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An Ismā‘īlī Thinker on Ishmael (Ismā‘īl) and Isaac (Iṣḥāq) 2: Translation of the *Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ* by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī 14

Shin Nomoto

Introduction

This article provides the translation of the second segment or section (*faṣl*) from the chapter entitled ‘The Chapter on Ishmael and Isaac’ (*Bāb al-Qawl fī Ismā‘īl wa-Iṣḥāq*) from Part Three of the *Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ* (*The Book of Correction*) by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. ca. 332 A.H./933–4 C.E., a Neoplatonist-influenced Ismā‘īlī thinker from the 4th c. A.H./10th c. C.E.¹ This study is the 14th in a series constituting the English

1 The critical edition of the *Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ* appeared as: Abū Ḥātim Aḥmad ibn Ḥamdān al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ*, ed. Ḥ. Mīnūchihr and prepared for publication by M. Mohaghegh with an English introduction by S. Nomoto (Tehran, 1377 A.H./1998 C.E). When the text of *al-Iṣlāḥ* is referred to in this article, the pagination of this printed edition is followed. In addition, I have consulted the following two manuscripts: MS Hamdani, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London (originally preserved in Milwaukee, Wis.) (referred to as H); and MS Tübingen Ma VI 327, Universität Tübingen (referred to as T). The segment translated in this article is found in al-Rāzī, *al-Iṣlāḥ*, pp. 172–177/H. ff. 86r–89r/T. ff. 85v–89r. As for MS H, I am most grateful to Professor Abbas Hamdani (Professor Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) for his generous permission to use the MS which was originally in his possession, and to Dr. Paul E. Walker (Senior Lecturer at the University of Chicago), for kindly reproducing for me his photocopy of the MS. For the references to the life and works of al-Rāzī, see the works cited in note 1 in the introduction of our 5th sequel of the translation of the text of *al-Iṣlāḥ*,

translation of the entire text of *al-Iṣlāḥ*.²

As in several parts of *al-Iṣlāḥ* this section starts with a quotation from al-Nasaḥī's *Kitāb al-Maḥṣūl* (*The Book of Product*) according to which the people described in the Qur'ān having been transformed into the apes by God as a punishment for their disobedience to God were those who had disobeyed their superiors in the era of Abraham by indulging in amusing things. Opposing this statement al-Rāzī asserts that those people lived in the cycle (*dawr*) of Moses.³ Al-Rāzī's claim is clearly set as a counter opinion on al-Nasaḥī's discussion of Zarathustra's (or Zoroaster) time and place in the history of the prophet, which can be found in the chapter on the third enunciator-prophet (*thālith al-nuṭaqā'*) in Part 3. Al-Rāzī believes that Zoroaster was a member of the missionary community (*da'wa*) of Moses, not that of Abraham as asserted by al-Nasaḥī.⁴

² 'An Ismā'īlī Thinker on the First Enunciator-Prophet 1: Translation of the *Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ* by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī 5,' *Reports of the Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies* 41 (2010): pp. 71–95.

² The first and second articles, the two halves of the third article, and the fourth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth articles of this project have been respectively published in *Reports of the Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies* 34 (2002): pp. 97-152; 35 (2003): pp. 105-131; 36 (2005): pp. 45-78; 39 (2008): pp. 99-119; 40 (2009): pp. 69-90; 42 (2011): pp. 127–149; 43 (2012): pp. 117-135; 44 (2013): pp. 309-325; 45 (2014): pp. 283-296; 46 (2015): pp. 419-439; 47 (2016): pp. 225-239; 48 (2017): pp. 299-319; 49 (2018): pp. 203-117. As for the fifth article, see n. 1 above. The complete titles of these articles are omitted here for the sake of brevity.

³ Al-Rāzī, *al-Iṣlāḥ*, p. 172/H f. 86r/T ff. 85v-86r.

