jahannam were undoubtedly popular with the quššāš. The Prophet, with his special status (al-maqām al-maḥmūd), is the hero of these operations which constitute his final intercessory act.1716 Samarqandī includes it in his last chapter on ʿuqūq as Muḥammad mediates between disgruntled mothers and insolent offspring. Such family reunions are not accidental; the Muslim community, when

1712 Suyūṭī, Budūr, 366.
1713 Bukhārī, Šahīḥ, 4:461-7; Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, 3:95, 144, 236; Ashʿarī, Shajarat al-yaqīn, 87.
1714 Qurṭūbī, Tadhkirah, 516-18; Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 205-8.
1715 Qurṭūbī, Tadhkirah, 1:384-8. Nahr is where a pendant would hang, described as aʾlā al-ṣadr.
all is said and done, fends for its own.\textsuperscript{1717} In one rescue version, God, in a fit of rage at the \textit{kuffar} taunting Muslim sinners on their misplaced trust in Muḥammad, sends Gabriel to immediately free them from Jahannam.\textsuperscript{1718} In another, one sinner remains a thousand years beseeching God’s mercy with “\textit{Yā ḥannān! Yā mannānū!}” until the Almighty sends an angel to the rescue.\textsuperscript{1719} The “last sinner” is sometimes given the name Juhaynah authenticating the proverb (\textit{‘inda Juhaynah al-khabar al-yaqīn}), which many scholars erroneously assume is a \textit{ḥadīth}.\textsuperscript{1720} In our context that certainty (\textit{yaqīn}) pertains to Juhaynah’s release from hell. The original proverb, however, revolves around a story of betrayal, murder and theft; the poetry line (from which the proverb is derived) alerts the sister of the murdered man to seek out the tribe of Juhaynah in order to learn of \textit{al-khabar al-yaqīn} or the identity of the killer!\textsuperscript{1721}

There are variants to these last minute rescue operations such as that of the sinner crawling (\textit{zaḥfan}) his way to paradise only to discover that all the dwellings have been claimed (\textit{fa-yajid al-nās qad akhadhū al-manāzil}). He

\textsuperscript{1719} \textit{Ḥannān} and \textit{mannān} are divine attributes, the first alludes to mercy and is similar to \textit{raḥīm} and the second to blessings; see Qurtubī, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:518; Ash’ārī, \textit{Shajarah}, 85.
\textsuperscript{1720} Ahwāzī, \textit{Zhūd}, 151; Qurtubī, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:515; ‘Idwī, \textit{Mashāriq}, 299; Suyūṭī, \textit{Budūr}, 488; Ibn Kathīr, \textit{Nihāyah} 2:339 quotes the \textit{khabar} to demonstrate its improbability. Juhaynah has also been associated with the last two survivors of the Sufyānī armies at the end of time; see Aḥsā’ī, \textit{Rāj’ah}, 55, 102.
\textsuperscript{1721} Dīnawārī, \textit{Mujālasah}, 2:615; Anbā’ī, \textit{Jamharat al-amthāl}, 44-5.
laments his condition at which God grants him a single wish then multiplies it tenfold.\footnote{1722} Another attributed to Hannād b. al-Sarī describes a group of sinners who, after doing time in hell, request to be placed by the wall (jidār) only to find that it does little to alleviate the heat. They ask to be placed a bit further away and pledge not to ask another favor. The modesty of their aspirations earns them access to paradise.\footnote{1723} Shī'ites too have their rescue missions; in qiyāmah dreams ‘Alī extends his hand to pull away from the flames those who call upon him.\footnote{1724} One could here include the sinner who succeeds in avoiding hell altogether by conveying to God his one hope of forgiveness.\footnote{1725} All such scenarios connect to another popular literary genre, the faraj ba’d al-shiddah stories where hardship is miraculously alleviated through divine agency.

