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An Ismā‘īlī Thinker on Ishmael (Ismā‘īl) and Isaac (Iṣḥāq) 3: Translation of the *Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ* by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī 15

Shin Nomoto

Introduction

This article provides the translation of the third 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 15th in a series constituting the English

1 The critical and printed edition of the *Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ* appeared as Abū Ḥātim Aḥmad ibn Hamdān al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ*, ed. H. Mīnūchihr and prepared for publication by M. Mohaghegh with an English introduction by S. Nomoto (Tehran, 1377 A.H.Sh/1998 C.E). When the text of *al-Iṣlāḥ* is referred to in this article, the pagination of this 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 is in his collection, and to Dr. Paul E. Walker (Research Associate at the University of Chicago), for his kindness in 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 translation of the

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

The section begins with the quotation of al-Rāzī’s rival in the debate, al-Nasafī’s remark on the relation of Isaac (Ishāq) and Ishmael (Ismā‘īl), the two sons of Abraham (Ibrāhīm), with regards to a well-known event narrated in the Qur’ān and the Hebrew Bible about Abraham’s sacrifice of one of his.³ Al-Nasafī holds that Isaac was a *bāb* (“gate”), the second highest dignity after either the enunciator-prophet (*nāṭiq*) and his successor, the fundament (*asās*), or his successor, also called “the completer” (*mutimm*, that is, *imām*).⁴ Because of this, according to him, Isaac became a ransom (*fidā*) for Ishmael.⁵

Al-Rāzī does not refute this remark directly. Instead, he confirms that Ishmael

text of *al-Iṣlāḥ*, ‘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 All of the articles of this project have been 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; 41 (2010): pp. 71-95; 42 (2011): pp. 127–49; 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; 50 (2019): pp. 347-360. As for the fifth article, see n. 1 above. The complete titles of those articles are omitted here for the sake of brevity.

3 As the Qur’ānic verses relating Abraham’s sacrifice of his son G. S. Reynolds cites 37: 100-110. He points out: “The basis of the sacrifice account is ultimately Genesis 22. G. S. Reynolds, *The Qur’ān and the Bible: Text and Commentary* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018), p. 681. Some of the contents of this section has already briefly introduced in one of the previous sequels of this series of translation of *al-Iṣlāḥ*, “An Ismā‘īlī Thinker on Ishmael (Ismā‘īl) and Isaac (Ishāq) 1: Translation of the *Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ* by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī 13,” *Reports of the Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies* 49 (2018): p. 207. Needless to say, the following is a thoroughly revised and enlarged description of the same section.

4 For the Ismā‘īlī terminology of the dignitaries of the community in the following discussion, see, for example, A. Hamdani, “Evolution of the Organizational Structure of the Fāṭimī Da‘wah: the Yemani and Persian Contribution,” *Arabian Studies* 3 (1976): pp. 85-114; H. Halm, “die Obere Fünf,” a Chapter in *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismā‘īlīya: Eine Studie zur islamischen Gnosis* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1978), pp. 67-74.

5 Al-Rāzī, *al-Iṣlāḥ*, p. 178/H f. 89r/T f. 89r.

held the grade of the fundament (*martabat al-asāsīya*) on the one hand and Isaac held the grade of the completer (*tamāmīya*). None of these two, he adds, became a “ram” which was sacrificed as a ransom.⁶ Actually, according to him, God ordered Abraham to sacrifice a “ram which grazed in Paradise.” Al-Rāzī maintains that this “ram which grazed in the paradise” means a person who was not Abraham’s son but rather who was educated and spiritually raised in the community for the missionary call (*da’wa*). This person was appointed by Abraham to be a lieutenant (*lāḥiq*), that is, a dignitary who was in charge of the missionary work of one of twelve sectors of the world, being finally sacrificed.⁷

