

THE CELEBRATION OF 'ĀŠŪRĀ' IN SUNNĪ ISLAM

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To S. Bashear,
in memoriam.

Muslim scholars show a tendency to consider an innovation the joyful celebration of 'ĀšŪrā' among the Sunnites, innovation which would have been established in order to counteract the Šī'ī festival. This attitude implies that the mournful celebration of 'ĀšŪrā' was older than the joyful one. However, it is difficult to ascertain the character of 'ĀšŪrā' festival in early Islam. Further research is to be done in this field, as well as in that of the association of 'ĀšŪrā' with other non-Islamic festivals. In my paper, I will describe the main characteristics of the celebration of 'ĀšŪrā' among the Sunnites in medieval Islam, paying special attention to a specific practice, that of liberal spending on one's household (*at-tawsī' alā l-'iyāl*). The case of this practice may serve to shed some light on the development of 'ĀšŪrā' festival.

1. The Islamic festival of 'ĀšŪrā' takes place the 10th (or, according to some traditions, the 9th) of *muḥarram*, the first month of the Muslim lunar calendar, and it is singled out by voluntary fasting in the works of *fiqh*¹. The origins of this fast are explained in two different ways in *hadīth* literature. According to some traditions, the fast of 'ĀšŪrā' was practised by the Arabs in Gāhiliyya times. According to another wide-

¹ See on the voluntary character of 'ĀšŪrā' fast, Mālik, *al-Muwatta'*, *riwāya* by Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā al-Layṭī, Beirut 1981, pp. 242-243; *riwāya* by aš-Šaybānī, Cairo(?) 1979, p. 131 (with mention of Abū Ḥanīfa's doctrine). Cf. the commentaries by az-Zurqānī (4 vols., Cairo 1961-62), II, 177-179 and by Abū l-Walīd al-Bāḡī (7 vols. in 6, Cairo 1912-13), II, 57-59. Ibn Rušd, in his *K. bidāyat al-muḡtabid* (2 vols. in 1, Cairo s.d.), I, 213-214 points out that there is unanimity on the commendable character of 'ĀšŪrā' fast; so is the opinion of Ibn Ḥazm in his *Muḥallā* (11 vols. in 8, Cairo 1929), VII, 17-18.

spread tradition, the Prophet established the fast of 'Āšūrā' in imitation of a Jewish practice, with which he came into contact after his arrival in Medina; later on, Muḥammad ordered the Muslims to perform the obligatory fast in *ramadān* and this month, consequently, substituted the day of 'Āšūrā'². At some time during this development, the Prophet wanted to distinguish the Muslim fast of 'Āšūrā' from that of the Jews, so he ordered the believers to fast the 9th of *muḥarram* instead of the 10th and from this arises the *ihṭilāf* on which day 'Āšūrā' falls³. The Jewish practice followed by the Prophet was clearly the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur, the tenth day of the first month of the Jewish calendar; the idea of "atonement" was preserved in the Muslim festival in a tradition which says that the fast of 'Āšūrā' is an expiation (*kaffāra*) for a whole year⁴. Once *ramadān* became the fixed period for obligatory fast, 'Āšūrā' remained, as mentioned, a day of supererogatory fast in the legal theory. However, it maintained a special place among Muslim festivals (*'id*, pl. *a'yād*) as it is shown in the *faḍā'il yawm 'Āšūrā'*⁵.

² See A. J. Wensinck et al., *Concordance et Indices de la tradition musulmane* (7 vols., Leiden 1936-1969), IV, 223-224 and *EP*, s.v. "Āshūrā"; see also 'Abdarrazzāq, *al-Musannaf* (11 vols., Beirut 1970-1972), IV, 285-291, and Ibn Abī Šayba, *al-Musannaf* (5 vols., Hyderabad 1966-70), III, 5-9. Ibn Durayd stated that the form *fā'ūlā'* did not exist in Ġāhiliyya times, but Ibn Abī Ġamra (see note 5) refuted it on the basis of the *ḥadīth* which says that the Arabs used to fast "on 'Āšūrā' day during the Ġāhiliyya". An attempt to reconcile the two traditions on the origins of 'Āšūrā' fast is to be found in Abū l-Walīd al-Bāḡī, *op. cit.*, II, 57-58. S. D. Gotein has pointed out the coincidences between *ramadān* and Yom Kippur, the day of fast of the Jews which is the precedent of 'Āšūrā': see his "Ramadān, the Muslim month of fasting", *Studies on Islamic history and institutions*, Leiden 1966, pp. 90-110.

³ See Ibn Rušd, *op. cit.*, I, 214. The fast on the 9th of *muḥarram* is called *tāsū'ā'*. Ibn Abī Ġamra (see note 5) deals at length with the etymology of both 'Āšūrā' and Tāsū'ā'.

⁴ See *Concordance*, loc. cit., al-Muzanī, *al-Muḥtaṣar* (margins of Sāfi'ī's *K. al-Umm*, 7 vols. in 3, Cairo 1903-8), II, 26; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *ʿIlal al-ḥadīth* (2 vols. Beirut 1405/1985), I, 241, num. 702. The tradition is very often quoted in the works dealing with 'Āšūrā'. On the concept of *kaffāra* in Islam see the article of J. Chelhod in *EP*.