VI. The Final Status of Jahannam:

Sunnī scholars reached an ḯimā‘ endorsing the doctrine that unbelievers were destined to remain in hell for all eternity. The final status of Jahannam and of its Muslim sinners, however, continued to be debated.\footnote{1726} There were three possible scenarios for the afterlife: that hell (and paradise) persist eternally (khulūd); that both should perish; or that hell should perish while paradise would

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{1722} Ibn Mandah, līmān, 2:819; Bayhaqī, Ba’th, 101-2; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Šīfāt al-jannah, 64-5.
\item \footnote{1723} Ibn Rajab, Takhwīf, 169, Ibn Ḥabīb, Waṣf, 47-9; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Husn al-žann, 678-9; Ibn Mandah, līmān, 2:844-5; Suyūṭī, Budūr, 483-8, Anīs al-jalīs, 87-9; Nawawi, Aḥādīth, 23-6.
\item \footnote{1724} Qummī, Manāzil al-ākhirah, 92-3.
\item \footnote{1725} Ibn al-Jawzī, Šīfāt al-ṣalfwah, 1:458; for the longer version see Awzā’ī, Sunan, 678.
\item \footnote{1726} According to Hoover, an ĭmā‘ is binding and once it is reached, the subject is not open to discussion; see John Hoover, “Islamic Universalism: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s Salafi Deliberations on the Duration of Hell-Fire,” MW 99.1 (2009), 181. Accordi
The Qurʾān’s strong assertions of the eternity (khulūd) of Jahannam had some Muslim scholars argue in favor of the cessation of pain.-Qūrṭūbī hoped that Muslims, prior to their release, would undergo a “death” that would numb their pain in hell. The Jāḥizīyyah, a Muʿtazilite aṣḥāb al-kalām group, voiced a similar position where the dulling of pain signals successful acclimatization for those destined to remain there. They would blend into their fiery environment because Jahannam attracts its own “fiery” types. The Muʿtazilite Abū Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf (d. 235/850) imagined that the movements (ḥarakāt) of all inhabitants in the afterlife would come to a halt (sukūn dāʾīm khumūd) culminating for the ahl al-nār in a moment of intense pain (wa-tajtamiʿ al-ālām fī dhālika al-sukūn). Another Muʿtazilite, Thumāmah b. Ashras al-Numayrī (d. 213/828) believed that the kuffār, mushrikūn, Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians, heretics (zanādiqah) and Dahrīs will, like animals and birds, turn to dust. This position was seen to be similar to the one held by Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 128/745) that supported the eventual destruction of both hell and paradise along with their inhabitants after which God would create new worlds. The notion of khulūd in such a context would be pointless; the Qurʾānic emphasis on

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1727 Khallīl, Islam and the fate of others, 80.
1728 Qūrṭūbī, Tadhkirah, 1:409-10; Suyūṭī, Budūr, 459.
1729 Inna [ahl al-nār] lā yakhładūna fihā ʿadhāban bal yaṣīrūn ilā ṭabīʿat al-nār wa-kāna [those on the Jāḥizīyyah] yaqūl al-nār tajdhib ahlahā ilā nafsīhā min ghayr an yadhkhul aḥad fihā; Shahrastānī, Milal, 31-2. Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 543/1148) wished that hell’s inhabitants would be transformed into a fiery substance that would allow them to enjoy their surroundings; Binyamin Abrahamov, “The Creation and Duration of Paradise and Hell in Islamic Theology,” Der Islam 79 (2002), 99-100, 93.
1730 Shahrastānī, Milal, 30.
eternity, as Jahm is reported to have said, is for amplification and emphasis (*al-mubālaghah wal-ta’kid*).\(^\text{1731}\)

One must separate between *khulūd al-nār* and *takhlīd al-kuffār*. After all, hell can remain and all of its inhabitants be released. *Takhlīd al-kuffār* was seen by some as excessive revenge that reason should reject (*al-ta’bid mazīd min al-intiqām yunkiruhu al-‘aql*).\(^\text{1732}\) Ibn al-Jawzī cites three justifications for *takhlīd* of which the most important is the truthfulness of the *wa‘īd* (*ṣidq al-wa‘īd*) followed by the fact that sinners deserve their punishment which would heal the victims who can trust the fact that their enemies are suffering.\(^\text{1733}\) Finally, the longer the *kuffār* are punished, the more steadfast they remain in their *kufr*.\(^\text{1734}\) Clearly for Ibn al-Jawzī hell is not a penitentiary; there is no rehabilitation: the *wa‘īd* is clear and the hardened *kuffār* are incorrigible.

Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756/1355) refuted along similar lines a treatise composed by Ibn Taymiyyah on *fanā‘ al-nār*. Subkī reiterates the position of the *ijmā‘* that paradise and hell will remain for all eternity and that whoever disagrees with this opinion is a *kāfir*. The argument for the release of the *ahl al-nār* is based on *āthār* of the *ahl al-salaf*: the caliph ‘Umar maintained that once the


\(^{1733}\) This is known as *shifā‘ al-ṣudūr*; see Q9:14.

\(^{1734}\) *Ibid.*, 335.
inhabitants remaining in hell are as much as the sands of ‘Ālîj, they will be released. In another, Ibn Maṣ‘ūd stated that a time will come when hell will find itself empty, its gates swinging open in the wind. A third athar, traced to al-Sha'bî, maintained that hell is the fastest in the afterlife to be populated but also the fastest to be depopulated (asra‘uha kharāban).\textsuperscript{1735}

Subkî refutes the first argument by saying he has seen the athar of ‘Umar written in two different ways: yakhrujūn and yarjūn. Should yakhrujūn be correct, maybe it alludes to sinners being taken to the zamharır or the reference could be to Muslim sinners. The second athar on the open gates swinging could relate to Muslim sinners in the first level that would be emptied out. As for the third, the implication is that heaven too would be on the road to ruin, which is false. The ahl al-nār are doomed to remain in permanent punishment; fanā’ would imply either that they die or that they would be released — both positions rejected in the Qur’ān. He reminds his interlocutor that the asmā’ al-ḥusnā include those that deal with punishment such as shadīd al-ʾiqāb, al-jabbār, al-qahhār, al-mudhill, al-muntaqīm and how emphasizing God’s mercy contradicts the wa‘īd of eternal punishment. The afterlife, Subkî reiterates, has two domains, paradise and hell, both valid and both eternal. As for those who argued that evil (shārīr) will be expiated through infernal torment, he responds citing Q6:158, that

conversion in the afterlife is invalid and affirms, like Ibn al-Jawzī, the incorrigibility of the *kuffār*. Hardliners like Ibn al-Jawzī and Subkī attempt to safeguard the message of the Qur’ānic *wa’īd* which was initially delivered with imposing force — a force that, as this chapter has shown, has been slowly eroding.

**VII. Conclusion: Evaluating the afterlife narrative**

This chapter argues that changes were regularly being made to the afterlife’s master narrative which explain the discrepancies and ambiguities in the relationship of the *barzakh* to the *ḥisāb*. Punishment in the *barzakh* is associated with specific sins, how do these relate to the grander narrative of the *ḥisāb*? What justifies the interrogation of Munkar and Nakīr? At which point does the afterlife begin? When does the statement that the grave is the first stage of the afterlife (*awwal manāzil al-ākhirah*) and an illustration (*namūdhaj*) of the punishments or rewards to come begin to take effect? Does the definition of the grave change if its occupants emerge as sinners? At which point do they know they’ve been judged and sentenced?

The notion that the dead have a sense of their fate in the afterlife contradicts the earliest accounts of Muḥāsibī and Asād b. Mūsā. Tradition would