⁴ Al-Rāzī, *al-Iṣlāḥ*, pp. 148-167/H ff. 72r-83r/T ff. 71v-82v. Translation of this chapter is found in S. Nomoto, 'An Ismā'īlī Thinker on Various Religions and Muslim Groups 1: Translation of the *Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ* by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī 10,' *Reports of the Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies* 46 (2015), pp. 419-439; the sequel 11th, 47 (2016): pp. 225-239; sequel no. 12, 48 (2017): pp. 299-319. See also S. Nomoto, 'An Early Ismaili View of Other Religions: A Chapter from the *Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ* by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. ca 322/934),' in T. Lawson (ed.), *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought, Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt* (London/New York: I. B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, 2005), pp. 142-156. Cf. J. van Ess' short section on al-Rāzī in his *Das Eine und das Andere: Beobachtungen an islamischen häresiographischen Texten* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), vol. 1: pp. 506-514.

The main topic of this section is not Zoroaster's time and place in the history of the prophet: rather the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'ān, 2: 65; 4: 143; 7: 163, 164, and 166, which seemingly share the same theme or can be related to the common context (with possible exception of Q 4: 143): an episode in which some Jews are said to have been transformed into apes as a punishment for their breaking of the Sabbath. This kind of episode is an example of punishment stories a category of the Qur'ānic stories discussed in modern scholarship. In this type of stories, certain communities or members of a particular community are punished because of their disobedience to the prophet sent by God or for breaking precept(s) imposed by Him.⁵

Then who are those transfigured to “apes” in those verses according to al-Rāzī? He identifies them as follows:

“...We told them: Become despicably outcast apes!” (Q 7: 166). That is, they were expelled from the missionary community, and their hypocrisy manifested itself. For they had been metamorphosed from the form of humanity into the form of the ape, namely, an ugly form. This means that they deviated from the rule of the People of the Hierarchy (*hudūd*), namely, those who reside in the [hierarchical] missionary community and those who are faithfully obedient [to their superiors], leaving for the traits of the hypocrites.⁶

They are the people who were “expelled from the missionary community” because of their deviation from the right path, or the right interpretation of the precepts. The right

5 See for example, D. Marshall, “Punishment Stories,” in J. McAuliffe (General Editor) et al (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2001-2006), vol. 4: pp. 318-322. Cf. H. Eisenstein, “Animal Life,” in J. McAuliffe (General Editor) et al (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. 1: pp. 93-102, especially pp. 97-99 (on God's punishments); F. Viré, “Kird”, in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs (consulted online on 03 February 2019 <http://dx.doi.org.kras1.lib.keio.ac.jp/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4386>).

6 Al-Rāzī, *al-Iṣlāḥ*, p. 176/H f. 88r/T f. 87v.

interpretation was shown by their superiors such as the fundament (*asās*), namely, the direct successor of enunciator-prophet (*nāḥiq*), the completers (atimmā', sg. mutimm), i.e. imand the lieutenants (*lawāḥiq*, sg. *lāḥiq*) each of whom is the leader of one of twelve sectors (sg. *jazīra*, pl. *jazā'ir*), the regions functioned as archdioceses in the Ismā'īlī *da'wa* or missionary community.⁷ In other words they did not recognize their authority.⁸ Who are really the people being attacked because of their disobedience to the divinely-supported (*mu'ayyadūn*) and hierarchs of the missionary community in reality? Do they represent a metaphor for particular group that lived in the cycle of the Prophet Muḥammad or even specific people contemporary to al-Rāzī? These questions will be investigated in our future research.

7 Al-Rāzī, *al-Iṣlāḥ*, p. 175/H. f. 87r/T. f. 87v.

8 Al-Rāzī, *al-Iṣlāḥ*, passim in pp. 174-176/H. ff. 86v-88r/T. ff. 86v-87v.

**Translation of
the Second Segment of
the Chapter on Ishmael and Isaac
from
Part Three of Kitāb *al-Is̄lāh*
by
Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī**

1. The edition of the text used for this translation is:

Abu Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Is̄lāh*. Ed. Ḥasan Mīnūchīhr [and] prepared for publication by Mahdī Mohaghegh. Tehran, 1998. Hereafter this edition is referred to as the ‘printed edition’ or ‘printed ed.’ The printed edition is based on the following three manuscripts:

MS Tehran-Markazī, F 1413 (microfilm) and 6180/1-2 (photocopy), Markazī Library, University of Tehran represented as A (*alif*) in the printed edition;

MS Tehran-Markazī, F. 1507 (microfilm) and 6087-6088 (photocopy), Markazī Library, University of Tehran represented as B (*bā*);

MS Mīnūchīhr, Tehran represented as J (*jīm*). We consulted the notes in the printed edition, which cites variants from these manuscripts.

