

The Prophet's donkey in the Shi'ite traditionⁱ

Khālid Sindāwī [Haifa University]

The author of *Īyāt al-Īyawān al-kubrā* says of the donkey that it will not lose its way after having once walked on a certain path, that it is sharp of hearing, patient, capable of performing hard work and undertaking difficult journeys, rarely ill and heals easily, and eats less, needs less, works more and is smarter than most other pack animals: "It prevents its master from taking a wrong step and falling into mischief; by braying it warns him that the devil is standing in the way, calls on God for protection against him, and puts its master on his guard".ⁱⁱ To this others have added that donkeys are the cleanest of all hairy beasts, that they are free of fleas, and that they are affable, good-tempered, composed and contemplative. They love their master even if the latter mistreats them, recognize him by smell from afar, know where they have stayed in the past, possess strong senses of smell and hearing, and never stumble twice on the same spot, just like a wise man who takes care not to repeat his mistakes. Some have described the donkey as a model of sagacity and prudence, for it refuses to trust any unfamiliar source of water and will not drink it before testing it in many ways.ⁱⁱⁱ

It is thus not surprising that asses, in particular the females of the species, have served as the mounts of prophets.^{iv} They are symbols of peace, poverty, modesty, patience and courage. In the Old Testament and the Gospel they enjoy a prominent position. Thus Samuel struck the ground looking for the lost donkeys;^v Balaam learned much from the she-donkey that was able to show him where the angel of Yahweh stood;^{vi} it was on the back of a donkey that Joseph^{vii} took Mary^{viii} and Jesus^{ix} to safety; it was on a donkey that Christ entered Jerusalem in victory;^x when Abraham^{xi} asked Sara^{xii} for permission to visit Ishmael^{xiii} she gave it on condition that he not stay overnight with her and that he remain on his donkey;^{xiv} Jeremiah^{xv} left Nebuchadnezzar^{xvi} on a donkey after the king had been killed;^{xvii} and "Rabbinical Jewish writings provide clear references to the awaited Messiah, son of David / son of Joseph as coming on an ass and, in a few Midrashic commentaries it is even said that this would be the same ass which Abraham and Moses used to ride".^{xviii}

In Islam mounts and beasts of burden are also the riding animals used by prophets, and by the Shiites' infallible imāms, both during their lives and on the Day of Resurrection. Thus, according to one tradition the Prophet Muḥammad will ride al-burāq on the Day of Judgment.^{xix}

According to another *Īadīth* the prophets will be resurrected on the backs of mounts, Nāli^{xx} on his she-camel^{xxi} and FāŌima^{xxii} the Prophet's daughter on her father's she-camel *al-ghaĀbāB*; the Mahdī when he appears at the end of time will be riding "the mount of the earth" (*dābbat al-arĀ*),^{xxiii} and the "imposter" (*dajjāl*) will ride a whitish donkey whose step is a mile long and covers great distances quickly.^{xxiv}

Riding a donkey would appear to have been a characteristic feature of Old Testament prophets, one which Islām then borrowed, so that the Prophet Muḥammad was described as riding donkeys, in addition to horses, she-camels and mules,^{xxv} for the purpose of confirming his prophetic status as an equal to the Hebrew prophets.^{xxvi}

On the following pages we shall describe and analyze the way in which the Prophet's ass is dealt with in the sources of Shiite tradition. The paper will show how this tradition tried to ascribe to the Prophet's ass a connection to the concept of prophetic legacy in Shiite theology, an ancient concept which it claims goes back to the days of Noah.

The Prophet's ass: its name and origins

Shiite sources disagree among each other as to the name of the Prophet's ass, variously using the names *Yufayr* and *yaYfŪr*.^{xxvii} According to some these are the names of two different asses, but the majority are agreed that both names refer to one and the same animal.

The meanings of the ass's names

YUfayr: This is a diminutive of disrespect derived from *aYfar* (= dust-colored), which is itself derived from *Yufra* (= dust).

YaYfUr: The name means a (dust-colored) gazelle or, according to some, a gazelle cub, and was given to the Prophet's ass to describe both its color and the way it ran.^{xxviii}

The ass's origin

There exist three different traditions concerning the origins of the Prophet's ass.

Tradition A.^{xxix} One tradition has it that Al-Muqawqis,^{xxx} master of Alexandria, sent the Prophet the ass YaYfUr as a present with the Prophet's envoy to him, IāŌib bin Abī BaltaYa^{xxxi} (d. 650 AD). The ass was one of a number of gifts he sent to the Prophet, which included also a she-mule known later by the name of Duldul, and four slave girls, including Māria the Copt,^{xxxii} mother of Ibrāhīm, and her sister Sīrīn, mother of YAbd al-Rālmān bin Iāssān bin Thābit al-AnŌārī (d. 674).

Tradition B.^{xxxiii} This tradition relates that Farwa^{xxxiv} bin YAmr al-Jadhāmī, who worked for the Byzantines, converted to Islam and sent the Prophet a letter informing him of this. This letter he sent with a man named MasYŪd bin SaYd in the year 10 H, with whom he also sent a she-mule called FiĀĀa, a horse, a donkey named YUfayr, as well as some fine garments, following which the Prophet accepted his conversion to Islam and wrote to him to that effect.^{xxxv}

Tradition C.^{xxxvi} According to this tradition the Prophet took a black donkey as spoil in the attack on Khaybar^{xxxvii} (628 AD). The donkey recognized the Prophet, who asked it what its name was. The donkey answered that it was Yazīd bin Shihāb^{xxxviii}. The donkey then told the Prophet: "God gave my ancestor sixty^{xxxix} descendants, which none but prophets rode, and now of my ancestor's progeny none is left but myself, and of the prophets none but you. I was waiting for you [to ride me]. Before you I belonged to a Jew whom I made fall off me on purpose, and who as a result beat my belly^{xl} and my back". Then the Prophet said: "I will name you YaYfUr"^{xli} and asked it if it had a desire for females and was answered that no.