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come to describe the grave as part of hell or of paradise,\textsuperscript{1738} with the dead getting a preview (‘\textit{ard}) of their future placement.\textsuperscript{1739} In the case of sinners such exposure is substantial punishment (\textit{hādhā ḍarb min al-‘adhāb kabīr}). The souls of Pharaoh and his people in Q40:45-6 inhabit black birds are exposed to hell.\textsuperscript{1740} This ‘\textit{ard}, according to Qatādah, is a daily tour of their infernal quarters intended — for the time being in the \textit{barzakh} — to disgrace Pharaoh.\textsuperscript{1741} Similarly, the souls of the \textit{kuffār} would inhabit black birds or they would find themselves trapped beneath a black rock on the edge of hell.\textsuperscript{1742} Some texts push the timeline of this preview (‘\textit{ard}) even further back to the moment of death before the arrival of the interrogating angels. Angels lift the soul of the dying person to God where a verdict is issued after which it is taken on tour to its future dwellings all while the corpse is being prepared for burial!\textsuperscript{1743} In \textit{Shajarat al-yaqīn}, the names of the dying are shaded either in black or in light at which point the angel of death knows how to allocate his charges.\textsuperscript{1744} In short, results are announced at exit polls!

\textsuperscript{1738} \textit{al-qabr ḫufrah min ḫufar jahannam aw rawḍah min riyaḍ al-jannah}; see Bayhaqi, ‘\textit{Adhāb al-qabr}, 55.
\textsuperscript{1740} Qurṭubi, \textit{Tadhkirah}, 1:190-2; Bayhaqi, ‘\textit{Adhāb al-qabr}, 55.
\textsuperscript{1741} \textit{yuqāl lahum yāl Fir’aww hādhīhi manāẓilukum tawbikhan lahum wa-ṣighāran wa-naqmatan}; Bayhaqi, ‘\textit{Adhāb al-qabr}, 54.
\textsuperscript{1742} ‘Aynī, ‘\textit{Umdah}, 23:97.
\textsuperscript{1744} Ash’ārī, \textit{Shajarat al-yaqīn}, 15-16.
The *dunyā*’s timeline begins to be applied to ‘*adhāb al-qabr* so that Muslim benefits begin to be applied retroactively to the grave.\(^{1745}\) Fridays or the entire month of Ramaḍān are periods when punishment is suspended. Afterlife texts have come to define two types of ‘*adhāb al-qabr* — permanent (*dā‘īm*) for the *kuffār* and some sinners (*wa-ba‘ḍ al-‘usāh* and intermittent (*munqaṭī*) for those who have committed minor offences (*man khaffat jarā‘înum min al-‘usāh*) which could be atoned for through prayer or alms. Muslim sinners, as some would maintain, would be subject to the discomfort of the grave for one hour (*sā‘ah wāhidah*) or at most for that first week after burial.\(^{1746}\)

Predictably, the ambiguity of the *barzakh* generated much confusion, especially in its relationship to the grander narrative. The companion Ḥudhayfah b. al-Yamān (d. 36/656) believed that the grave represented one type of reckoning (*ḥisāb*) and the afterlife another and that whoever was called to the *ḥisāb* in the *qiyāmah* was headed for hell.\(^{1747}\) Another unresolved issue was the duration of the ordeals of the grave. In one dream the caliph ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb reports that it has taken him twelve years to clear his record.\(^{1748}\) Al-Ḥakīm al-

\(^{1745}\) *Haj’ah* means sleep and in Hannād b. al-Sarī’*s* words *lī-kuffār ḫaj’ah yajidūna fīhā ṭa‘m al-nawm hattā yawm al-qiyāmah fa-idhā šīha bi-ahlu al-qubūr yāqūl al-kāfir yā waylanā man ba’athanā min marqadinā;* see Suyūṭī, *Sharḥ al-ṣudūr*, 76-7.

\(^{1746}\) *wa-hādhā yaddull ‘alā anna ‘uṣāt al-Muslimin lā yu’adhdhabūna siwā jum’ah wāḥidah aw dūnāhā wa-annahum idhā waṣalū ilā yawm al-jum‘ah inqata’a thumma lā ya‘ūd wa-huwa yaḥtāj ilā dalīl* (bold added); see Suyūṭī, *Sharḥ al-ṣudūr*, 75-6.