2. In addition to the printed edition, we consulted the following two manuscripts:

MS Hamdani, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London (originally in Milwaukee, Wis.) abbreviated as H; and MS Tübingen, Ma VI 327, Universität Tübingen (University of Tübingen) abbreviated as T.

3. For readers’ reference, the pages numbers of the printed edition, and the folio numbers of the MSS H and T are shown in the translation of the text, and also some of the variants of MSS A, B, and J, and MSS H and T are shown in the translation, in which case we reproduce the variants shown in the notes by the editor(s) in

transliteration.

4. The symbol [] indicates a word or a phrase which is a suggested reconstruction of the text.
5. The symbol (=) indicates an explanatory word or phrase which we have supplemented for a better understanding of the preceding word or phrase.
6. We follow the paragraph structure in the printed edition.
7. When a Qur'ānic verse is quoted or referred to in the main text and footnote, the abbreviation "Q" is mentioned first, then its chapter (*sūra*) number, followed by its verse(s) (*āya*, pl. *āyāt*) number(s). We have translated the Qur'ānic verses quoted in al-Rāzī's text in consultation with the following English translations: M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (transl.), *The Qur'an* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) abbreviated as Abdel Haleem; A. J. Arberry (transl.), *The Koran Interpreted*, 2 vols (London: Allen and Anwin, 1957; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, Oxford World Classics, 1983) abbreviated as Arberry; A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an* (Lahore: Sheikh Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, 1934; reprint, n.p.; Islamic Propagation Center International, n. d.) abbreviated as Yusuf Ali. In addition, we also consulted: T. Izutsu (Japanese transl.), *Kōran*, 3 vols (Tokyo: Iwanami Publishers, 1964) abbreviated as Izutsu; J. Berque (French transl.), *Le Coran: Essai de traduction de l'arabe*, édition revue et corrigée (Paris: Albin Michel, 1990) abbreviated as Berque; and R. Paret (German transl.), *Der Koran*, Übersetzung von Rudi Paret, 12. Auflage (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2014) abbreviated as Paret.

Translation of the Text

(P. 172) (H f. 86r) (T f. 85v)

Section.

On the statement as follows:

Those who stayed away from Abraham and adhered to the idols deserved the saying of God—May He be mighty and glorious—, “When they were unruly about what they were forbidden to do, We told to them: Become contemptible apes!” (Q 7: 166), for they disobeyed, hence they were transformed into apes: their concerns were nothing but hunting,¹ dancing, drinking wine (*khumūr*), playing with chessboard (*shitrānj*) and backgammon (*nard*), and the similar things of ugly motives; and they were of the same kind as the apes in these activities.²

(T f. 86r) We say: this verse, namely, His— Be mighty and glorious— saying, “When they were unruly about what they were forbidden to do, We told to them: Become contemptible apes!” (Q 7: 166), talks the people of the cycle (*dawr*)³ of Moses, not on those of the cycle of Abraham—Peace upon both of them!⁴ The

1 “...apes: their concerns were nothing but hunting”: *qirada lā humm la-hum illā al-ṭarada*. B has this. A has *qirada la-hum al-ṭarada*. H and T have *qirada lā humm la-hum al-ṭarada*. J has *qirada lā la-hum al-ṭarada*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 172, ll. 10-11.

2 “[I]n these...”: *bi-hādhhī*. A has this. B, H, J, and T have *li-hādhhī*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 172, l. 12.

3 “[I] talks on the people of the cycle...”: *Hiya fī ahl dawr...* A and H have this. B has *wa-hiya fī dawr*. J and T have *Hiya ahl dawr*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 172, l. 14.