From these three different traditions concerning the origins of the Prophet's ass we may conclude that in fact he possessed two, one called YUfayr which was given to him by Farwa bin YAmr al-Jadhāmī, and another, YaYfUr, concerning whose origins there is a dispute between those who maintain that it came from the spoils of Khaybar and those who claim that it was a gift from Al-Muqawqis.

The issue of the origins of the Prophet's ass cannot be decided from within the various sources, and thus remains unresolved.

Whatever the fact of the matter, what is of significance for our purposes here is: A. The fact that the donkey from Khaybar spoke to the Prophet after the latter had taken him as booty; B. The ultimate fate of the Prophet's ass. Below we shall deal separately with each of these two matters and then explain how Shiite tradition tried to use each of these issues to further its religious ideology.

The ability of the Prophet's ass to speak and its conversation with the Prophet

Before dealing with the Prophet's speaking donkey specifically, we would like to briefly survey the way the motif of talking donkey's is treated in Islamic literature.

Islamic traditions contain numerous mentions of talking donkeys who speak to their masters intelligibly using human language. AĪmad Ōughrul Bey included in his distinguished book *Al-MafhŪm min ahl al-Ōamt al-maYŪm*^{xlii} a number of traditions^{xliii} in which donkeys speak. Shiite tradition also contains stories about talking donkeys. From an examination of such traditions the following generalizations can be established:

- a. What the donkey says is uttered in perfectly intelligible human language.

- b. Usually it is the donkey's owner who induces the donkey to speak, although in some cases the donkey speaks entirely of its own accord.
- c. Generally the people to whom donkeys speak are prophets, Imāms or other saintly people. The donkey's utterance usually has the purpose of drawing attention to a miracle^{xliv} (in the case of a prophet or Imām) or a virtuous trait or deed^{xlv} (in the case of a saint).
- d. Occasionally the utterance has the purpose of announcing the appearance of a prophet, or of proving a wronged prophet right.
- e. The target or addressee of the donkey's utterance is usually a prophet or saint.
- f. In the case of a saint the donkey speaks when the two are alone. No one else ever hears what it says; the donkey's speech is an aspect of the grace shown the saint.
- g. At the time of the donkey's speech its owner sits on its back, either at the outset of a journey or on the road.
- h. The donkey at times objects to the path chosen by its master, especially if the latter is engaged in an objectionable activity such as opposing a prophet or wronging a saint.
- i. Sometimes the speaking donkey expresses its gladness that its master or rider is about to become a prophet.
- j. A speaking donkey destined to serve a prophet will refuse to be the property of anyone else. If despite this it comes to be owned by someone who is not a prophet it will rebel against its master and refuse to let him ride it; when the prophet dies, the donkey will commit suicide from grief and so that no one else will ride it after the prophet.
- k. A speaking donkey knows and understands its master's wishes and intentions and will act accordingly.
- l. A speaking donkey will testify against its non-believing master^{xlvi} and will throw such a person off its back. Thus, for example, when Ka'Yb al-Ashraf^{xlvii} came to the Prophet on a donkey's back the donkey threw him off, reared up and struck his head. Then the donkey said to him: "You miserable slave, you witnessed the miracles of God and yet did not believe". Then the Prophet said [to Ka'Yb]: "Your donkey is better than you; it refused to let you ride, nor will you ever ride it again". Then Thābit bin Qays^{xlviii} bought the donkey for one-hundred dinars, and when he rode it and came to the Prophet on it, it was gentle and courteous, and protected him from harm.

In view of the preceding it will then not surprise us to see the Prophet's ass, and, as we shall see below, Noah's ass as well, speak.

Shiite writers thus possessed abundant precedents for speaking asses, which they could adopt and modify to fit Shiite beliefs.

In the account of the Prophet's speaking ass represented by Tradition C above, in which the donkey was taken as booty by the Prophet in the attack on Khaybar in the year 628 AD, it was the Prophet who initiated the dialogue with the captured donkey by asking it what its name was. The donkey then answered that its name was Yazīd bin Shihāb. The Prophet then changed its name to Ya'Yfūr and asked it if it desired females, whereupon the donkey answered that it did not. After that the donkey informed the Prophet that it was the last of sixty donkeys of a line of donkeys destined to serve prophets and that before it fell into the Prophet's hands it had been the property of a Jew whom it had toppled off and who had then beaten and famished it.

Notice that throughout this relatively lengthy dialogue between the Prophet Muḥammad and his ass (a) the latter's speech is perfectly intelligible to the Prophet, (b) the donkey is aware of belonging to a line of donkeys destined to serve prophets, and (c) it is joyful that

fate has made the Prophet its owner. So while it is true that the donkey is outwardly inconspicuous and looks like any other member of its species, in fact it is made clear that internally it differs from them and in fact possesses some of its master's characteristics: it is party to divine secrets, pleased with belonging to the Prophet as if it were part of the prophetic message, distinguishes between Jew and Muslim and like any human being attributes to prophets the ability to perform miracles and supernatural acts and to make any object, living or inanimate, subservient to them, including the donkey itself.