Thereafter al-Rāzī undertakes to interpret the verses of the visit of the strange “guests” of Abraham (Q 11: 69-71; 15: 51-53; 51: 24-28) who are called “messengers” or “the dispatched” (*mursalūn*) by God (Q 51: 31). They announced the good tidings from God Abraham and his wife Sarah (Sāra), that is, the birth of a son.⁸ This story thus depicts Abraham’s encounter with the angelic beings.⁹ Al-Rāzī calls the “guests” who visited Abraham the “two *khayāls*” (*al-khayālān*). The *khayāl* (“imagination”) is the lowest of the three angelic beings below the two highest hypostases, the Preceder (*al-Sābiq*) and the Follower (*al-Tālī*) in Ismā’īlī mythical terminology, or the Universal Intellect (*‘Aql*) and the Soul (*Nafs*), in Neoplatonist terminology. Since in Section 1 of the present chapter on Isaac and Ishmael, the fundament and the higher ranked, enunciator-prophet are called “the two fundaments” (*al-asāsān*) as a pair, the “the two *khayāls* can be identified with *khayāl* and one of the two higher-ranked two angels, namely, either *fath* (“opening”) or *jadd* (“fortune”).

6 Al-Rāzī, *al-Iṣlāḥ*, p. 178/H f. 89r/T f. 89r.

7 Al-Rāzī, *al-Iṣlāḥ*, p. 179/H f. 89r-v/ T f. 89v.

8 Among the Qur’ānic verses which relate the story of the strange “guests” of Abraham G. S. Reynolds cites 11: 69-73; 15: 51-56; 29: 31-35; 51: 24-34; see also 37: 112. According to him, these verses “develop” the theme of “the three mysterious visitors to Abraham” in Genesis 18 of the Hebrew Bible. See G. S. Reynolds, *The Qur’ān and the Bible*, p. 353.

9 For the theme of the prophets’ encounter with the angelic beings, see S. Nomoto, “Early Ismā’īlī Thought on Prophecy According to the *Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ* by Abū Ḥatīm al-Rāzī” (Ph. D. Dissertation, McGill University, 1998), pp. 185-236 and 263-269.

In his description of this encounter al-Rāzī states that Abraham had a contact with the two highest cosmic hypostases called “the two Roots” (*al-Aṣḥlān*) as a pair, namely, the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul, as follows:

When he went into contact with the two Roots (*al-Aṣḥlān*), he gained the “spiritual stream” (*jārī*) from them through the intermediacy of the two *khayāls*.¹⁰

The above-mentioned *jārī*, or “spiritual stream,” is a flow of spiritual energy coming from the higher angelic beings which conveys a divine message and instruction.¹¹ Consequently, transmitting the “spiritual stream,” the strange, angelic “guests,” that is, the two *khayāls* conveyed the good news of the future birth of a “well-knowing” boy (*ghulām ‘alīm*), namely, Isaac.¹² This good news is that Isaac was appointed to be a completer, being granted the position of the completer.¹³ Also in al-Rāzī’s interpretation Isaac’s mother, Sarah, was actually Abraham’s “gate” (*bāb*) or the dignitary who holds the highest position, just below him: he was appointed to the position of religious instruction of Isaac.¹⁴ In this manner Ismā‘īlī hermeneutics has the tendency to interpret female figures in Hebrew and Greek Bibles and the Qur’ān as being the male dignitaries of the missionary organization.¹⁵

Towards the end of the section, as a refutation of al-Nasafī’s idea of the sacrifice

10 Al-Rāzī, *al-Iṣḥlāh*, p. 180/H f. 90r/T f. 90v.

11 For this term *jārī*, see S. Nomoto, “Early Ismā‘īlī Thought on Prophecy,” pp. 194-203.

12 Al-Rāzī, *al-Iṣḥlāh*, pp. 179-180/ H f. 90r-v/T f. 90v.

13 Al-Rāzī, *al-Iṣḥlāh*, p. 179/ H f. 90r/T f. 90r.

14 Al-Rāzī, *al-Iṣḥlāh*, p. 182/H f. 91v/ T ff. 91v-92r.

15 For example, in his *Asās al-Ta’wīl* al-Qāḍī al-Nu’mān (d. 363/974) interpreted the figure of Mary as being a dignitary who was appointed to spiritual instructor of the young Jesus. See al-Qāḍī al-Nu’mān, *Asās al-Ta’wīl*, ed. ‘Ārif Tāmīr (Bayrūt: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1960), pp. 300-307, especially p. 307. Also cf. H. Corbin, “Herméneutique spirituelle comparée (I. Swedenborg — II. Gnose Ismaélienne),” in *Face de dieu, face de l’homme : herméneutique et soufisme* (Paris: Flammarion, 1983), pp. 151-162 (English translation by L. Fox as : “Comparative Spiritual Hermeneutics,” in *Swedenborg and Esoteric Islam* [West Chester, Penn.: Swedenborg Foundation, 1995], pp. 125-134).