4 This statement by al-Rāzī is based on or continues his debate with al-Nasafī on Abraham, the third enunciator-prophet, and his cycle with al-Nasafī; They debated on which prophet, either Abraham or Moses, Zarathushtra followed, and in which cycle he lived, either Abraham’s or Moses’. See “the chapter on the saying [by al-Nasafī] on the third enunciator-prophet” in al-Rāzī, *al-Iṣlāḥ*, pp. 148-166/H ff.72r-83r/T ff.71v-82v.

exoteric [exegetical] custom is put in practice about them because they are people who violated the Sabbath (*al-sabat*). Therefore in the story on them God—— May He be mighty and glorious——said: “Ask them (**p. 173**) about the village which was located on the seashore, when they violated the Sabbath; their fishes used to come to them on the day of their Sabbath” (Q 7: 163). Then He said: “When they were unruly about what they were forbidden to do, We told them: Become contemptible apes!” (Q 7: 166). And He said in another verse: “You have known those of you⁵ who did not observe the Sabbath. Therefore we said to them: (**H f. 86v**) Become contemptible apes!” (Q 2: 65). What is recognized [about those verses] is: The ‘apes’ were transformed from the Jews.

Regarding the transformation (*maskh*),⁶ it is transmitted from the Prophet—— May God bless him and his household——that he said [on it]: “the transformation and the baseness (*khasf*) exist in my community.”⁷ The transformation, in its literal meaning is that the people are transformed from human forms in terms of human relation——not into the forms of cattle,⁸ nor the forms of the humankind, nor the forms of predatory animals, but the sorts of all of them are similar to [the natures in human relation]. Therefore “humankind” indicates the person who recognizes the

5 “[T]hose of you...”: *alladhīna...min-kum*”; “those of you” (Abdel Haleem); “those among you” (Arberry); “ceux d’entre vous” (Berque). All these translations are almost the same; we follow Abdel Haleem.

6 On the meaning of *maskh* in religious context in general, see Ch. Pellat, “Maskh,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs (Consulted online on January 26, 2019 <http://dx.doi.org.kras1.lib.keio.ac.jp/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5018>).

7 The source of this Prophetic tradition is unknown to me.

8 “[They] are transformed from the human forms interms of human relation——neither in [any of] the forms of the cattle”: *Musikhū ‘an al-ṣuwar al-insānīya fī ṣūrat al-insīya lā ṣuwar al-bahā’im*. A has *Musikhū ‘an al-ṣuwar al-insānīya fī ṣūrat al-insīya ṣuwar al-bahā’im*. B has *Musikhū ‘alā al-ṣuwar al-insānīya fī ṣūrat al-insīya lā ṣuwar al-bahā’im*. J, H and T have *Musikhū ‘alā al-ṣuwar al-insānīya fī ṣūrat al-insīya ṣuwar al-bahā’im*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 173, ll. 6-7. None of the five manuscripts has the reading of the Printed Edition. This suggests that the reading of this sentence in the Printed Edition is a reconstruction by its editors.

truth, thus becoming a human being in reality. The “cattle animal” indicates an exoteric person (*zāhirī*) who cannot comprehend the truth and is blind⁹ to it. The “predatory animal” indicates an antagonist who preys his followers by maligning them. The expression “apes,” that is, the disfigured ones, indicates the perfidious people who (**T f. 86v**) were the human beings, when they recognized the truths, but [then] became perfidious and resumed [the evil custom of] hypocrisy. For the ape resembles neither the human being nor ‘cattle animal’: that is to say, the hypocrite belongs neither to the people of the reality (*ahl al-ḥaqīqa*)¹⁰ nor to the people of exoteric teaching (*ahl al-zāhir*), as God—He be mighty and glorious—described, saying: “[They] waver between this and that; [going] neither to these nor to those¹¹” (Q 4: 143). Likewise, the ape resembles neither the humankind (**p. 174**) nor the cattle animal; rather, the predominant [tendency] in the ape is the similarity to the predatory animal, because he (the ape) did not stand firmly in the reality and the people of exoteric teaching did not agree with him¹² [in doctrinal matters]. He has resemblance to all people. For he [once] listened to the truth, so resembling [other] people. Thereafter he broke [the rules in esoteric doctrine], thus returning to the exoteric doctrine. He believed the leadership, consequently becoming a predatory animal. He thus preyed on and (**H f. 87r**) misguided the people.