The death of the Prophet's ass

All the traditional sources are agreed that Ya'fūr committed suicide the moment the Prophet passed away, out of grief over the latter's death, as if it had made a pact with itself never to let anyone else ride it, since it was destined for the Prophet only and constituted part of his mission. Now once the Prophet was dead, his mission was at an end and his donkey realized this and understood that its own mission also came to end at the same time as that of its master. That is why it committed suicide as soon as the Prophet Muḥammad, "the Seal of the Prophets", died, making his donkey also the "Seal of the prophets' donkeys".

There is disagreement among various sources as to the method and place of the suicide in question.

Al-Kulaynī^{lix} has this to say on the matter: "Yūfayr died in the hour in which the Prophet of God died; it cut off its halter at Qabāḍ^l and then threw itself down into it, so that it became its grave".

According to another tradition the Prophet's ass killed itself in a well belonging to Abū al-Haytham bin al-Tayhān^{li} (d. 648 AD) and the well became its grave.^{lii}

The deaths of the Prophet's ass and al-ʿUsayn bin ʿAlī's horse^{liii}

In light of the significant role played by the Prophet's ass from the day it came into his possession until it committed suicide, the Shiites created a link between it and al-ʿUsayn bin ʿAlī's horse which was killed in a dramatic fashion by the Umayyads at the battle of Karbalā^{liv} (680 AD). Elements of the "story of the Prophet's ass's end" were woven into a story about the death of al-ʿUsayn's horse^{lv} at Karbalā^l in order to demonstrate that the characteristics and fates of mounts of the prophets and imāms had much in common with those of their masters. Indeed, the horse which ʿUsayn had inherited from his grandfather the Prophet behaved in the battle of Karbalā^l like a human being, fighting bravely alongside ʿUsayn and killing a number of the enemy. At the end of the battle, after ʿUsayn had been killed, his horse is reported to have neighed, surveyed the dead among ʿUsayn's companions,^{lvi} wet its forelock with ʿUsayn's blood and run to the tent of ʿUsayn's wives to inform them that he had been killed. After that the Umayyad forces tried to capture it but it escaped, ran into the Euphrates and drowned itself. Some sources even add that the horse will be resurrected with ʿUsayn and the "Lord of Time" (*Ōālib al-zamān*)^{lvii} or Mahdī. By stressing that (a) ʿUsayn had inherited his horse from his grandfather the Prophet, (b) it committed suicide after ʿUsayn's death and it would not permit anyone else to ride it, Shiite tradition emphasizes the special nature of this horse, whom only prophets or imāms could ride and no one else, certainly not the enemies of the imām!

In the Euphrates River, which is holy to the Shiites,^{lviii} the horse finds a haven. There it can commit suicide and stay for the "interval" (*barzakh*)^{lix} until it becomes resurrected at the end of time. Just as the Prophet's ass drowned itself in a well, so ʿUsayn's horse drowns itself in the water of the Euphrates. Water, the symbol of purification, would thus appear to play an important role in protecting the mortal remains of the mounts of prophets and imāms during the "interval" in which they await their resurrection at the end of time together with their masters. Their disappearance under water may also hint at the idea of the twelfth imām's "absence" (*ghayba*),^{lx} which began in the year 874 AD and is due to end with the imām's reappearance as the Mahdī who will fill the earth with justice just as now it is filled with iniquity. It would thus seem that Shiite writers were trying to

link the suicides of the Prophet's ass and Ísayn's horse with the idea of the "absence", by having both mounts come back at the end of time, when their masters would ride them again. In short, prophets' and imāma' mounts share some of their masters' characteristics and are themselves qualitatively different from their more run-of-the-mill brethren.

How is the Prophet's ass related to Noah's ass^{lxi} and king Solomon's hoopoe?^{lxii}

On seeing this question the reader may well wonder what possible link there can be between animals separated by many centuries from each other such as the above, and between a land beast such as an ass and the hoopoe, a bird.

The answer lies in the efforts made by Shiite writers to prove the superiority of their brand of Islām over all others and to demonstrate its legitimacy and worthiness as a religious faction. In order to do this they delved into the earliest history of mankind, focusing in particular on stories about prophets whose beliefs they were able to prove were consistent with their own. In fact, they went on to claim that many of these ancient prophets were *bona fide* Shiites, and that the Shiite faction in Islām is no more than a natural extension of ancient Shi'ism.^{lxiii} Indeed, attempts were made show that the prophets and their heirs shared common characteristics and traits with members of the Prophet Muḥammad's family (*ahl al-bayt*). Among such shared features were the birds and the beasts belonging to each of these two groups, as will be demonstrated by the following two examples.

Example A: Noah's ass and the Prophet's ass

Shiite writers found a link between the ass of Noah and that of the Prophet. What unites the two, despite the great time difference between them, is a common ancestry: the Prophet's ass is seen as belonging to a line of asses belonging to prophets. These asses and their descendents were bequeathed from prophet to prophet, from Adam down to Muḥammad, the last of the prophets.

In a tradition ascribed to AbŪ ÝAbd Allāh [i.e., the sixth imām, JaÝfar al-Ñādiq,^{lxiv} d. 765 AD) he says: "There was an ass with Noah in the ark. Noah came up to it and polished its saddle. The [ass] then said 'From the loins of this ass an ass will be born whom the master and seal of the prophets will ride; I thank God for having made me this ass'".^{lxv}

In this tradition Noah's ass speaks to its master and appears to know both the identity of future prophets and the fact that its descendants will ride these prophets in turn, all the way to the last ass who will belong to the last prophet. The ass would seem to possess knowledge of the occult and be capable of prophesizing the future, and Noah, being a prophet himself and as such able to perform miracles, understands the ass's speech.