Tirmidhī believed that the ḥisāb al-qabr allowed the believer to emerge from the barzakh having settled his debt (wa-qad iqṭuṣṣa minhu) — that was the function of the ḥisāb al-qabr.\textsuperscript{1749} Indeed, for some scholars — Sunnī and Shīʿī — death signaled a minor Resurrection (qiyyāmah ṣughrā).\textsuperscript{1750} Suyūṭī put the best spin on things: the ordeal of the grave (fitnah) is a celebratory moment designed to highlight a believer’s faith (izhār imānihi) and diminish his sins (tamhīś dhunūbihi). As we have seen in our discussion of the evolution of kaffārah, by Suyūṭī’s time, a believer could guarantee to emerge from his grave with a clean slate through a number of venues: the tribulations of the dunyā, the pressure of the grave, the interrogation of the angels, prayers and alms of relatives or friends, the ordeals of the qiyyāmah or the shaf’a’ah of the Prophet, relatives, teachers and so on.\textsuperscript{1751} Basically, hardship of any sort would work in favor of the believer.

What we are seeing is a narrative in progress — a narrative that was never static. By the 8\textsuperscript{th} century hijrī, Ibn Rajab voices the idea that the ḥisāb was already underway in the grave where the Muslim is questioned on the rights of God and man (ḥaqq Allāh wa-ḥaqq ‘ibādihi). Ritual cleanliness affects man’s primary obligation to God (prayer), blood matters relate to ḥuqūq al-‘ibāḍ whose starting point is gossip (ghibhah and namimah). These are straightforward

\textsuperscript{1749}Suyūṭī, Ḥāwī, 2:191; Sharḥ al-ṣudūr, 66. Suyū
\textsuperscript{1750}Qurṭubī, Tadhkirah, 1:263; Aḥṣā’ī, Raj’ah, 39.
\textsuperscript{1751}Suyūṭī, Ḥāwī, 2:188. Suyūṭī
transgressions (aysar anwā’ al-adhā). They that the afterlife could have already begun is a matter Ghayṭī left open — the punishment of usurers in the mi’rāj could have been their current condition in the barzakh or a preview for the Prophet (muththilat lahu) to learn of their fate.

We find interesting reactions to the idea of an ongoing ḥisāb. Ḫadīth cites the case of a man who preempts the torments awaiting him by requesting cremation. Another sought to be buried without his shroud so as to meet his Maker unemcumbered (mujarradan). Do the crucified undergo ‘adhāb al-qabr, someone asked the Shi‘ite Imām, Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765)? He replied that God would order the air to squeeze the crucified in a fashion stronger than if they were in the grave. Other reactions included those who refuted the rhetoric of wa‘īd. Biographical dictionaries cite how the traditionist Yazīd b. Hārūn rebuked Munkar and Nakīr when they asked him who his God was when for the past eighty years he had taught nothing but religion. A similar reprimand is said to have been delivered by Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawiyyah who challenged the interrogating

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1752 Ibn Rajab, Ahwāl, 89.
1753 Ghayṭī, Mi’rāj, 73.
1755 Ibn al-Mulaqqin, Gharīb, 301-2.
1756 Majlisī, Biḥār, 6:266.
1757 He answers ali yuqāl hādhā wa-qad kuntu u’allim al-nās al-dīn mundhu thamānīn sanah; see Suyūṭī, Ḥāwi, 2:195. In Ibn al-Jawzī’s version, Yazīd b. Hārūn shakes the dust off his white beard before answering Munkar and Nakīr (fa-ja’ā’utu unaffīd li)yātī al-bayḍā’ min al-turāb). In this longer version the two angels also question him on one transmission chain. When Yazīd b. Hārūn described himself as trustworthy transmitter (thīqah), they commented that he loathed (yabghaṭ) ‘Ali; see Šīfat al-ṣafwah, 2:10.
angels on the same first question by saying she had lived her whole life with only Him on her mind.\textsuperscript{1758}