With regards to the interpretation of His words “When they were unruly about what they were forbidden to do, We told them: Become contemptible apes!” (Q 7: 166), He—His mention be glorious!—said in the beginning of the story: “And ask them about the village which was located by the sea,” to the end [of the verse] (Q

9 [W]ho cannot comprehend the truth... Literally “to whom the truth is incomprehensible” (*alladhī istabhama ‘alay-hi al-ḥaqq*).

10 They are the people of the Ismā‘īlī community.

11 “[N]either to these nor to those”: *Lā ilā hā ‘ulā ‘i wa-lā ilā hā ‘ulā ‘i*: “not to these, not to those” (Arberry); “belonging neither to one side nor the other” (Abdel Haleem).

12 “[T]he people of exoteric teaching did not agree with him”: *Wa-lā qabala-hu ahl al-zāhir*. Instead of the reading suggested in the printed edition, “*qabla-hu*” (before him/it), we read “*qabala-hu*” in accordance with the context.

7: 163). The “sea” indicates the enunciator-prophet, because he composed the sacred law (*allaḡa al-sharī‘a*): [for] he is the “sea” on which the ships sail; which means that the missionary call (*da‘wa*) is established on him in the ages of the completers (*atimmā‘*, sg. *mutimm*) (=imāms)¹³.

“The village which was on the seashore” (Q 7: 163) indicates the hierarchy of the missionary organization (*ḡudūd al-da‘wa*), that is, the people who lived in the age of the enunciator-prophet before his appointment of the fundament (*iqāmatu-hu al-asās*) ———Peace be upon both!———: they were attached to the former without any intermediacy of the latter, (**T f. 87r**) because they broke the Sabbath. Thus the Sabbath¹⁴ indicates the position of the [seventh] enunciator-prophet, because it is the seventh day (*al-yawm al-sābi‘*) [of the week], that is, the day the enunciator-prophets who lived before him indicated and pointed to.¹⁵

His saying, “they broke the Sabbath,”¹⁶ means: they violated what the law (*nāmūs*) prescribed for them, that is to say, the observation of the obedience to the fundament and the practice of the missionary work in his name and the names of the completers after him. Thus they violated it (i.e., the allegiance to the *ahl al-bayt* symbolized as the ‘Sabbath’), inviting [the people] to the exoteric teaching of the enunciator-prophet, disregarding the esoteric; it is the latter teaching the invitation to which the six completers put in practice for they abandoned the ‘fishing’ (*ṡayd*) during the six days in which it was allowed to them, but they fished on the seventh day, that

13 Succeeding the enunciator-prophet and the fundament they “complete” the cycle. Therefore we can think that the imāms are called “completers” in early Ismā‘īlī terminology. See A. Hamdani, “Evolution of the Organizational Structure of Fāḡimī Da‘wah: The Yemeni and Persian Contribution,” *Arabian Studies* 3 (1976): pp. 85-114.

14 “Thus the Sabbath”: *Fa-al-sabt*. A, H, J and T have this. B does not have this. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 174, l. 10.

15 This paragraph indicates that people need to recognize ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib’s rank of successor to the Prophet (his fundament) to be saved by the seventh enunciator-prophet, because the seventh will come from the descendants of ‘Alī and the Prophet, that is, *ahl al-bayt*. Also, by attacking the people who obey only the Prophet but not his fundament, ‘Alī, this paragraph criticizes the Sunnīs.

16 ‘[T]hey broke the “Sabbath”’: *Ya ‘dūna fī al-Sabt*. I follow Abdel Haleem.

is, the Sabbath on which they were forbidden to fish.

(P. 175) [The saying,]“the fish came to them on the day of Sabbath regularly...” (Q 7: 163): That is to say, the people who follow the exoteric sacred law¹⁷ thronged to them. (H f. 87r) Those people made submission to them and responded [only] to the exoteric teaching disregarding the esoteric.