In order to place this tale within a context and provide it with credibility Shiite tradition has ascribed to Muḥammad's ass an utterance, on the occasion of its having been taken as spoil by the Prophet in the attack on Khaybar, in which he confirms what its progenitor, Noah's ass, said.

Example B: King Solomon's hoopoe and the Prophet's ass

The hoopoe is a favorite bird of Shiite scholars, who forbid killing it. In a tradition whose chain of authorities goes back to the imāms it is related in various versions that "on every wing of the hoopoe it is written in Syriac 'The family of Muḥammad is the best in creation'".^{lxvi} The hoopoe belonging to Solomon is considered special by Shiites. Its name was YaÝfŪr,^{lxvii} like the name of one of the Prophet's asses and it was, together with Solomon's ant, one of the world's wonders.^{lxviii}

What is particularly germane to our discussion is the fact that Solomon's hoopoe was named YaÝfŪr. This is certainly no coincidence. Rather, it constitutes an attempt by Shiite writers to create a link between Solomon and the Prophet. It is as if to say that the Prophet inherited the name of his ass from Solomon's hoopoe and gave it to his ass in order to preserve the legacy handed down from one prophet to another in an intact chain

beginning with Adam and ending with ʿAlī bin Abī ʿĀlib, the Prophet Muḥammad's proper heir.

The legacy acquired by the heir of each prophet consisted of many things, including identical names for the beasts which they owned and knowledge of their language. Thus Solomon often spoke to his hoopoe, Muḥammad spoke to his donkey when he took possession of it at Khaybar, and Noah spoke to his donkey when it entered his ark, as we saw above.

In emulation of the prophets Shiite imāms preferred riding on asses

Shiite imāms preferred asses to other mounts, in emulation of the prophets and their humble behavior.^{lxxix} In particular they imitated the way the Prophet Muḥammad climbed on his ass, so that when an imām's donkey swaggered its master would abase himself and place his head on the saddlebow.

In a tradition handed down in the name of ʿAbd Allāh bin ʿAḥḥab al-Makkī^{lxxx} the latter says: "The imām Jaʿfar al-Ḥadiq summoned me after he had saddled a mule and a donkey and asked me if I was willing to accompany him on his affairs. I said 'yes'. He then asked me which of the two mounts I preferred and I answered 'the donkey'. He said: 'I prefer the donkey'. Then we went on our way and as he was speaking with us he was thrown face down onto his saddle for quite some time. When he raised his head I said: 'I see that you are uncomfortable with the saddle. If you would only take the mule'. He answered: 'Certainly not. Even if the donkey were to swagger I would do as the Prophet of God did. He rode a donkey named ʿUfayr which swaggered, and so he [the Prophet] placed his head on the saddlebow, yes indeed. Then he raised his head and said Oh God, this is the work of ʿUfayr, not mine'.^{lxxxi} And the fifth imām, Muḥammad al-Bāqir^{lxxii} (d. 732 AD) is quoted as saying: "My favorite mounts are donkeys".^{lxxiii}

The preceding two traditions indicate that the imāms preferred asses to other mounts, in emulation of the prophets and especially in imitation of the Prophet Muḥammad and his humble behavior toward his mount, which went so far as to ask God to forgive the beast for its misbehavior.

Riding an ass is thus a characteristic feature of prophets and also of imāms. In fact, the latter were careful to emulate the prophets' behavior in many respects.^{lxxiv}

Conclusion

In the preceding pages we saw that asses were the favored mounts of prophets and imāms and that riding an ass was a sign of a prophet or an imām and evidence of their humility. The Prophet Muḥammad was not superior to the other prophets in this respect. His ass, whatever its name and origins, spoke with the Prophet just as the asses of other prophets did, and in the end committed suicide by drowning in a well after the Prophet's death.

Shiite tradition drew on certain details of the story of the Prophet's ass and produced links to its own ideology. Thus it connected the fates of the Prophet's ass and al-ʿIsayn bin ʿAlī's horse, and also used Noah's ass and Solomon's hoopoe, to prove that all the prophets' mounts and birds had certain features in common and that asses were part of a legacy which began with Adam and will end with the last Shiite imām, Muḥammad al-Qāʾim (disappeared at Sāmīrāb in the year 874 AD), a legacy in which the Prophet's ass was one link in a chain.

ⁱ The word *Shiʿite* in this article refers exclusively to the Imāmi version of Shiism.

ⁱⁱ Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad bin Mūsā al-Damīrī, *Īyāt al-Īyawān al-kubrā* (Tehran, Nāʾir Khosro Publications), 1:339.

ⁱⁱⁱ S. Ó., *Nabāhat al-Īyawān*, translated from English by S. Ó (Beirut, Dār Ibn Zaydūn, 1980), pp. 244-246.