of one of Abraham's sons for another, al-Rāzī summarizes his points with regards to this issue:

One of them would have been the sacrifice but was redeemed with a ram which had grazed in Paradise. The ram was not any of his sons from his loins.¹⁶

Al-Rāzī concludes his discussion on the theme of Abraham's sacrifice of his son in this way.

¹⁶ Al-Rāzī, *al-Iṣlāḥ*, p. 183/H f. 91v/T f. 92r.

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

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

Abu Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ*. Ed. Ḥasan Mīnūchīhr [and] prepared for publication by Maḥdī Moḥaghegh. 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 1407, 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 MSS H and T are shown in the translation of the text; 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 Unwin, 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. 178)(H. f. 89r) (T. f. 89r)

Section

With regards to the statement:

“As for Ishmael and Isaac, one of the two is a boy for slaughter (*dhabīḥ*) and the other is a ransom¹ for him, namely, Isaac, the one for whom God coined the symbol of a ram (*kabsh*); and He appointed him to be a *bāb* of Ishmael; thus, because of this [appointment by God] one of the two became a boy for slaughter and the other is a ransom for him.”

We say that the grade of the fundament (*martabat al-asāsīya*) belongs to Ishmael and that of the completer (*tamāmīya*)² belongs to Isaac. This is a rightful (*ṣaḥīḥa*) [ranking for them] as the story goes, but one of them is not a ransom for another. The ram which became a ransom³ is neither Isaac nor Ishmael. This ransom is not Abraham’s son⁴—peace upon him— for his sacrifice. For when he intended to offer his son for sacrifice, God—May He be mighty and glorious—said: “This is

1 “[A] ransom”: *fidā* (ending with *alif maqṣūra*). A, B and H give *fidā*. J and T give *fidā*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 178, l. 3. The reading *fidā* (ending with *alif maqṣūra*) is therefore a reconstruction by the editors of the printed edition.

2 The office of “completer” (*tamāmīya*) is the rank and office of the “completer” (*mutimm*, pl. *atimmā*), that is, the imām who succeeds the *asās* in each enunciator-prophet’s (*nāṭiq*) cycle (*dawr*); there are seven “completers” in each cycle, each of whom is appointed to be a “completer” by the divinely-guided designation (*naṣṣ*) of his previous “completer”; and becoming the next *nāṭiq* the seventh of them inaugurates the next cycle.

3 “[A] ransom”: *fidā* (ending with *alif maqṣūra*). A, B and H give *fidā*. J and T give *fidā*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 178, l. 8. The reading *fidā* (ending with *alif maqṣūra*) is therefore a reconstruction by the editors of the printed edition.

4 “[S]on”: *ibn*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *bn*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 178, l. 7.

the evident trial⁵ to them” (Q 37: 106), that is to say, the great ordeal. It is reported that if Abraham—peace upon him—had slaughtered his son, it would have become a custom of the people who came after him that the sacrifice be the sons.⁶ Thus there would be a great ordeal in that act.

The scholars (*ahl al-‘ilm*) indicated that Abraham—peace be upon him—wanted to appoint⁷ one of his sons to be a lieutenant (*lāhiq*) and wanted this rank to remain among his descendants too, just as the grade of the fundament-ship and that of the completer-ship passed to them (=his other son[s] and their descendants). [Furthermore,] he wanted: that the lieutenants also come from his (=that son’s) descendants with the exclusion of other people; and that (**T. f. 89v**) the custom be practiced in that way. Therefore God—He be mighty and glorious—said: “This was a great ordeal,” [which means:] the people of missionary community (*ahl al-da‘wa*) were denied from this excellence [of holding that high rank]. He—His Name be blessed⁸—said that the custom should be practiced (**p. 179**) after him within [the frame of] this sacred law [brought by the Prophet Muḥammad], just as it was practiced within [the frame of] that (**H. f. 89v**) sacred law [brought by Abraham],⁹ because the former law is one and the same with the latter, as we have already commented. If the rule had been practiced in this way in that cycle, it would not have been possible that there would have existed any completer and any lieutenants in this cycle, except coming from the offspring from the sixth enunciator-prophet and his

5 “[T]he evident trial”: *al-balā’ al-mubīn*; “the manifest trial” (Arberry); “akirakana kokoromi” (an evident trial/test) (Izutsu).