“But one day, when they did not observe the Sabbath, the fish did not come to them” (Q 7: 163). They said: The fishes did not come to them on other days than Sabbath. That is to say, they did not respond to the true missionary call (*al-da‘wa al-ḥaqīqa*), which the six completers carried out.

“Thus we tested them because of their unlawful behavior” (Q 7: 163). That is to say, they were tempted by what they [themselves] brought to light, such as hypocrisy and abandoning obedience, because unlawful behavior is deviation from obedience. That [sort of act] became a trial to them and their followers.

“When a group of them said: (T f. 87v) ‘Why do you preach to people, God will perish you or punish you severely?, they (=those who preached) answered: ‘[To ask] to your Lord as an excuse, and perhaps they can beware’” (Q 7: 164). That is to say, a certain people of those who stick to the obedience [to God] used to blame them or preach to them as an excuse to [their superiors such as] the lieutenants and the fundament; the latter is their “Lord” (*rabbu-hum*), because he is their master (*ṣāhibu-hum*). This means: [under the direction of the fundament] the lieutenants, who led the people blamed [above], came to know them, whereas the latter did not give up the hypocrisy that they had already disclosed and hidden. [Also this verse means] that they had already fell down¹⁸ [because of their hypocrisy] and the fundament drove

17 “[T]he exoteric sacred law”: *al-sharī‘a al-zāhira*. A has this. B has *sharī‘a al-zāhir*. H has *sharī‘a li-zāhir*. J and T have *al-sharī‘a al-zāhir*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 175, ll. 1-2.

18 “[T]hey had already fell down”: *Qad saqatū*. If we read *suqitū*, namely, in passive voice instead of *saqatū*, the reading of the Printed Edition, we can translate it: “They had already repented.” On this reading of *saqata* in passive voice, see E. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863-1893; reprint, Cambridge, England: Islamic Text

them away from the missionary community. Thus they became leaders in the exoteric teaching. Consequently they and their followers suffered in doubt and uncertainty on their authorities and then fell into the severe punishment ready to them among the last ones of them. **(P. 176)** “When they behaved haughtily about what they were prohibited from” (Q 7: 166). That is, they abandoned the obedience to the fundament whom they were ordered to obey. They became haughty, overstepping [the bounds] concerning the hypocrisy they were forbidden from, **(H f. 88r)** being scornful to conducting the missionary call in the name of the fundament and of the completers succeeding him.

“... We told them: Become despicably outcast apes!¹⁹” (Q 7: 166). That is, they were expelled from the missionary community, and their hypocrisy manifested itself. For they had been metamorphosed from the form of humanity into that of the ape, namely, an ugly form. This means that they deviated from the rule of the hierarchy (*rasm al-ḥudūd*), namely, those who reside in the [hierarchical] missionary community and those who are faithfully obedient [to their superiors], leaving for the traits of the hypocrites. They were **(T f. 88r)** expelled and removed from the missionary community, because the removed base people [compared to apes] were driven away from listening (*istimāʿ*) [to the esoteric teaching?²⁰]; as a result, the spiritual substance (*mādda*) is cut off from them. They thus adhered to the hypocrisy, turning into apes, namely, the folks who were thereafter disfigured. They disclosed the abstinence but conceived [the idea of] the unbelief, hypocrisy, and injustice. Therefore their ambition is to lead the people astray from the straight path of God.

This is the trait of the apes who were disfigured in the early age and of all those whose affairs are put in practice, such as the ugly people and the apes. As for those

Society, 1984), vol.1, p. 1380.

19 “Become despicably outcast apes!”: *Kūnū qiradat^h khāsiʿin^e*. “Be like apes! Be outcasts!” (Abdel Haleem); “Be you apes, miserably slinking” (Arberry); “Be ye apes, despised and rejected” (Yusuf Ali); “Soyez des singes dégoûloureux!” (Berque); Werdet zu abscheulichen (? sic) Affen!” (Paret); “Saru ninatte sugosugoto hikisagare” (Become apes and go away dejectedly) (Izutsu). Abdel Haleem has closest translation to ours.