- iv For further details on this matter see S. Bashear, "Riding Beasts on Divine Mission: An Ass and Camel Tradition", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 36/1 (1991):37-75.
- v See E.G. Hirsch, "Samuel", *Jewish Encyclopedia* 12 (1901):5-8.
- vi Al-Majlisī, *BiĀr al-anwār*, 4th edition (Beirut, Muḥassasat al-wafāʿ, 1984), 378:13; for a detailed discussion of the story of Balaam and his ass see R.W.L. Moberly, "On Learning to be a True Prophet: The Story of Balaam and His Ass", *New Heaven and New Earth: Prophecy and the Millennium*, ed. by P.J. Harland & C.T.R. Hayward, (Leiden-Boston-Cologne, Brill, 1999), pp. 1-17 (Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 77).
- vii For whom see M.W. Montgomery, "Joseph", *Jewish Encyclopedia* 6 (1901):246-253.
- viii For whom see A.J. Wansinck-[Penelope Johnstone], "Maryam", *EP* 6 (1991):628-632.
- ix For whom see G.C. Anawati, "Ysa", *EP* 4 (1991):81-86.
- x Matthew 21:1-6, John 12:14-15, Luke 19:28-35.
- xi For whom see R. Paret, "Ibrahim", *EP* 3 (1986):980-981.
- xii For whom see A. Rippin, "Sara", *EP* 4 (1997):26-27.
- xiii For whom see R. Paret, "Isma'īl", *EP* 4 (1990):184-185.
- xiv Al-Rāwīndī, *Qiṭāʿ al-anbiyāʾ*, p. 112, quoted in Al-Majlisī, *BiĀr al-anwār* 2:85, 12:112.
- xv For whom see G. Vajda, "Irimiya", *EP* 4 (1990):79.
- xvi For whom see E. Davis, "Nebuchadnezzar", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 12 (1917):912-918, in Islam: p. 916.
- xvii Niʿīmat Allāh al-Jazāʾirī, *Al-Nūr al-mubīn fī qiṭāʿ al-anbiyāʾ wal-murāsāl* (Qum, Maktabat Āyat Allāh ʿAshī al-Najafī, 1984), p. 427; ʿAlī bin Ibrāhīm al-Qumī, *Tafsīr al-Qumī* (Qum, Muḥassasat dār al-kitāb, 3rd edition, 1984), 90:1; both quoted in Al-Majlisī, *BiĀr al-anwār*, 2:85, 14:360.
- xviii *Babylonian Talmud*, Tractate Sanhedrin (London, 1969):98b-99a; Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer (London, 1916):224-225; L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1969): 2:327; M.D. Gross, *Ozar ha-Agada* (Jerusalem, 1965): 1:401-402.
- xix On al-burāq see R. Paret, "Burad", *EP*, 1 (1986):1310-1311.
- xx On Ṣāliḥ see A. Rippin, "Salih", *EP*, 8 (1995):984.
- xxi For details on Ṣāliḥ's she-camel see, for example, ʿAbd al-Malik bin Muḥammad bin Ismāʿīl al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb fī al-muʿāf wal-mansūb*, edited by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḥr al-Ibrāhīmī (Cairo, Dār al-Maʿārif, 1977), pp. 29-31, 45, 352.
- xxii For whom see L.V. Vaglieri, "Fatima", *EP* 2 (19910):841-850.
- xxiii For details on dābba see A.S. Fulton, "Dabba", *EP* 1 (1986):884.
- xxiv Muḥammad bin ʿAlī bin al-ʿūsayn bin Bābawayh al-Qumī, also known as Al-Shaykh al-ʿaḍūq, *Kamāl al-Dīn wa-tamām al-niʿma* (Qum, Dār al-kutub al-islāmiyya, 2nd edition, 1975), 527:2.
- xxv The Prophet had a number of horses, five according to some, more according to others. For details concerning the Prophet's horses and their names see Ibn Juzay al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-khayl*, edited by Muḥammad al-ʿArabī al-khiṭābī (Beirut, Dār al-gharb al-islāmī, 1986), p. 89; see also Muḥammad bin ʿAbd al-Baḥdādī, *Al-Munammaq* (Beirut, ʿĀlam al-kutub, 1985), p. 406. The prophet also possessed three she-camels: al-ghābāb, al-qaʿwāb and duldul. For details concerning them see ʿAbd al-Raʿmān bin ʿAlī bin Muḥammad ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-Wafā bi-awāl al-muʿōafā*, edited by Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Qādir ʿAlī (Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1985). The prophet also had three mules, called Al-Ayliyya, fiḥā and duldul.
- xxvi See Bashear, op.cit., p. 37.
- xxvii See, for example, J. Ruska, "Himar", *EP* 3 (1989):393b.
- xxviii Al-Majlisī, op.cit., 16:97, 127-128.
- xxix For details on this tradition see *ibid.*: 21:45, 47 no. 3; cf. Muḥammad bin al-ʿAbd al-Baḥdādī, *Al-Muḥabbir*, edited by I. Lichten (Beirut, Dār al-ʿAfāq al-jadīda, no date) p. 67;

cf. also Rashīd al-Dīn Muḥammad bin ShahrĀshĪb, *ManĀqib Āl AbĪ ḌĀlib Ḍalayhim al-salĀm* (Qum, Muḥassasat al-ḌalĀma lil-nashr, 1960), 169:1.

xxx For whom see K. Ohrnberg, “al-Mukawkis”, *EP* 3 (1993):511-513.

xxxī For whom see JawĀd ḌAlī, *Al-MufaḌḌal fĪ taḌrĪkh al-Ḍarab qabla al-islĀm* (Baghdad, third printing, 1993), 6:432.