6 “[T]he sons”: *al-abnā’*. A, B, and H give this reading. J and T give *al-abnā*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 178, l. 11.

7 “[T]o appoint”: *yuqīma*. A, B, and H give this reading. J and T give *yaqsima*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 178, l. 12.

8 “[H]is Name be blessed”: *Tabāraka ismu-hu*. A, B, H, and T give this reading. J has ‘*j*’ (*‘ayn jīm* in sole characters). See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 178, l. 15.

9 “[W]ithin [the frame of] that sacred law [brought by Abraham]”: *fī tilka al-sharī‘a*. Literally, “within that sacred law.”

fundament——peace be upon both of them.¹⁰ Because the example of that sacred law [brought by Abraham] was practiced in this sacred law, Abraham——peace be upon him——was allowed to appoint anyone from the descendants of his loin to be a fundament or completer and to appoint anyone from the descendants of others to be lieutenant. In this [way] the custom was established and put into practice in this cycle. He was ordered to sacrifice a ram that grazed¹¹ in Paradise: the latter (=the animal) was one person in the hierarchy ruled by Abraham (*aḥd ḥudūdi-hi*); this man in the hierarchy was educated¹² in the missionary community. He had a grade and a leading position but was not of Abraham’s offspring. If he had been of Abraham’s offspring,¹³ [nobody] would have said¹⁴ that a ram from Paradise had been sacrificed, so that he would have been able to slaughter it instead of his own son when he intended to offer him. Hence this deed already showed¹⁵ that this ram was not his own son but a person in the hierarchy who was a praised pleasing man in the missionary community at work for long time (**T. f. 90r**) because a metaphor is coined with the “ram.” When the man was praised, it was said that he was a “ram of rams,”¹⁶ just as it is said that someone is

10 “Peace be upon both of them”: *‘alay-himā al-salām*. H, J and T give this reading. It is missing from A and B.

11 “[G]razed”: *ra’ā*. A, B, H and T give this reading. J gives *da’ā*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 179, l. 6.

12 “[E]ducated”: *rubbiya*. B and H give this reading. A gives *kāna rubbiya* (sic.). J and T give *kāna zakī*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 179, l. 6.

13 “If he had been Abraham’s offspring”: *Law kāna min ṣulbi-hi*. A, B, H and T give this reading, whereas J lacks. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 179, l. 7.

14 “[N]obody] would have said”: *la-mā qāla*. Literally, “he would have said.” In the text the person whom this “he” refers to is not clear. This translation is a temporary reconstruction of the author’s intention which we suggest here in accordance with the context.

15 “[W]hen he intended to offer him. Hence this deed already showed...”: *Lammā arāda dhanba ibni-hi. Fa-ḡad dalla dhālika*. A and H give: *Lammā arāda dhanba ibni-hi. Fa-ḡad dalla-ka*. B gives: *arā dhanba waladi-hi. Fa-ḡad dalla dhālika*. J and T give: *Lammā arāda dhanba ibni-hi. Fa-ḡad dhālika*. Therefore the reading here is a reconstruction of the text by the editors of the printed edition. See the note by them to p. 179, l. 8.