20 This is a temporary interpretation.

[animals] who are apes in reality, it is not in their nature to drink wine, to have pleasure, to play backgammon²¹ and chess, and to do other things coming from the disgraceful characters. Therefore those apes resemble them. Indeed most of those disfigured are the people who broke [the promise], resisted stubbornly, and showed abstinence but became excessive in it, until the discord [imposed] by them became tremendous and the damages caused by them to the community multiplied. This is because of the piety and abstinence they showed until they subjected the community to trial; ensuing it their companions imitated them because of **(H f. 88v)** the hypocrisy and [excessive] piety. It is they whom the Commander of the Faithful (*Amīr al-Mu'minīn*) ———Peace be upon him———described **(p. 177)** with his saying as follows: “The most hateful of the humankind are two men: [one of them is] a man whom God entrusted to himself so that he deviated from taking the path, **(T f. 88v)** being passionate in discussion of doctrinal novelty; He was devoted to the fasting and the worship, consequently being trial to the people who were attracted by him. He was also astray from the guidance of those who had preceded him, led astray anyone who imitated him in his lifetime and after his death, and took upon [the responsibility of] the errors of others, remaining in his own error. [The other one is] a person who collected [acts and thoughts of] ignorance among the ignorant people: those similar to him had already called a learned man. He never lived in this world safely even for one day.”²² On the other hand he described the two of them with an enormous attribute and mentioned these two groups, stating that they had gone astray from the guidance. This is a trait of those who were disfigured in this community and thus became those resembling apes transformed from the appearance of humankind into a distorted form.

21 “...to have pleasure, to play the backgammon”: *wa-al-ṭarab wa-lā la' b al-nard*. A has this. B, H, J and T have *al-nard*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 176, ll. 10-11.

22 The editors of the printed edition point out that this saying attributed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib finds its parallel passage in *Nahj al-Balāgha*, a compilation of the homilies, speeches and letters attributed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the editorship of which is usually attributed to al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (359/970-406/1016). See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 177, l. 5.

These people are stronger in damaging to the ‘people of two plateaus’ (*ahl al-najdayn*)²³ than those people who are occupied with the dirty matters that damage people. The damages caused by the latter group of people affect only themselves. However, as for the former group of people, they are the instruments of the religion [used] with the hypocrisy they disclose and the abstinence with which they strip off [their clothes].²⁴ This [depiction] is more resembling and clear [with regards to the reality] in figurative speech (*tamthīl*),²⁵ and more improbable in eloquent expression (*bayān*),²⁶ than those detested expressions. However all of us intend²⁷ to elucidate the truth. God will bestow upon all of us success for the most right work (**H f. 89r**) (**T f. 89r**) with His mercy.

23 The meaning is unknown to me. Does the expression “two plateaus” mean this world and the hereafter?

24 ‘[T]he abstinence with which they strip off [their clothes]’ (*wa-yatasallakhūna bi-hi min al-tawarru’*): It can be thought that this means that the abstinence practiced by them discloses their hidden reality (presumably, their hypocritical nature).

25 This is a technical term in classical rhetoric in Arabic. The translation of the term is based on the following article: M.G. Carter and G.J.H van Gelder, “Tamthīl,” in *EI*² (consulted online on January 13, 2019 <http://dx.doi.org.kras1.lib.keio.ac.jp/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1166>).

26 For the translation of this term of rhetoric see G.E. von Grunebaum, “Bayān,” in *EI*² (consulted online on February 02, 2019 <http://dx.doi.org.kras1.lib.keio.ac.jp/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1298>).

27 “...in eloquent expression (*bayān*), than those detested [expressions]. If all of us intend.” Some words and phrases quoted in this note are in brackets because they do not appear in the Arabic original text: *al-mustakraha fī al-bayān wa in kāna*. B has this. A has *al-mustakraha wa-al’ad* (?) *al-bayān wa in kāna*. H, J and T have *al-mustakraha wa-awḍaḥ fī al-tamthīl wa-ab’ad al-bayān wa in kāna*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 177, l. 10, on pp. 177-178.