xxxīī For whom see F. Buhle, “Mariya”, *EP* 5 (1991):575; Muḥammad al-TawnajĪ, *MuḌjam aḌĀm al-nisĀḌ* (Beirut, DĀr al-Ḍilm lil-malĀyĪn, first edition, 1989), p. 163; Al-ḌAsqalĀnĪ, *Al-IḌĀba fĪ tamyḌz al-ḌalĀba*, 1:520-521.

xxxīīī For details concerning this tradition see bin ShahrĀshĪb, *op.cit.*, 1:168-169, quoted in Al-MajlisĪ, *op.cit.*, 21:375, 408-409, 61:195.

xxxīīīī In some versions of this tradition the name is ḌUmar and not ḌAmr; for details see bin ShahrĀshĪb, *op.cit.*, 1:168, 171; Al-MajlisĪ, *op.cit.*, 16:107, 375:21, 61:195.

xxxīīīī The tradition goes on to relate that when the Byzantine emperor learned of Farwa’s conversion to Islam he summoned him and demanded that he retract. When Farwa refused the emperor put him in prison and then took him out and had him killed and crucified. For additional details see Al-MajlisĪ, *op.cit.*, 21:409.

xxxīīīīī For more details concerning this tradition see QuḌb al-Dīn al-RĀwindĪ, *Al-KharĀḌij wal-jarĀḌīl* (Qum, Muḥassasat al-imĀm al-mahdĪ, third printing, 1989)1:42; ḌAlī bin ḌUnis al-NabĀḌ al-BayĀḌ, *Al-ḌirĀḌ al-mustaḌm ilĀ mustafiqqḌ al-taqdḌm* (Al-Najaf, Al-Maktaba al-Īyadariyya, first printing, 1965)1:53; Al-RĀwindĪ, *QiḌaḌ al-anbiyĀḌ*, p. 312, no. 387; Al-MajlisĪ, *op.cit.*, 16:100, 17:404; Fakhr al-Dīn al-ḌarḌī, *MajmaḌ al-balrayn*, edited by Al-Sayyid Āmad al-ḌsaynĪ (Qum, Maktabat nashr al-thaqĀfa al-islĀmiyya, second printing, 1986)2:207.

xxxīīīīī For details concerning the attack on Khaybar see C.E. Bosworth, “Khaybar”, *EP* 4 (1990): 1137-1143.

xxxīīīīīī According to some sources the name was ḌAmr bin ShihĀb. For details see Āmad Ōghrul Bey, *Al-MafḌum min ahl al-Ḍamt al-maḌlūm* (Cairo, Al-MaḌbaḌa al-wahbiyya, 1864), p. 82.

xxxīīīīīīī Seventy according to Ōghrul Bey, *op.cit.*, p. 82.

xl Another source has “famished my belly”. For details see Al-RĀwindĪ, *op.cit.*, 1:42.

xli According to a number of sources the name is Al-YaḌfūr. See Al-NabĀḌ, *op.cit.*, 1:53.

xliī Ōghrul Bey quotes four traditions in which donkeys speak. These are the following: the case of the Prophet’s ass that spoke to the Prophet at Khaybar; Balaam’s donkey that refused its master’s demand to take him to curse Moses; the she-donkey of ĪlḌma al-SaḌdiyya the Prophet’s wet nurse, which spoke in praise of the Prophet while he was being nursed; and the donkey of AbŪ SulaymĀn which advised its master against a journey which he was considering.

¹ I would like to thank Prof. J. Sadan of Tel-Aviv University for drawing my attention to this important book.

xliīī For details concerning these traditions see bin ShahrĀshĪb, *op.cit.*, 1:93; Al-Īsan al-ḌAskarĪ, *TafsḌr al-imĀm al-ḌAskarĪ* (Qum, Madrasat al-imĀm al-mahdĪ, first printing, 1989), pp. 97-98, quoted in Al-MajlisĪ, *op.cit.*, 17:304-307; Al-RĀwindĪ, *op.cit.*, p. 173, quoted in *BiĀr al-anwĀr*, 13:307.

xliīīī What is unique about Shiite attitude toward miracles (*muḌjiza*) is that it ascribes the ability to perform *muḌjizĀt* to imĀms as well as to prophets. For details see M.A. Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early ShiḌism: The Sources of Esotericism I Islam*, translated by D. Streight, New-York, 1994, p. 91; Al-Shaykh al-MufḌḌ, *AwḌbil al-maqĀlĀt fĪ al-madhĀhib wal-mukhtĀrĀt* (TabrḌz, 1951):40-41.

xliīīīī For the differences between miracles (*muḌjiza*) and grace (*karĀma*) see L. Gardet, “KarĀma”, *EP* 4 (1990):615-616; E. Geoffroy, “Attitudes contrastées des mystiques musulmans face au miracle”, in: *Miracle et karama: hagiographies médiévales comparés*, vol. 2; D. Aigle (ed.), publications de l’EPHE, vol. 109, 2000, pp. 301-316; R. Gramlich, *Die Wunder der Freunde Gottes: Theologien und Erscheinungsformen des islamischen Heiligenwunders*, Freiburger Islamstudien, vol. 11 (Wiesbaden, 1987): 16f; J. Lobenstein,

“Miracles in ŠiYi Thought: A Case Study of the Miracles Attributed to Imam GaYfar al-Sadiq”, *Arabica* 2 (2003):202-211; A.J. Wensinck, “MuYdjiza”, *EP* 7 (1993):295.

^{xlvi} Al-YAskarD, *op.cit.*, pp. 95-97, quoted in Al-MajlisD, *op.cit.*, 17:304-307; Bin ShahrAshÜb, *op.cit.*, 1:93.