16 “...[the] rams”: *al-kibāsh*. A gives this reading. B and H give *al-kubūsh*. J and T give *al-kūsh*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 179, l. 10.

a “goat of goats”¹⁷ when he is blamed. For the “ram” refers to a person whose deed is praised¹⁸ among the people of the hierarchy [on the one hand], and the “goat” refers to his antagonist (*diddu-hu*) [on the other hand]. For this reason he was redeemed¹⁹ with this ram, and [also] this position was granted to a person different from his son. Hence Abraham—Peace be upon him—feared that he would have already committed a sin, and he was also angered (**H. f. 90r**) when this position was taken away from his son. Therefore God—He be exalted, mighty and glorious—consoled him over this matter and taught him that He had already granted Isaac the position of the completer; he received the good tidings about it.²⁰ Do you not consider His saying after this story following this verse: “We informed him of a good tiding about Isaac of [his becoming] a prophet and one of the righteous people”²¹ (Q 37: 112)? He brought the good tidings that²² He had granted him (Isaac) the position of the completer which is ranked higher than that of the lieutenants,²³ when He said: “...a prophet.” That is to say, (**p. 180**) he is higher than the lieutenants in rank because the meaning of the

17 “...[the] goats”: *al-tuyūs*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *al-tuyūsh*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 179, l. 11.

18 “[A] person whose deed is praised”: *man yuḥmadu*. A and H give this reading. B gives *man yumdaḥu*. J and T give *min jumla* (?). See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 179, l. 11.

19 “For this reason he was redeemed”: *Fa-fūdiya*. A, B, H and T give this. J gives: *Fa-fadadiya* (?). See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 179, l. 11.

20 “[H]e received a good tiding of it”: *Bushshira bi-dhālīka*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *Bushshira dhālīka*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 179, l. 14.

21 “[O]ne of the righteous people”: *min al-ṣāliḥīn*; “a righteous man” (Abdel Haleem); “one of the righteous” (Arberry); “einer von den Rechtschaffenen” (Paret); “tadashii ningen” (a righteous person) (Izutsu). We follow Abdel Haleem, Arberry and Paret.

22 “He brought a good tiding that...”: *Fa-bushshira bi-an...* A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *Fa-bushshirnā wa...* See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 179, l. 16.

23 “[T]hat of the lieutenants”: *rutbat al-lawāḥiq*. A, H, J and T give this reading. B gives *martabat al-lawāḥiq*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 179, l. 16.

“prophet”²⁴ is the “elevation.”²⁵ This [following] one is the story which God—He be mighty and glorious—mentioned²⁶ in the Chapter of “the Sweeping Winds” (*sūrat al-dhāriyāt*) [in the Qur’ān],²⁷ saying: “Has the tale of the guests of Abraham reached you? When they entered his [home], they said: ‘Peace.’ He (Abraham) said: ‘Peace, people unknown [to me].’²⁸ He went away to his people and brought fat calf [to the guests]. Then he offered it to them, saying: ‘Would you not have it?’ He felt a fear of them. They told him: ‘Do not be afraid.’ And they reported to him a good news of [birth of] a well-knowing²⁹ boy” (Q 51: 24-28). Abraham’s guests refer to the “two *khayāls*” because he was brought in relation to those two of them.³⁰ (T. f. 90v) When he went into contact with the “two roots” (*al-aṣlān*), he gained the “spiritual stream” (*al-jārī*) from them through the intermediacy of the “two *khayāls*.”

And His saying: “They said: ‘Peace.’” That is, Abraham was ordered to pay submission³¹ to the command of the two *khayāls*. Therefore “...he said ‘Peace.’” That is to say, he already submitted, just as he was ordered [to do so], although I do deny your impossibility for eating what I offered.³² He said “people unknown,” only

24 “[B]ecause ... the ‘prophet’”: *lianna al-nabī*. A and B give this reading. H, J and T give *kāna al-nabī*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 180, l. 1.

25 “[T]he ‘elevation’”: *al-irtifā*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *irtifā*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 180, l. 1.

26 “[T]he story which God—He be mighty and glorious—mentioned”: *al-qīṣṣa allatī dhakara-hā Allāh ‘azza wa-jalla*. A gives this reading. B gives *qīṣṣa allatī dhakara-hā Allāh*. H gives *qīṣṣa allatī dhakara-hā Allāh ‘j* (‘*ayn jīm* in sole characters). J and T have *qīṣṣa al-nabī dhakara-hā ‘azza wa-jalla*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 180, l. 1.

27 This is the *sūra* 51 of the Qur’ān, as indicated later below.

28 “[P]eople unknown [to me]”: *qawm munkarūn*. We follow Arberry’s translation here.