Challenges to the Qur’anic \textit{wa’id} came from unexpected quarters. There were those who recklessly embraced the \textit{wa’id}; lovers and their poetry, as we have seen in chapter two, welcomed Jahannam’s slash and burn as worthy of their beloved. Others were unimpressed by the promises on offer (\textit{wa’d}): Ibn al-Rāwandī (d. ca. 246/860) likened paradisiacal pleasures to what uncouth peasants and Kurdish women might desire.\textsuperscript{1759} Ascetics rejected the commercial language of the \textit{ḥisāb}; Ibn al-Mubārak describes a man wearing a woolen \textit{jubbah} on which \textit{lā tubā’ wa-lā tushtarā} (not to be sold or bought) was inscribed — a phrase, as hagiographic entries report, that adorned many \textit{sūfī} garments.\textsuperscript{1760} A famous prayer of Rābi’ah al-‘Adawīyyah challenged the images of \textit{targhib/tarḥib} by brazenly demanding that God burn her in hell if she feared Jahannam and deny her paradise should she have worshiped Him in the hope of attaining it.\textsuperscript{1761} Such freedom from fear can also be seen in \textit{Nahj al-Balāghah} describing those who worship God with reward in mind (\textit{qawman ‘abadū Allāh raghbatan}) as practicing the worship of merchants (‘\textit{ibādat al-tujjār}), those with punishment in

\textsuperscript{1758} “I, one feeble woman, who have only you in the whole world, I shall never forget you that you should send one to ask me who is thy God”; See Āṭṭār, \textit{Muslim}, 51.


\textsuperscript{1761} Āṭṭār, \textit{Muslim Saints}, 51.
mind (qawman ‘abadū Allāh rahbatan) as practicing the worship of slaves (‘ibādat al-‘abīd), and those with gratitude in mind (‘abadū Allāh shukran) as practicing the worship of the free (‘ibādat al-aḥrān). Similarly, Qushayrī alludes to two types of repentance: tawbat al-‘awāmm from sins (dhunūb) and that of the elite (al-khawāṣṣ) from oversight (ghaflah). The unconscious utterances of unruly ṣūfīs (shaṭṭ sl-ṣūfiyyah) were brazen. Some claimed their spit or, as al-Biṣṭāmī thought, pitching his own tent outside hell, could extinguish its flames. Fearlessness defied boundaries; if those in paradise would be denied the sight of God for one hour, according to Biṣṭāmī, they would scream to find their way out of paradise the way sinners holler to be released from their infernal surroundings.

Muslims are exhorted to walk a fine line between ḥusn and sū’ al-ẓann bi-‘Ilāh. Attributes such as cowardice (jubn), stinginess (bukhl) or greed (ḥirs) reflect an inherent distrust in God. Ibn al-Jawzī in his wa‘ẓ warned Muslims

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1763 Qushayrī, Risālah, 11, 61.
1764 Melchert describes ascetics as pessimists and mystics as optimists. Fear ceased to be a deterrent, the love of God was such that fear “had fallen away”; see Christopher Melchert, “The Transition from Asceticism to Mysticism at the Middle of the Ninth Century C. E.,” Studia Islamica 83 (1996): 51-70.
1765 This was also attributed to Abū Bakr al-Shiblī (d. 334/945); see Sarrāj, Luma’, 491; Ibn al-Jawzī, Tāblis, 384-407; Saṭṭārī, Nuzhat al-majālīs, 67.
1766 Qurtubi, Tadhkirah, 1:595.
that divine forgiveness is arbitrary. Scholars favoured caution; Ibn Mas‘ūd’s list of *kabā‘ir* captures this delicate balance: it is a sin to despair of God’s mercy (*qunūṭ/iyās*) as much as it is to be complacent in underestimating the degree of His guile (*makr*). Linguists remind us that the term *rajā’,* supplication made in fear or certainty, is one of the *āḍād.*

The rich hagiographic material on the world of *wilāyah* and *ṣūfī* patronage in Sha’rānī’s time reveals a *barzakh* unlike anything in afterlife texts. The *wa’id* of hell remained intact but, as we have seen, the ideas regarding ‘*itq* and *kaффārah* encouraged the possibility of evading hellfire altogether. The *aʃḥāb al-ahwāl* inflated their abilities to manipulate the *barzakh*; their miracles (*karāmāt*) placed them on an equal footing with the prophets. In 923/1517 a *wali* could boast that he was *šaḥib al-shafā‘ah* in the *qiyyāmah.* Another boasted of being on personal terms with the angel of death, of having access to the *lawḥ* were all the deeds and fates are recorded, of negotiating with Munkar and Nakīr and even revoking death! A third, Shaṭānūfī (d. 713/1314) claimed that a true shaykh is the one capable of deleting his disciplines’ names from the book *diwān al-*