^{xlvii} For whom see W. Montgomery Watt, “KaYb b. al-Ashraf”, *EP* 4 (1990):315.

^{xlviii} For whom see TaqDy al-DÐn al-Íasan bin ÝAIÐ bin DÁud, *KitÁb al-rijÁl* (Teheran, MuPassasat al-nashr, Teheran University, 1964), p. 433, no. 84; Al-Íasan bin YÜsuf bin ÝAIÐ bin al-MuÕahhar al-ÍilÐ (also known as the ÝallÁma al-ÍilÐ), *RijÁl al-YallÁma al-ÍilÐ* (Qum, DÁr al-dhakhÁpir, 1991), p. 29, no. 11.

^{xliv} MuÍammad bin IsÁaq al-KulaynD, *Al-KÁfD* (Teheran, DÁr al-kutub al-islÁmiyya, fourth printing, 1946)1:237, no. 9, quoted by al-MajlisD, *op.cit.*, 22:457.

^l The name of a well at the home of Thawba bin al-Íusayn bin al-SÁPib bin AbÐ UbÁba, which gave its name also to the village in which it was located. For further details see ShihÁb al-DÐn YÁqÜt bin ÝAbd AllÁh al-ÍamawD, *MuYjam al-buldÁn* (Beirut, DÁr ÝyÁP al-turÁth, 1979) 4:301-302; MuÍammad bin ÝAbd al-MunÝim al-ÍimyarD, *Al-RawÁ al-miYÕÁr fD khabar al-aqÕÁr*, edited by ÍsÁn ÝAbbÁs (Beirut, Maktabat LubnÁn, second printing, 1984), pp. 452-453; M. Lecker, *Muslims, Jews and Pagans: Study on Early Islamic Medina* (Leiden, 1995): 133.

^{li} For whom see Ibn DÁud, *op.cit.*, p. 406, no. 95; Al-ÍilÐ, *op.cit.*, p. 189, no. 21; Ibn al-ÍabÐb, *op.cit.*, p. 268; AÍmad bin AbÐ ÝAbd AllÁh al-BurqD, *KitÁb al-rijÁl* (Teheran, MuPassasat al-nashr, Teheran University, 1964), p. 64; AbÜ JaYfar al-ÓawsD, *RijÁl al-ÓawsD* (Qum, MuPassasat al-nashr al-islÁmD, 1995), p. 86, no. 867-1.

^{lii} Al-RawindD, *op.cit.*, 1:42; Al-MajlisD, *op.cit.*, 17:416.

^{liii} For whom see L. Veccia Vaglieri, “al-Husayn b. ÝAli b. Abu Talib”, *EP* 3 (1986): 607-615.

^{liiv} For details about KarbalÁP see E. Honigmann, “Karbala”, *EP* 4 (1990):637-639. For details about the battle of KarbalÁP see AbÜ Mikhnaf (LÜÔ b. YaYyÁ), *KitÁb maqtal al-Íusayn*, translated by Hamid Mavani (Montreal, 2002):65f; H.M. Jafri, *The Origins and Early Development of ShiYa Islam* (London, New-York, Beirut, 1979):174-221.

^{liv} Shiite sources disagree on the name of al-Íusayn's horse. Thus AbÜ Mikhnaf gives its name as MaymÜn, whereas AkhÕab KhawÁrizm gives it as Al-Murtajaz. For details see AbÜ Mikhnaf (LÜÔ b. YaYyÁ), *KitÁb maqtal al-Íusayn*, edited by ÝUmar AbÜ al-NaÕr (Beirut, 1971):48; AkhÕab KhawÁrizm (Al-Muwaffaq bin AÍmad al-BakrD al-MakkD al-ÍanafD), *Maqtal al-Íusayn* (Najaf, MaÕbaYat al-zahrÁP, 1948):38; Kh. SindÁwD, *The MuqÁtil in Shiite Literature*, Ph.D. dissertation (Hebrew) (Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, Israel, 2000):11.

^{lv} In all seventy-two men accompanied Íusayn from al-MadÐna to KarbalÁP, fought at his side and were killed to the last man. The Shiites call them also *anÕÁr al-Íusayn*. Numerous biographies of these “helpers” have been compiled, among them: MahdÐ Shams al-DÐn, *AnÕÁr al-Íusayn* (Beirut, 1996); ÝAIÐ MuÍammad Dukhayyal, *AÕÍÁb al-Íusayn* (Beirut, DÁr al-tayyÁr al-jadÐd, 1985); MuÍammad bin al-Shaykh ÓÁhir al-SamÁwD, *IbÕÁr al-Yayn fD AnÕÁr al-Íusayn Ýalayhi al-salÁm* (Qum, Maktabat baÕÐratD, no date).

^{lvii} The appellation of the twelfth imÁm, MuÍammad bin al-Íasan al-YAskarD, who disappeared in SamirrÁP in 874 AD. He is also known by the following names: Al-QÁPim, al-MahdÐ, al-MuntaÛar, Íujjat AllÁh and AbÜ al-QÁsim. For details concerning the twelfth imÁm see, for example, J.G.J. Ter Haar, “Muhammad al-KaPim”, *EP* 7 (1993):443; Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide ...*, p. 175, no. 235.

^{lviii} Cf. Kh. SindÁwiD, “The Cult of the Euphrates River and Its Significance among ShiYites”, *Der Islam* (forthcoming).