⁵ Chapters on this matter are to be found in the *ḥadīth* collections. 'Umar b. Aḥmad b. Šāhīn (d. 385/995) wrote a *K. faḍā'il 'Āšūrā'* and so did the Andalusian Qāsim b. Ibrā-

Where do these *faḍā'il* come from? There are several explanations about the excellences 'Āšūrā', usually connected with the fact that God bestowed *karāmāt* on his prophets on that day. So, for example, on 'Āšūrā' day Adam and David were forgiven, Noah's ark landed, Abraham was saved from the fire, Solomon was given his *mulk*, the sea was divided for the children of Israel and Pharaoh was drowned, Jesus ascended into the sky, etc.⁶ It is worth noting that very seldom Muslim sources record the event that is generally agreed to have given rise to the Jewish festival of Yom Kippur, a day of fasting and atonement, a day when forgiveness is granted to all who repent fully. That event was the descent of Moses from Sinai with the second Tablets of the Law⁷. In Judaism there are other explanations about the origins of the Day of Atonement: according to some sources, in that day Jacob heard of Joseph's death and mourned for him; it is also considered the day of the circumcision of Abraham and the day of the Akedah, the binding of Isaac⁸. Because of these different explanations there is no agreement in

hīm b. Qāsim b. Yazīd al-Anṣārī (d. 446/1054, see Ibn Baṣkuwāl, *K. aṣ-Ṣila*, ed. Cairo 1955, num. 1015), both works lost (the former is not mentioned in *GAL*, I, 165, SI, 76 nor in *GAS* I 209-210). I have been able to consult three works of this genre: Ibn Abī Ġamra al-Ṭrāqī al-Mālikī (10th/15th century), *In'ām Allāh 'alā l-anām bi-faḍl ša'n 'Āšūrā' bayna l-ayyām*, ms. Topkapi A. 566, 21 f.; 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Uḡhūrī al-Mālikī (d. 1066/1656, see *GAL*, II, 317-318 and SII, 437), *Faḍā'il yawm 'Āšūrā'*, ms. Bibliothèque Nationale Paris, num. 3244, f. 153-175; 'Abdarrahmān b. Muḥammad aṣ-Šanāwī aṣ-Šahāwī aṣ-Ša'ūdī al-Aḥmadī aṣ-Šaḍīlī (d. after 1066/1656), *Galā' al-abṣār bi-dīker ba'd mā warada fī faḍā'il 'Āšūrā' min al-ātār wa-l-aḥbār*, ms. Bibliothèque Nationale Paris, num. 5651, f. 370a-405a.

⁶ aṣ-Šanāwī, f.376b, cf. al-Uḡhūrī, f. 153b-154a and Ibn Abī Ġamra, f.7b, where other events are mentioned: the people of Yūnus were forgiven, Jonas was saved from the whale, Joseph was set free out of jail. According to other lists recorded by the same authors, God created ten things on 'Āšūrā'. See also Ibn al-Ġawzī, *Kitāb al-mawḍū'āt* (3 vols., Medina 1966-68), II, 202 and Qāḍī an-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im al-islām* (2 vols., Cairo 1951-60), I, 338. It is also said that on 'Āšūrā' *taqūm as-sā'a*.

⁷ I have found mention of this fact in Ibn al-Ġawzī, *Mawḍū'āt*, II, 200 and aṣ-Šanāwī, f.374a.

⁸ See *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (16 vols., Jerusalem 1971-72), s.v. "Day of Atonement".

Judaism about the nature of the day. As Hawting has put it, "the majority view [among the Jews] is that it is a day of fasting, certainly, but a day with a positive and joyful character ... In contrast, some saw the day as one of mourning and self-mortification ..., so that, together with abstention from food or drink, it was demanded such things as constant standing in prayer, going without sleep, wearing sackcloth and ashes, and weeping"⁹. This latter interpretation, in Hawting's view, would have influenced the Šī'ī celebration of 'Āšūrā', which happened to be the day when Ḥusayn was killed in Karbalā' in the year 61/680: "Just as in Judaism there were those who saw the Day of Atonement a day of joy and others as a day of sorrow, so in Islam there were similarly competing notions about the 10th of *muḥarram*, 'Āšūrā' day. It seems that the Šī'ī had to struggle to uphold a mournful conception of the day in the face of a tendency to associate it with events which indicated God's blessings on mankind"¹⁰, some of which I have already pointed out. Hawting has also stressed that Šī'ī 'Āšūrā' does not seem to be associated with fast. This practice appears not to have been of great importance either in the popular celebration of the same day among the Sunnites, in spite of the *fuqahā*'s stressing of the fast as the only well-established *sunna* of 'Āšūrā'.

2. The popular practices among the Sunnites connected with 'Āšūrā' seem to have developed especially in North Africa and Egypt. There are several studies dealing with the modern celebration of 'Āšūrā' in Morocco and Tunis. Its main features have been briefly described by Ph. Marçais¹¹: the supererogatory fast recommended in that day has almost no

⁹ G. R. Hawting, "The Tawwābūn, Atonement and 'Āšūrā'", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 17 (1994), pp. 166-181.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, cf. the statement of al-Maqrīzī in paragraph 3.

¹¹ *Ef.*, s.v. "Ashūrā' in the Maghrib", with bibliography; see also E. Doutté, *Magie et religion dans l'Afrique du Nord*, Paris 1984, pp. 526-534. Abū 'Ubayd al-Bakrī reports that on 'Āšūrā' day oxes were sacrificed in Qayrawān and a big fair took place in Monastir: *Description de l'Afrique septentrionale*, ed. and transl. by M. G. de Slane, Paris 1965, pp. 60 and 79; on the celebration of 'Āšūrā' in Monastir see also Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb*

importance, whereas almsgiving is a widespread practice; the children of the Qur'ānic schools ask money for their teachers¹²; the cemeteries are visited and the dead remembered; special dishes are prepared, using eggs and chickens; rites of fire, marriage and carnival are attested in various regions of North Africa.