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1768 laysa bayn al-Adamī wa-bayn Allāh qarābah wa-lā raḥim wa-innamā huwa qa‘im bi-l-qisṭ ḥākim bi ‘l-‘adl ... ḫadh shā‘a ‘afā fa-‘afā kull kathi‘f min al-dhunūb wa-idhā shā‘a akhadha wa-akhadha bi ḫ-yasİR fa-‘l-ḥadhar al-ḥadhar; see Ibn al-Jawzī, Ṣayd al-khāṭīr, 140.
1769 These are based on Q41:49; 7:99; see Samarqandi, *Tafsīr,* 1:349.
1770 Anbārī, *Addād,* 6, 10.
1771 Sha’rānī, *Lawāqīh,* 233.
1772 Sha’rānī, *Akhlāq,* 1:453; *Laṭā‘īf,* 480, 482.
ashqiya’. According to Sha’rānī’s ṣūfī master, al-Khawwāṣ, the ‘ārif is as little affected by hellfire than if he had fallen ill. Sha’rānī concurs that the šāhib al-ḥāl’s light can overpower the flames of Jahannam, the flames barely touch him as he crosses the ṣirāt. Sha’rānī exhorts us to believe these claims, which included the wali’s ability to cancel out the sins of his followers, or to gaze into ablution water and identify the sins washed in it. Such boasts would have been unimaginable centuries earlier. In effect, what the aṣḥāb al-aḥwāl were doing were depopulating hell, buying back souls out of hell, from the barzakh end through their special prayers.

Finally depictions of majālis al-quṣṣāṣ reveal how reunions and rescue narratives were popular topics. The Muslim sinner, in the afterlife narrative, starts as the outsider who ends up returning to the fold and to the world of reward and privilege. A parallel can be drawn between the sinner as outsider in the afterlife and the believer as outsider in the dunyā. The Prophet exhorted believers to behave as if they were strangers or merely passing through (‘ābir sabīl) this world. Exile (ghurbah) is synonymous with humiliation...
Islamic tradition offers comfort to the gharīb in this world but none in the next. In the quṣṣāṣ repertoire the afterlife gharīb finds solace in his reunion with God. The return of the prodigal son as a theme has enormous emotional potential especially if seen in the light of Muslim privilege. Tradition tags strangers who die in foreign lands as martyrs. Many vied for that unique privilege: ‘ulamā’ portrayed themselves as ghurabā’ mobbed by ignoramuses; those shunned for upholding al-amr bi ‘l ma‘rūf were also proclaimed as the genuine ghurabā’. 

Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1024), who composed one of the most salient passages on alienation, reveals how the gharīb as a theme filled much of the storytellers’ stock-in-trade. A qāṣṣ narrates the inability of the outsider to fit anywhere. The gharīb has no home — Riḍwān could not locate him in paradise, nor Mālik in hell, nor Gabriel in the heavens, nor Iblīs on earth and only then does the qāṣṣ “locate him” in Q54:55 — the only refuge for an outcast is to be and Clement of Alexandria; see Olivia Remie Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 21-2. I would like to acknowledge Remie’s impressive research and academic contribution. Her recent passing is a loss to all of us colleagues.

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with God. In a second example the qāṣṣ calls out to a list of prophets in an imaginary dialogue: “Moses! What do you want? My brother Aaron! Muḥammad! What do you want? My mother and uncle! Noah! What do you want? My son! Jacob! What do you want? Joseph! Does no one want me? Where is the one who wants me?” At which point he slams a chair and screams: “Yā qāri! Recite!” An assistant — here we learn the performance was essentially a two-man show — recites Q2:52 “They want His face” at which point the majlis erupts in a great emotional upheaval!  

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1784 Ibn al-Jawzī, Quṣṣāṣ, 165.
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