29 “[W]ell-knowing”: *‘alīm*; “gifted with knowledge” (Abdel Haleem); “cunning” (Arberry): “a son endowed with knowledge” (Yusuf Ali); “doué de connaissance” (Berque); “klugen [Jungen]” (Paret); “kashikoi” (wise) (Izutsu)

30 “[T]o those two of them”: *ilay-himā*. A, B, H and T give this reading. J gives *ilay-hā*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 180, l. 5.

31 “[T]o make submission”: *bi-al-taslīm*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *bi-al-ta’līm*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 180, l. 7.

32 “I offered”: *qarrabtu-hu*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *faraytu-hu* (?). See

because their refrained from eating the calf. “He felt a fear of them.” It is because he had a fear that he would have already committed a sin by hastening to carry out the order for the two he offered the calf to. Therefore at that time they reported to him (**H. f. 90v**) the good news of [the birth of] a well-knowing boy.” This “well-knowing boy,” of whose good tiding they reported, was Isaac. That is, the good tiding of his position was reported. It was noticed that he was granted the position of the completer. Do you not perceive Him saying,³³ “...well-knowing”?

He said in the Chapter of *al-Hijr*: “And tell them about the guests of Abraham. When they came to see him, they said: Peace. He (Abraham) said: We feel a fear of you. They said: Do not fear. We will report you a good new of the birth of a well-knowing boy” (Q 15: 51-53). And He said in the Chapter of Hūd: “Our messengers already visited Abraham with good tiding. They said: Peace. Abraham responded: Peace. He did not hesitate to bring calf at that time. However, when he saw their hands (**p. 181**) not reach toward it,³⁴ he felt unacquainted of them³⁵ and felt a fear of them” (Q 11: 69-70). Do you not see that he felt unacquainted of them when he saw their hands not reach to the calf he offered? Hence the word was put forward and held back³⁶ (*muqaddam wa-mu'akhhkar*) because he said in “the Sweeping Winds” as follows: ‘Peace, people unknown [to me]. He went away to his people and brought fat calf [to the guests]’ (Q 51: 27). His feeling of unacquaintance (**T. f. 91r**) came out only after he offered the calf but they abstained from taking it. He explained in the Chapter of Hūd that his feeling of unacquaintance and fear of them came out only

the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 180, l. 8.

33 “[S]aying”: *yaqūl*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *bi-qawl*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 180, l. 12.

34 “[T]heir hands not reach toward it”: *aydiya-hum lā tašilu ilay-hi*; “their hands did not reach towards the meal”(Abdel Haleem); “their hands not reaching towards it” (Arberry); “leur mains ne s’y portaient pas” (Berque); “sie nicht zugriffen” (Paret).

35 “[H]e felt unacquainted of them”: *nakara-hum*. J, H and T give this reading. A and B give *anna-hu nakara-hum*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 181, l. 1.

36 “[H]eld back”: *mu'akhhkar*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *muwākhar*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 181, l. 2.

after he saw their hands not reach for the calf³⁷ he had offered. And this was said about him: [the word was] held back and put forward. It (=such a saying) is possible in the language of the ‘Arabs.

In the same way He——He be mighty and glorious——also spoke on this story in the Chapter of Hūd: “His wife stood [close by] and laughed. Then We reported her the good news of Isaac” (Q 11: 71). She laughed only after she was given the good news of Isaac. However, in words He preferred to say: “...and [she] laughed,” and thereafter said: “Then We reported her (**H. f. 91r**) the good news of Isaac,” whereas she laughed only after she received the good news of Isaac.³⁸ It is this matter that the exegeses and the interpretation indicate both in exoteric and esoteric meanings. This is just as we said of the “put-forward” and “held-back” matters (*al-muqaddam wa-al-mu’akhhhar*). Those are [included] in the things which must be known³⁹ because numerous examples for them can be found in the Qur’ān. These good news are on Isaac in these verses. This is what He——He be mighty and glorious——mentioned⁴⁰: “They reported to him the good news of [birth of] a well-knowing boy”; and “We will report the good news of [birth of] a well-knowing boy.” However He made a clear statement in His name in this verse with His following saying: “Then We reported her a good news of Isaac and of Jacob after him” (Q 11: 70). This is because Abraham learned [thanks to this news] that the position of the completer⁴¹ would

37 “[T]o the calf”: *ilā al-‘ijl*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *ilay-hi al-‘ijl*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 181, l. 5.