We find information about similar and other practices in the *Kutub al-bida'* written by scholars who lived in Egypt like Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) and Ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ (d. 737/1336)¹³. Both of them describe and condemn the "innovations" introduced in the celebration of 'ĀšŪrĀ' among the Sunnites:

- it is a day of joy and happiness (*al-farah wa-s-surūr*);
- chickens are slaughtered and *al-ḥubūb* are cooked in a special way¹⁴;
- *ziyārat al-qubūr* is performed;
- the application of henna by the women on their bodies is considered almost a duty;
- the women make also a special linen-cloth to be used as a shroud in order to stop Munkar and Nakīr approaching the corpses;
- to perfume with incense a prisoner is believed to get him out of jail;
- women and men bathe (*al-iḡtisāl*) and colour the eyelids with *koḥl* (*al-iktihāl*)¹⁵;

al-madārik (8 vols., Rabat s.d.), VI, 252.

¹² It was a custom in the Maghrib to give gifts to schoolteachers on 'ĀšŪrĀ' and other festivals: see F. de la Granja, "Fiestas cristianas en al-Andalus (Materiales para su estudio). II." (*Al-Andalus* XXXV (1970), pp. 119-142), pp. 131-132, and H. R. Idris, "Fêtes chrétiennes en Ifrīqiya à l'époque zirīde", *Revue Africaine* 98 (1954), pp. 261-276.

¹³ Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtidā' as-ṣirāt al-mustaḡīm*, s.l., 1325/1907, p. 144; transl. by M. Umar Memon, *Ibn Taymiyya's Struggle against Popular Religion*, Paris 1976, pp. 246-248; *Maḡmū' fatāwī ṣayḥ al-islām Aḥmad b. Taymiyya* (30 vols., Riyad 1381-83), XXV, 299-317; Ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ, *al-Madḡhal* (4 vols. in 2, Cairo 1348/1929), II, 289-291. Ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ is quoted by al-Wanṣarīsī, *al-Mīyār al-mu'rib* (13 vols., Rabat 1981), II, 489.

¹⁴ 'Abdarrāḥīm b. al-Ḥusayn al-ʿIrāqī as-Šāfi'ī (d. 806/1403) wrote a *fatwā* declaring permitted *akl ad-daḡāḡ wa-l-ḥubūb yawm 'ĀšŪrĀ'* (see *GAL* II, 65-66 and Ibn Abī Ḡamra, f.8b). al-ʿIrāqī appears in Abī Ḡamra's works as a supporter of the popular practices of 'ĀšŪrĀ'.

¹⁵ On this practice see also al-Bayhaqī, *Šu'ab al-imān* (ed. Abū Muḥammad as-Sa'īd

– people use to ask forgiveness (*al-muṣāfaḥa*) from each other;
 – it is also a day of liberal spending on one's household and relatives (*at-tawsī' alā l-iyāl*) and, more generally, of almsgiving to the poor and the orphans¹⁶.

The survival of some of these practices in spite of the prohibition of the *fuqahā'* is attested by Lane: "It is a common custom of the Muslims of Egypt to give what they can afford in alms during the month of Moḥarram, especially on its first ten days, and more especially on the tenth day ..."¹⁷; "... a dish, which it is the custom of the people of Cairo to prepare on the day of Ashoorā', ... is called 'ḥoboob', and is prepared with wheat, steeped in water for two or three days, then freed from the husks, boiled and sweetened over the fire with honey or treacle; or it is composed of rice instead of wheat; generally, nuts, almonds, raisins, etc. are added to it"¹⁸.

b. Basyūnī Zaḡlūl, 9 vols., Beirut 1990), III, n° 3797.

¹⁶ Other practices are mentioned in the works of Ibn al-Ġawzī, Ibn Abī Ġamra, al-Uḡhūrī and aṣ-Šanāwī: a special prayer; *ziyārat 'ālim*; to visit the sick; to stroke with the hand the head of an orphan (this practice is mentioned in the Torah according to al-Uḡhūrī, f. 163a and aṣ-Šanāwī, f. 388a-388b); to cut the nails; to recite the *sūrat al-ihlās* one thousand times, etc.

¹⁷ E. W. Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, London 1860, p. 426. The *qādī* Ibrāhīm b. 'Arafāt al-Qanā'ī (d. 744/1343) used to give one thousand dinars as alms every year on 'Āšūrā' day (aṣ-Šafadī, *al-Wafī bi-l-wafayāt*, VI, ed. S. Dederig, Wiesbaden 1972, p. 55, num. 2495). I have not been able to consult B. Langner, *Untersuchungen zur historische Volkskunde Ägyptens*, Berlin 1983, pp. 51-62, where she deals with the Egyptian festivals.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 429. Huda Ša'rawī remembers in her memoirs (*Harem Year. The memoirs of an Egyptian feminist*, tr. M. Badran, London 1986, p. 46): "For the 10th of muharram, *yawm al-Ashura*, we made *ashura*, a special wheat pudding with nuts and dried fruits". A dish called *ašūra* is also made in Turkey according to the following recipe: 1/2 kg grains of wheat (soaked overnight and cooked separately with water); 100 gr. chick-peas and 100 gr. cannellini beans (soaked overnight and cooked separately with water); 2 handfuls of rice added later on; dried figs, raisins, apricots and chestnuts (stewed and added to above); sugar; decorated with hazelnuts, walnuts, almonds, pomegranate, seeds and sprinkled with rose-water. So it is cooked in the vicinity of Karamüsel near Istanbul. I owe this information to Dr. G. R. Hawting, whom I wish to thank for his comments and suggestions.