^{lix} For details on *barzakh* see B. Carra de Vaux, “Barzakh”, *EP* 1 (1986):1071-1072.

^{lx} For more details on the “absent” imÁm among imÁmD Shiites see Amir-Moezzi, *op.cit.*, pp. 108-114; M. Momen, *An Introduction to ShiYi Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver ShiYism* (New-Haven - London, 1985), Ch. 8; H. Halm, *Die Schia* (Darmstadt, 1988), Ch. 4.

^{lxi} For whom see C.E. Bosworth, “Nuh”, *EP* 3 (1995):108-110.

^{lxii} J. Walker - [P. Fenton], “Sulayman b. Dawud”, *EP* 9 (1997):822-824.

- lxiii For an excellent treatment of this subject see E. Kohlberg, “Some Shi‘ī views of the Antediluvian World”, *Studia Islamica* 52 (1980):41-66.
- lxiv For whom see M.G.S. Hodgson, “Dja‘far al-Sadik”, *EP* 3 (1991):374-375.
- lxv Al-Kulaynī, *op.cit.*, 1:237, no. 9, quoted by al-Majlisī, *op.cit.*, 17:405, no. 23.
- lxvi *Ibid.* 6:224, no. 1; Al-Shaykh al-‘urr al-‘Āmilī (Mu‘ammad bin al-‘asan bin ‘Alī bin Mu‘ammad bin al-‘usayn), *Was‘Ābil al-shi‘Ā* (Qum, Mu‘assasat ‘Al al-bayt li-‘Īyā‘ al-turĀth, 1989) 23:394, no. 29833; al-Majlisī, *op.cit.* 27:261, no. 1; 383:61, no. 45; Abū Ja‘far al-‘awsī, *Al-Am‘Āl* (Qum, D‘Ar al-thaqāfa lil-nashr, 1994): 350, no. 724-64; Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (Mu‘ammad bin ‘Alī bin al-‘usayn, also known as Al-Shaykh al-‘adūq), *‘Uyūn akhbār al-ri‘Ā* (Teheran, D‘Ar al-‘Ālam lil-nashr (Jahan), 1958) 1:261, no. 20.
- lxvii Al-Majlisī, *op.cit.*, 14:129; 61:285; Al-Jaz‘īrī, *op.cit.*, 379.
- lxviii Among the other wonders of the world according to Shiite belief are the following: the dog of the Seven Sleepers, ‘Uzayr’s ass, al-Sāmir’s calf, ‘Alī’s she-camel, Ishmael’s ram, Jona’s whale, Noah’s crow, Aws bin Ahnān’s wolf and ‘Alī’s sword. For details see Ibn ShahrĀshūb, *op.cit.*, 267:3, quoted also by al-Majlisī, *op.cit.*, 39:82.
- lxix Al-Mḏrzā ‘asan al-Nūrī, *Mustadrik al-was‘Ābil* (Qum, Mu‘assasat ‘Al al-bayt li-‘Īyā‘ al-turĀth, 1988) 8:268, nos. 9415-9421. Among the Shiite imāms reported to have used asses as their mounts are ‘Alī bin Mūsā al-Ri‘Ā (d. 818 AD), Ja‘far al-‘Ādiq (d. 765) and ‘Alī bin al-‘usayn (d. 713). For details see al-‘urr al-‘Āmilī, *op.cit.*, 277:15; al-Majlisī, *op.cit.*, 47:21; 72:130; 83:201; Mu‘ammad bin ‘asan bin Farrūkh al-Qummī, *Ba‘Ā‘ir al-darajāt* (Qum, Manshūrāt maktabat ‘Āyat Allāh al-‘u‘mā al-Mar‘ashī al-Najafī, 1984): 495; Mu‘ammad bin Jarḏr bin Rustum al-‘obarī, *Dal‘Ābil al-imāma* (Qum, D‘Ar al-Dhakh‘īr lil-ma‘bū‘Āt, 1963): 156, 187.
- lxx For whom see al-Kishshī, *Rijāl*, 215, no. 385; al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 228, no. 601.
- lxxi Al-Kishshī, *op.cit.*, 215-216, no. 386, quoted by al-Majlisī, *op.cit.*, 61:200, no. 47; 73:291, no. 14; 73:300, no. 40; al-Nūrī, *op.cit.*, 8:265, no. 9410-1; al-‘Āmilī, *op.cit.*, 11:489-490, no. 15344; al-Kulaynī, *op.cit.*, 8:276, no. 417; ‘Āmad bin Mu‘ammad bin Khālid al-Barqī, *Al-Malāsīn* (Qum, D‘Ar al-kutub al-islāmiyya, second printing, 1951) 2:352, no. 41; Mu‘ammad bin Mas‘ūd al-‘Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr al-‘Ayyāshī*, edited by Hāshim Rasūlī al-Ma‘allātī (Teheran, Al-Ma‘ba‘Ā al-‘ilmiyya, 1960) 2:285, no. 41.
- lxxii For whom see E. Kohlberg, “Muhammad b. ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Abidin”, *EP* 7 (1993):397-400.
- lxxiii Ra‘ḏ al-Dḏn al-‘asan bin al-Fa‘āl al-‘obarsī, *Makārim al-akhlāq* (Qum, D‘Ar al-sharḏf al-ra‘ḏ, fourth printing, 1992):265.
- lxxiv For more details concerning similarities between imāms and prophets see, for example, M.H. Tabataba‘ī, *Shi‘īte Islam* (New York, State of New York University Press, Albany, 1977): 185-186.