38 “[S]he laughed only after she received the good news of Isaac”: *Wa-innamā ḍaḥikat ba’da mā bushshirat bi-Ishāq*. B and H give this reading. J and T give *Wa-innamā ḍaḥikat ba’da mā bushshirat Ishāq*. A lacks this sentence. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 181, l. 9.

39 “...known [of it]”: *ta’allumu-hu*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *ya’lamu-hu*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 181, l. 10.

40 “He——He be mighty and glorious——said about”: *Qāla-hu ‘azza wa-jalla*. A, B, H and T give *Qāla ‘azza wa-jalla*. J gives *Qāla ta’ālā*. The pronoun *hu* in accusative case is the reconstruction suggested by the editors of the printed edition. See the note by them to p. 181, l. 11.

41 “[T]hat the completer-ship”: *anna al-tamāmiya*. B, H, J and T give this reading. A gives

remain among his descendants until the end of Abraham’s cycle, so that he could have had patience when [he saw] they abstained from receiving⁴² the calf which he served. [Also] he wanted to install him⁴³ (=Isaac) in that position [of the completer] as we commented. He called him “calf” just because of his hurrying up the order by Abraham without anything put into practice⁴⁴ in it. Therefore (T. f. 91v) he called him “calf,” just as the people of Moses called⁴⁵ the one whom Moses appointed, (p. 182) “calf,” because they hurried up the business with him⁴⁶ before Moses’ return, without anything put into practice⁴⁷ for Moses—Peace upon him— with his order. Do you not see him say as follows, when he blamed them⁴⁸ for their deed?: “Did you hasten the order of your Lord [i.e., His punishment]?” (Q 7: 150). Likewise a person who was appointed⁴⁹ in this community was called “calf,” because he hastened to be punished in this world.⁵⁰ Thus he was [actually] hastened [to receive punishment], just as God—He be mighty and glorious—said on His attribute⁵¹: “For anyone

anna-hu al-tamāmīya. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 181, l. 13.

42 “[F]rom receiving”: *min qabūl*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *fi qabūl*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 181, l. 13.

43 “...to install him”: *yurattiba-hu*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *turattiba-hu* (?). See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 181, l. 14.

44 “... put into practice”: *yajrī*. A, B, and J lack this word. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 181, l. 15. It is missing also from other manuscripts H and T. Thus this reading *yajrī* is the reconstruction by the editors.

45 “...called”: *sammā* (ending with *alif maqṣūra*). A gives this reading. B, H, J and T give *sammā* (?) (ending with *alif* of long vowel). See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 181, l. 14. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 181, l. 15.

46 “[T]he business with him”: *al-amr bi-hi*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *al-abh* (?). See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 182, l. 1.

47 “...put into practice”: *yajrī*. The manuscripts A, B, and J give *jarā*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 182, l. 1. Other manuscripts H and T have this reading.

48 “[H]e blamed them”: *ātaba-hum*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *ābata-hum*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 182, l. 2.

49 “... was appointed”: *uqīma*. A, B, H and T give this reading. J gives *uqīma* (?). See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 182, l. 3.

50 “[T]his world”: *hādhihi al-dunyā*. A and B give this reading. H gives *hādhā al-dīn*. J and T give *hādhihi al-dīn* (?). See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 182, l. 3.

51 “[O]n His attribute”: *fi ṣfati-hi*. A, H, J and T give this reading. B gives *fi ṣifa*. See the

who desires the quickly-passing worldly life, We rushed in it whatever We wishes for whomever We want. Therefore We prepared hell for him, where he burns, blamed and expelled” (Q 17: 18). This regards the first antagonist (**H. f. 91v**) because he hastened to have the requital for what he gained.⁵² Hence he was [actually] hastened [to receive punishment] so that⁵³ he would be made left alone between himself and the position in which he remained and with which he was content: [this was] as a repayment for him, as already pointed out.