3. Some of the popular practices of 'ĀšŪrā' have been seen as imitation of the Jews. According to al-Uğhūrī and aš-Šanāwī, *al-igtisāl*, *al-iktihāl* and *lubs al-kattān* were performed by the Jews of Medina and Ḥaybar¹⁹. R. Brunschvig sees in the slaughtering of chickens a probable influence of the *kapparot*, a custom practised on the day before the Day of Atonement (also on the eve of the New Year or *rōš ha-šānā*) in which the sins of a person are symbolically transferred to a fowl, usually a cock or hen; sometimes plants were used (e.g., beans, peas)²⁰. On his part, Lane says that the custom of giving alms "seems to have been copied from the Jews, who are accustomed to abound in almsgiving and other good works during the ten days commencing with their New Year's day and ending with the Day of Atonement"²¹.

It is a common feature among the *fuqahā'* who condemn these practices to consider that they originated as a means to counteract the Šī'ī celebration of 'ĀšŪrā'²². On his part, al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) states that the Ayyūbids singled out 'ĀšŪrā' as a joyful festival by way of liberal spending, special sweets, *al-iktihāl* and visiting the *ḥammām*, according to the customs of the Syrians imposed by al-Ḥağğāğ b. Yūsuf in the days of 'Abdalmalik b. Marwān, the aim of al-Ḥağğāğ being to insult the followers of 'Alī b. Abī Tālib²³. If al-Maqrīzī is to be be-

¹⁹ See al-Uğhūrī, f. 159b and aš-Šanāwī, f. 392b; see also fn. 16 on *maṣḥ ra's yatīm*.

²⁰ *La Berbérie orientale sous les Hafšides* (2 vols., Paris 1947), II, 303-304, note 5 (see also p. 272) and *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. "Kapparot", where it is said that this custom appeared in the 9th century.

²¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 426, note 1.

²² This is especially the case of Ibn Taymiyya, but the same idea can be found in Ibn Abī Ġamra, al-Uğhūrī and aš-Šanāwī.

²³ *Kitāb al-ḥitāt* (4 vols., Cairo 1324-26), II, 365; see also II, 289 on a strife between Šī'ītes and Sunnites on 'ĀšŪrā' day in the year 363/973. The Fāṭimid caliph al-Mu'izz (341/953-365/975) complained to Qāḍī an-Nu'mān on the fact that 'ĀšŪrā' was celebrated as *yawm 'id wa-surūr* (see an-Nu'mān, *Kitāb al-mağālis wa-l-musayyarāt*, Tunis 1978, pp. 397-398). The Fāṭimids do not seem to have succeeded in imposing the Šī'ī celebration of 'ĀšŪrā' on their North African subjects, the only influence left being the visit to the burial place of the head of the al-Ḥusayn in Cairo: see Lane, *op. cit.*, p. 429ff.

lieved, that would mean that already in al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ's time 'Āšūrā' was celebrated by the Šī'ī as a day of mourning and that until that moment it had no special significance as a joyful festival for the Sunnites²⁴.

Following the idea underlying the text of al-Maqrīzī, other Sunnite scholars insist on the fact that the above mentioned practices of 'Āšūrā' were "innovations" and that traditions were invented in order to support them and make them appear as *sunan*. Among these false traditions we find: "who colours his eyelids with kohl on 'Āšūrā' day will avoid any eye disease during the year", "who bathes on 'Āšūrā' day will not be sick during the year"²⁵, "who spends liberally on his household on the day of 'Āšūrā', God will bestow plenty upon him throughout the remainder of the year" (*man wassa'a 'alā nafsihī wa-ablihi/iyālihi (fī n-nafaqa) yawm 'Āšūrā' wassa'a llāh 'alayhi sā'ir as-sana*). This tradition, which I will refer to as the tradition on liberal spending, deserves further attention.

4. The *matn* of this tradition, with the variants I have recorded²⁶, is to be found with different *isnāds*. In a), b), c) and d) I give a selection of the *isnāds* quoted several times with mention of the authors who recorded them; in e) and f) I give two *matn* variants which I shall refer to in the following paragraphs.

a) ... Yūnus b. 'Abdala'lā (d. 264/877, Egypt) ← Sufyān b. 'Uyayna (d. 198/813, Kūfa, Mecca) ← Ġa'far al-Kūfī (d. c. 154/770) ← Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. al-Muntašir al-Hamdānī al-Kūfī (d. after 100/718) ← Muḥammad b. al-Muntašir b. al-Aḡda' al-Hamdānī al-Kūfī²⁷ ← the Pro-

²⁴ The Būyids were the first to establish officially the Šī'ī celebration of 'Āšūrā' in the year 352/963: see H. R. Idris, *Le Berbérie orientale sous les zīrides (X-XII siècles)* (2 vols., Paris 1962), II, 711, note 136.

²⁵ On these traditions see Ibn al-Ġawzī, *Mawḏū'āt* II, 199-205; Ibn Taymiyya, *Fatāwā* XXV, 312; they are quoted by Ibn Abī Ġamra, al-Uḡhūrī and aš-Šanāwī.

²⁶ There is also a very long variant where Abū Hurayra reports that the Prophet recommended liberal spending on 'Āšūrā' together with other practices: see Ibn al-Ġawzī, *Mawḏū'āt* II, 200-201 and cf. II, 202-203. See also al-Bayhaqī, *Šu'ab*, III, n° 3795.

²⁷ On these transmitters see Ibn Ḥaḡar, *Tahḏīb at-tahḏīb* (13 vols., Hyderabad 1907-

phet. Ibn al-Muntašir and Ibn 'Uyayna state that they put to the test the tradition for sixty years and found that it worked²⁸. Ibn Taymiyya deals at length with this transmission, apparently because it was the most difficult to refute, as all the transmitters are considered *ṭiqa* in the *riḡāl* works and appear in the six canonical collections. However, the fact that there is no Companion mentioned by al-Muntašir (who belongs to the generation of the Successors) gives room to Ibn Taymiyya's refutation²⁹. Ibn Taymiyya does not seem to be aware of the variant of this transmission recorded by al-Bayhaqī where it is Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. al-Muntašir who, without even referring to his father, cites the tradition on liberal spending as a mere saying ("kāna yuqālu")³⁰.

b) ... Haysam b. Šaddāh ← Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-A'maš (d. c. 148/765, Kūfa) ← Ibrāhīm an-Naha'ī (d. 96/715, Kūfa) ← 'Alqama b. Qays al-Kūfī (d. 62/681) ← 'Abdallāh b. Mas'ūd³¹ ← the Prophet³². According to Ibn Abī Ġamra and al-Uḡhūrī, this tradition was included by Sulaymān b. Aḥmad at-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971) in his *al-Mu'ğam al-kabīr*,

1909), XI, 440-441 (Yūnus); *GAS* I, 96 (Ibn 'Uyayna); *Tahdīb* II, 84-86 (Ġa'far); *Tahdīb* I, 157-158 (Ibrāhīm); *Tahdīb* IX, 471 (Muḥammad).

²⁸ See Ibn Taymiyya, *Fatawī* XXV, 300 and 313; Ibn Abī Ġamra, f. 9b; aš-Šanāwī, f.384b-385b. I have not been able to check the *Musnad* of al-Ḥumaydī (ed. Ḥ. R. al-A'zamī, 2 vols., Beirut-Cairo 1380-82) where Ibn 'Uyayna's transmissions are abundant.

²⁹ In J. Schacht's view, however, that would be evidence in favour of its being an old tradition, according to his principle "isnāds have a tendency to grow backwards": see *The Origins of Muḥammadan Jurisprudence*, Oxford 1950.

³⁰ *Šu'ab*, III, n° 3796. The *riwāya* of Muḥammad b. al-Muntašir is also found as a mere saying, without any mention of the Prophet.

³¹ Haysam, according to Ibn al-Ġawzī, was considered *maḡhūl* by al-'Uqaylī (d. 322/934: *GAS* I, 177) and dismissed by Ibn Ḥibbān. For the other transmitters see Ibn Ḥaḡar, *Tahdīb* IV, 222-226 (al-A'maš); *GAS* I, 403-404 (Ibrāhīm); *Tahdīb* VII, 276-278 ('Alqama).

³² Ibn al-Ġawzī, *Mawḏū'āt* II, 203; Ibn Abī Ġamra, f.10a-10b; al-Uḡhūrī, f.157b; aš-Šanāwī, f.384b-385b.

where it indeed appears³³. It is also quoted by Ibn al-Aṭīr (d. 606/1209) in his *Ġāmiʿ al-uṣūl* in the chapter *fī faḍl an-naḥāqā*³⁴. His source is the work of the Andalusian Razīn b. Muʿāwiya (d. c. 535/1140), *K. at-tağ-rīd fī l-ḡamʿ bayna l-Muwattaʿ wa-ṣ-Ṣiḥāḥ al-ḥams*, still unpublished³⁵. It seems therefore that Razīn thought the tradition was included either in the *Muwattaʿ* or in the collections of al-Buḥārī, al-Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasāʿī or at-Tirmidī³⁶. But it is found in none of the extant versions of these works³⁷, as can be checked through the Concordance. Among others, al-Uḡhūrī pointed out this fact: he considers very odd (*ʿağīb*) that Ibn al-Aṭīr quotes it in his *Ġāmiʿ* and still odder that Ibn al-Aṭīr's brother keeps mentioning it in his *Iḥtiṣār Ġāmiʿ al-uṣūl*, both stating that the tradition is to be found in al-Buḥārī's and al-Muslim's collections. In my opinion, it is Razīn's work where the explanation of this "oddity" is to be found. Two possibilities can be taken into account: either Razīn included it because he agreed with its contents, disregarding the fact that it was not mentioned in the canonical collections, or he found the tradition on liberal spending in the version at his disposal of one of those collections. The first possibility would be supported by the fact that the *ḥadīth* on liberal spending on ʿĀṣūrā was known in al-Andalus since the days of ʿAbdarraḥmān II (206/822-238/852), as I shall mention. The second possibility could be supported by the fact that there is some evidence on the transmission in al-Andalus of a version of al-Buḥārī's collection which was not the usual one³⁸. Maybe

³³ See at-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muḡam al-kabīr*, 10 vols., Beirut 1983, vol. X, p. 94, n. 10.007.