“But the one who desires the hereafter and strives for it, as a believer” (Q 17: 19), [i.e.] a believer in the fundament up to the last. Likewise Abraham hurried up [to prepare the meal], but his guests could not eat the calf. That is to say, they were not able to accept anyone who was hastened in his activity unless the “spiritual stream” was entrusted to him.⁵⁴ As a result he feared that he had already committed a sin in relation to the hastening in his work. He had fear⁵⁵ [as such] when the calf was not accepted, being afraid of them. After that he received the good news of Isaac’s position. They said: he received the good news that the well-knowing boy⁵⁶ would be born from his wife, Sarah (Sāra).⁵⁷ This means: the summoning to him and the

note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 182, l. 4.

52 “[W]hat he gained”: *mā iktasaba-hu*. A, H, J and T give this reading. B gives *mā iktasabat-hu*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 182, l. 5.

53 “[S]o that”: *an*. A and H give this reading. B, J and T give *bayna an*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 182, l. 6.

54 “[That] the ‘spiritual stream’ was entrusted to him”: *an yuqaddama fī-hi amr bi-al-jārī*. A and H give this reading. B gives *an tuqaddama fī-hi amr bi-al-jārī*. J and T give *an yuqaddama fī-hi amr al-jārī*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 182, l. 10.

55 “He had fear”: *wa-ashfaqa*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *ittafaqa* (?). See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 182, l. 10.

56 “[H]e received a good news that the ... boy”: *wa bashashara bi-anna al-ghulām*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *aw bashasharnā al-ghulām*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 182, l. 11.

57 For the figure of Sarah in the Qur’ān and Muslim traditions, see A. Rippin, “Sāra,” 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 26 January 2020 http://dx.doi.org.kras1.lib.keio.ac.jp/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6616; First published online : 2012; First

instruction to him⁵⁸ (T. f. 92r) were [entrusted] to his bāb who is exclusively assigned to him. Therefore he was informed of⁵⁹ the good news that the one who would be appointed [i.e. the completer] would appear on account of this [task] to which he was exclusively appointed.⁶⁰

(P. 183) These verses are all on this story. This is the matter we told as follows: He (=Abraham) intended⁶¹ to slaughter him, but he was ordered to slaughter a ram as his substitute. The ram was the ransom which was neither Ishmael nor Isaac. Rather, one of them would have been the sacrifice but was redeemed⁶² with a ram that had grazed in Paradise. The ram was not either of his sons from his loins⁶³ just as the fallacy with regard to it came out from the statement in it,⁶⁴ as became clear to us. God knows the best.

print edition: ISBN: 9789004161214, 1960-2007).

58 “[T]he instruction to him”: *tarbiyatu-hu*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *bi-rutbati-hi*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 182, l. 12.

59 “Therefore he was informed of”: *fa-bushshira bi-anna*. A, B and H give this reading. J and T give *fa-bushshir-nā*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 182, l. 12.

60 “[T]his [task] to which he was exclusively appointed”: *hādhā alladhī yakhtaṣṣu-hu*. A, B, H and T give this reading. J gives *hādhā al-dīn kāna yakhtaṣṣu-hu*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 182, l. 13.

61 “[W]e told as follows: He (=Abraham) intended”: *dhakarnā anna-hu arāda*. A gives this reading. B gives *dhakarnā-hu arāda*. H gives *dhakara anna-hu arāda*. J and T give *dhakarnā bi-hi arāda*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 183, l. 1.

62 “[T]he sacrifice but was redeemed”: *al-dhabīh, fa-fūdiya*. A, H, J and T give *al-dhabīj (?)*, *fa-fūdiya*. B gives *al-dhibh, fa-fūdiya*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 183, l. 3.

63 “[A]ny of his sons from his loins”: *min wuldi-hi li-ṣulbi-hi*. J and T give *wuld min ṣulbi-hi*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 183, l. 3.

64 “[W]ith regard to it... from the statement in it”: *bi-hi min al-qawl fī-hi*. B and H give this reading. A gives *min al-qawl fī-hi*. J and T give *bi-hi min al-Qur ‘ān (?) fī-hi*. See the note by the editors of the printed edition to p. 183, l. 4.