³⁴ Ed. by ʿAbdalqādir Arnāʿūt (10 vols., s.l., 1969), IX, p. 527.

³⁵ On him see *GAL* SI 630.

³⁶ These are the collections he used according to Ibn Ḥayr, *Fabrāsa* (2 vols., Zaragoza 1894-95), I, p. 123.

³⁷ A similar problem with Razīn is also found in Ibn al-Aṭīr, *Ġāmiʿ*, I, 334, n° 118. I owe this reference to Prof. M. Cook, whom I thank for his comments on this paper.

³⁸ See Ibn Baṣkūwāl, *op. cit.*, num. 1169, biography of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Maḥmūd al-Warrāq (5th/11th century). On the existence of different versions of al-

the extant manuscripts of Razīn's work will shed some light on this matter, but unfortunately I was unable to consult them.

c) ... Šu^cba b. al-Ḥaġġāġ (d. 160/776, Wāsiṭ, Baṣra) ← Abū z-Zubayr Muḥammad b. Muslim al-Makkī (d. 120/737) ← Ġābir b. 'Abdallāh (d. 77/696 or 94/712)³⁹ ← the Prophet⁴⁰. Ibn Abī Ġamra and al-Uġhūrī mention that Abū 'Umar b. 'Abdalbarr (d. 463/1070) quoted the same tradition in his *al-Istidkār li-madāhib fuqahā' al-amṣār wa-'ulamā' al-aqtār fī mā taḍammanahu l-Muwatta' min ma'ānī r-ra'y wa-l-ātār* with an *isnād ġayyid 'an 'Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb*. I have not been able to check this reference as the *ḥadīṭ* does not appear in the only volume published until now⁴¹.

d) There is also a *matn* variant which goes: *man kāna dā ġudda wa-may-sara fa-wassa'a 'alā nafsibi wa-'iyālibi ya'nī yawm 'Āšūrā' wassa'a llāh 'alaybi l-ḥayrāt ilā ra's as-sana al-mustaqbala* ("who is rich and wealthy and spends liberally on himself and his dependents, i.e. on 'Āšūrā' day, God will bestow upon him his blessings until the first day of the following year")⁴².

e) There is evidence of a *matn* variant which mentioned the practice of liberal spending in connection with the eve of 'Āšūrā' (*at-tarwī'a laylat 'Āšūrā'*), as we shall see in the following paragraph.

Buḥārī's collection see F. Rosenthal, *The technique and approach of Muslim scholarship* (Roma 1947), pp. 20, 31.

³⁹ On these transmitters see *GAŚI*, 92 (Šu^cba); Ibn Ḥaġar, *Tahdīb* IX, 440-443 (Abū z-Zubayr); *Tahdīb* II, 42-43 (Ġābir).

⁴⁰ Ibn Abī Ġamra, f.10a (where "Sa'id" is mentioned instead of Šu^cba); al-Uġhūrī, f.157b; aš-Šanāwī, f.384b-385b. As in the version a), the transmitters state that they put the tradition to the test and found it to be true. Another version ending with Ġābir before the Prophet in al-Bayhaqī, *Šu'ab*, III, n° 3791.

⁴¹ Ed. by 'Alī n-Naġdī Nāṣif, s.l., s.d. aš-Šanāwī records: *wa-kāna l-imām 'Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb yaqūlu: aktirū ḥayr buyūtikum fī laylat 'Āšūrā' wa-yawmibi wassi'ū fīhi 'alā ahālī-kum*.

⁴² aš-Šanāwī, f. 384b-385b. This *ḥadīṭ* was transmitted by Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baġdādī with a defective *isnād*.

5. According to the *isnāds* mentioned, it seems safe to conclude that the *ḥadīṭ* on liberal spending was known in Kūfa and Mecca in the times of Ibn ʿUyayna (2nd half of the 2nd/8th c.) and in Baṣra around the same time. Between the 2nd/8th and the 3rd/9th c., the *ḥadīṭ* was known in Egypt (through Yūnus b. ʿAbdalaʿlā) and in Medina. This latter fact is attested in an interesting passage of the *Kitāb al-bidaʿ* written by the Andalusian Muḥammad b. Waḍḍāḥ al-Qurṭubī (d. 287/ 900)⁴³. In it another Andalusian, Saʿīd b. Ḥassān (d. 236/850) says that his Medinese teacher ʿAbdallāh b. Nāfiʿ (d. 206/821)⁴⁴ told him not to transmit the *ḥadīṭ* on liberal spending during the night of ʿĀšūrāʾ (*at-tawsiʿa laylat ʿĀšūrāʾ*) out of fear that it will be considered a *sunna*⁴⁵. On his part, a third Andalusian, Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā al-Layṭī (d. 234/848)⁴⁶ states that he spent the night of ʿĀšūrāʾ in Medina in the company of Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795) and in Egypt in the company of al-Layṭ b. Saʿd (d. 175/791), Ibn al-Qāsim (d. 191/806) and Ibn Wahb (d. 197/813) and none of them mentioned or did anything related to that *ḥadīṭ*. If we accept this statement, it will mean that the *ḥadīṭ* on liberal spending on ʿĀšūrāʾ reached Medina between 179/795 (death of Mālik) and 206/850 (death of Ibn Nāfiʿ) and Egypt between 197/813 (death of Ibn Wahb) and 264/877 (death of Yūnus b. ʿAbdalaʿlā) but it could also mean that all those scholars knew and ignored it. In al-Andalus, the *ḥadīṭ* on liberal spending is quoted by ʿAbdalmalik b. Ḥabīb (d. 238/852), a contemporary of the aforementioned Saʿīd b. Ḥassān, in a poem dedicated to the *amīr* ʿAbdarrahmān II⁴⁷. Two conclusions can be

⁴³ Ed. and transl. by María Isabel Fierro, Madrid 1988, num. VI, 8c; see also pp. 113-114 of the study.

⁴⁴ On him see Ibn Ḥaḡar, *Tabḍīb* VI, 51-52.

⁴⁵ Ibn Nāfiʿ is recorded in al-Bayhaqī, *Šūʿab*, III, n° 3793 and 3794 as a transmitter of the tradition on liberal spending. The anecdote found in the *Kitāb al-bidaʿ* thus seems to point to a change of his mind.

⁴⁶ He is the famous transmitter of the *Muwattaʿa*. On him see *op. cit.* in the fn. 43, p. 13.

⁴⁷ See Qādī ʿIyāḍ, *Madārik* IV, 140 and J. Aguadé, *El "Tārīj" de ʿAbd al-Malik b.*

drawn from this fact. Firstly, 'Abdalmalik never visited Iraq, so he must have learned that *ḥadīṭ* either in Ḥiğāz or in Egypt and this confirms the *terminus ante quem* of its spreading in those regions. Secondly, 'Abdalmalik b. Ḥabīb considered it a sound *ḥadīṭ*, as in his poem he invites the Umayyad *amīr* to follow it⁴⁸. This attitude implies that during his *riḥla* Ibn Ḥabīb met 'ulamā' who were transmitting that tradition as the words of the Prophet and who agreed with the practice.

It has been possible to establish the *terminus ante quem* of the existence of the *ḥadīṭ* for Kūfa, Baṣra, Ḥiğāz, Egypt and al-Andalus. To establish the *terminus post quem* is a more difficult matter. The evidence of the *isnāds* a) and b) could be interpreted in the sense that it was formulated in Kūfa at the time of Ibrāhīm an-Naḥā'ī and Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. al-Muntašir, i.e., in the 2nd half of the 1st/7th century. This was the time when el-Ḥağğāğ b. Yūsuf (d. 95/714) was governor of Kūfa, so maybe al-Maqrizī was right after all when he stated that the practices connected with 'Āšūrā' as a joyful festival originated in al-Ḥağğāğ's time. However, the only safe conclusion with the available data is that the tradition on liberal spending was well known between the end of the 2nd/8th century and the beginning of the 3rd/9th century, enjoying the support of some Sunnī scholars.

6. According to some versions of a), Muḥammad b. al-Muntašir transmitted the tradition on liberal spending without tracing it back to the Prophet, that is, as a mere saying. At the same time, I have pointed out that the tradition is usually accompanied by a *ziyāda* where some of the transmitters say that they put the tradition to the test and found it to be true. This could mean either that 1) the practice of liberal spending on 'Āšūrā' was a new one or at least was not well established and was thus in need of being praised in order to gain support; 2) it was an old practice which was being challenged and was thus in need of

Ḥabīb, Madrid (1991) with a translation of the poem.

⁴⁸ It is difficult to assess whether 'Abdalmalik b. Ḥabīb wanted to introduce the practice in al-Andalus or was simply reminding the *amīr* of it in order to get his share of his "liberal spending".

proofs of its being commendable; so, Muḥammad b. al-Muntašir started by saying “*kāna yuqāl man wassa‘a ‘alā ‘iyālihi yawm ‘Āšūrā*” and the saying was eventually transformed into a prophetic tradition.

The first possibility can lead us to accept the view of scholars like Ibn Taymiyya and al-Maqrīzī who thought that this and other practices were invented in the 2nd half of the 1st/7th century in order to make of ‘Āšūrā’ a joyful festival and therefore an insult for the followers of Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī.

The second possibility leads us on the contrary to assume that it was an old practice that started to be challenged by the end of the 1st/7th century.

What follows are some general remarks on the possible origin of the practice of liberal spending.

7. In Judaism there is a close relationship between festivals and charity: “The Pentateuch ... insists that the needy be remembered when the festivals are celebrated”⁴⁹. Almsgiving brings to the doer many blessing and among them there is atonement for sin⁵⁰. Although charity does not appear to be a specific practice of the Day of Atonement, it is so on the eve of that day: “It is customary to send gifts to the poor, and a duty to ask forgiveness from one another and to appease each other”⁵¹. According to the tradition e), liberal spending took place on *laylat ‘Āšūrā*, i.e. on the eve of the 10th of *muḥarram*. However, I have not found any reference to liberal spending *on one’s household* as a Jewish practice on the Day of Atonement or its eve.

⁴⁹ *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. “Charity”.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* The same idea is found in the *ḥadīṭ* literature: see A. J. Wensinck, *A Handbook of Early Muḥammadan Tradition*, Leiden 1927, p. 19 (*Alms as atonement*). Mālik says in his *Muwatta’*: “*ṣadaqa* is the impurities of people which they wash off themselves”.

⁵¹ *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. “Day of Atonement”, p. 1381. As I have pointed out, to ask forgiveness is also a Muslim practice of ‘Āšūrā’; the *igtisāl* of the Muslims has also a parallel among the Jews: “During the geonic period, the custom of ritual immersion on the eve of the Day of Atonement was introduced” (*loc. cit.*).

In the *ḥadīth* literature there are many traditions which stress that it is a duty for the Muslims to give *an-naḥaqa* to their own relations (*ʿalā ahlihi wa-ʿiyālihi*)⁵². At the same time, to neglect the family or household and to omit taking good care of them (*iḍāʿat al-ʿiyāl*) are considered a sin⁵³. This *naḥaqa ʿalā l-ʿiyāl* is a variety of almsgiving and thus we find it mentioned in the chapters devoted to *ṣadaqa* and *zakāt*. Now, there is some evidence that the fast of 'ĀšŪrā' ended with the *zakāt al-fiṭr*. Qays b. Saʿd b. ʿUbāda, a Companion of the Prophet⁵⁴, is reported to have said: "We used to perform the fast of 'ĀšŪrā' and to give the alms of fast breaking. When *ramadān* and (its) *zakāt* were revealed, those practices were neither ordered nor forbidden and we kept doing them"⁵⁵. At the same time, there is also some evidence that fast and *zakāt al-fiṭr* started to be associated only with *ramadān*. For example, ʿAlī is reported to have said: "The fast of *ramadān* abrogated any other fast and the *zakāt* abrogated any other almsgiving"⁵⁶. The revelation of *ramadān* as the month of fast and *zakāt al-fiṭr* appears thus as having disrupted the same practices on 'ĀšŪrā': some Muslims kept performing them on that day, while others started to oppose them. However, once again I have not found any reference to alms or liberal spending *on one's own relations and household* as a specific practice associated with the breaking of fast or with the eve of fast⁵⁷.

⁵² See, *Concordance*, s.v. "iyāl" and Wensinck, *Handbook*. A man's 'iyāl are "the persons whom he feeds, nourishes or sustains; or the persons who dwell with him, and whose expenses are incumbent on him, as his young man or slave, his wife, and his young child; the dependants for sustenance": E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 8 vols., London 1863-93, s.v. 'iyāl.

⁵³ See, for example, Zayd b. ʿAlī, *Corpus iuris*, ed. and transl. by E. Griffini, Milano 1919, p. 98.

⁵⁴ On him see Ibn Ḥaḡar, *Tabḏīb* VIII, 395-396.

⁵⁵ Ibn ʿAbdalbarr, *at-Tamhīd li-mā fi l-Muwattaʿaʿ min al-maʿānī wa-l-asānīd* (16 vols., Rabat 1967-85), XIV, 322.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, X, 118.

⁵⁷ T. Fahd lists among the features of an Islamic festival the following: "une générosi-

This leads to trying in another direction. In the version d) of the tradition on liberal spending ‘Āšūrā’ and the New Year (*ra’s as-sana*) are mixed together⁵⁸. The celebration of the New (solar or lunar) Year is usually associated with the giving of gifts: this happens in the *rōš ha-šānā* of the Jews⁵⁹, in the *yannayr* of the Christians⁶⁰ and in the Persian *nayrūz*⁶¹. Now, ‘Āšūrā’ was fixed on the tenth day of the first month of the Muslim calendar⁶². This association with the beginning of a new year could have transferred to ‘Āšūrā’ some of the practices peculiar to the celebration of New Year’s day and among them liberal spending on one’s own relations and household⁶³.

té qui se manifeste par des réjouissances familiales des festins, des plats et friandises appropriés à chaque fête, des spectacles et divertissements, une animation dans les rues, des achats qui sortent des l’ordinaire, etc., bien que cet aspect ne fasse pas intrinsèquement partie de l’idée de fête, du moins à ses origines” (“Les fêtes de l’Islam”, *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* XLVII (1979), pp. 191-205, p. 203).

⁵⁸ In the 8th/14th century, Ibn ‘Arafa “autorisait-il les particuliers à marquer ce jours (1er janvier) par des libéralités envers leurs proches. Le premier jour de l’année julienne, concurrancé par ‘āshūrā’ n’est plus guère aujourd’hui remarqué que dans les campagnes”: Brunschvig, *La Berbérie orientale*, II, 306.

⁵⁹ *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. “Rosh ha-Shanah”.

⁶⁰ See F. de la Granja, “Fiestas cristianas en al-Andalus (Materiales para su estudio). I.” *Al-Andalus* XXXIV (1969) pp. 1-53. See also Idrīs b. Baydakin at-Turkumānī (8th-9th/14th-15th centuries), *Kitāb al-lumā’ fi l-ḥawādīt wa-l-bidā’* (ed. S. Labib, 2 vols., Wiesbaden 1986), I, 293-298, where the author condemns “*mā yaf’aluhu l-muslimūna fi nayrūz an-našārā wa-mawāsimehim wa-l-‘yād min tawassu’ an-nafaqa*”.

⁶¹ See *EP*, s.v., “*nawrūz*”, M. Espéronnier, “al-Nuwayrī: Les fêtes islamiques persanes chrétiennes et juives”, *Arabica* XXXII (1985), pp. 80-101.

⁶² “On which day of the Arabian year the fast was originally observed cannot be ascertained owing to our defective knowledge of the calendar of the period; naturally its observance coincided with the Jewish on the 10 Tishrī and so fell in the Autumn”: *EP*, s.v., “*āshūrā*” (A. J. Wensinck).

⁶³ While this paper was in the process of being published, an excellent study appeared written by S. Bashear, “‘*Āshūrā*’, an early Muslim fast”, *Z.D.M.G.* 141 (1991) pp. 281-316.