



Determining the Date of the Narration as to the “Aqaba” Incident in the Interpretation Ascribed to Imām ‘Askarī (a) (Based on the Implementation of Adam Story)

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ABSTRACT

The plan of Hypocrites to murder the Revered Prophet, while returning from the war of Tabūk, is well known as the incident of “‘Aqaba” and various historical, narrative, and interpretive sources have attempted to reread it. In addition, in the interpretation ascribed to Imām ‘Askarī, there is a lengthy narration mixed with different occasions and themes –narrated from the Revered Prophet –which offers a unique reading of ‘Aqaba incident. In this narration, the story of angels’ prostration for Adam and his disobedience are pointed out. By implementing the method of determining the date based on an analysis of the text and source, the present article focuses on the micro-narrative of Adam story, examines the accuracy of its ascription to the Revered Prophet, and tries to figure out the approximate time of the issuance of this narration. Exploring the theories related to the Adam story shows their time to be after the Prophetic time. Moreover, analyzing the source of the narration indicates its layers wherein the first layer belongs to the second half of the third century as well as the fourth century, and the second layer to the sixth century. Indications suggesting the differentiation between the layers of the book as well as the text of the narration being mixed with Shī‘a distinctive themes (which are contemporary with the powerful era of Ṭabaristān Shī‘as) justify the probability that the narration of ‘Aqaba belongs to the sixth century and that its narrative milieu is Ṭabaristān.

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Introduction

When the Revered Prophet was returning from the war of Tabūk to Medina, the Hypocrites ambushed on the way to murder the Prophet by scaring the animal he was riding. This incident has become known as “‘Aqaba” and is cited in various historical sources (q.v.: Bayhaqqī, 1985, vol. 5: 256-257; Majlisī, 1983, vol. 21: 196-251; Ṭabrisī, 1993, vol. 5: 70-71; Wāqidī, 1989, vol. 3: 1042-1043). This incident has also been reported in detail in an interpretation ascribed to Imām ‘Askarī under the verse 2:87 of the Qur’ān. Based on it, the Hypocrites are divided into two groups: when ‘Alī replaces the Prophet in Medina, some attempt to kill him, and the second group who has left Medina with him tries to kill him when returning from Tabūk. The first group of Hypocrites fails down to marvels like the disclosure of their conspiracy by the animal of ‘Alī and the harmless passing of the Prophet from a deep pit. The Prophet becomes aware of this incident through revelation and tells it to his companions. At this time, the Hypocrites who are next to the Prophet express their delight for the failure of those Hypocrites in order to gain the Prophet’s trust. They congratulate the Prophet on this and ask about the superiority of ‘Alī (a) over angels. To respond, the Revered Prophet points out the virtues of ‘Alī and his own Ahl al-Bayt by referring to the incident of angels’ prostration for Adam, the reason for the command to prostrate and the role of Adam in it, the criterion for the classification of Shī‘as, the disobedience of Satan and Adam and rescue of Adam due to his humbleness in front of Muḥammad and his offspring. Later on, the incident of ‘Aqaba is finished with wonders like the entrance of Ḥudhayfa into a stone, his change into a bird, and the jump of stones over the head of the Prophet, and so on (Al-Tafsīr al-Mansūb ilā al-Imām al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī, 1989: 380-389).

This reading of ‘Aqaba incident is one of the unique interpretations ascribed to Imām ‘Askarī. Then it has been transmitted to Al-Iḥtijāj by Ṭabrisī (d. 588 AH) (1983, vol. 1: 53), *Al-Jawāhir al-Saniya* as well as *Wasā’il al-Shī‘a* by Ḥurr ‘Amilī (d. 1104 AH) (1989, vol. 7: 102; 2001, vol. 1: 504), Al-Burhān by Baḥrānī (d. 1107) (1995, vol. 1: 182), *Bihār al-Anwār* by Majlisī (d. 1110 AH) (1983, vol. 21: 229), and *Jāmi‘ Ahādīth al-Shī‘a* by Būrūjirdī (d. 1380) (1989, vol. 15: 248). Not being mentioned in the sources of the later and middle eras all the more the books of Manāqib, being doubtful about the validity of long narrations (Qandihārī, 2020: 68-69), uniqueness of the text as well as the themes (in spite of the existing incentive for narrating) are reminders to assess the ascription of this narration to the Revered Prophet. Therefore, in the present article the accuracy of ascribing this narration to the Revered Prophet has been explored by implementing the methods of date determination of hadiths, and tried to figure out the probable time and place of its issuance. Regarding the loose transmission of this narration, determining its date would be based on text and source analysis. Furthermore, because the narration is composed of micro-narrations and various themes, the emphasis is on those parts which can be explored historically. Now the part related to the story of angels’ prostration for Adam, his disobedience, and his being forgiven is going to be investigated.

It should be said this narration has attracted the attention of contemporary Shī‘a scholars from theological, jurisprudential, historical, and interpretive aspects. With an affirmative approach, they have used it in the discussions of imploration (Ḥusaynī Ishkiwarī, 2007, vol. 2: 422; Ismā‘īlī Yazdī, 2007, vol. 1: 118; Tajlīl Tabrīzī, 2011, vol. 5: 379); the superiority of prophets (Būrūjirdī, 1996, vol. 5: 177) and Imam ‘Alī (a) (Ansārī, 2008, vol. 1: 322; Hamadānī, 2008, vol. 3: 475; Shīrāzī, 2007, vol. 20: 164) and his lovers (Abū Ma‘āsh, 2008: 221) over angels; the contradiction between the prostration for Adam and Unity (Makārim Shīrāzī, 2005, vol. 3: 229; Malikī Miyānijī, 1994, vol. 1: 206; Ṣādiqī Tihirānī, 2014, vol. 23: 278; Sanad, 2014, vol. 3: 653); clarification of the finality of the Prophet of Islam (Subḥānī, 2001, vol. 3: 163); transmitted reasons for the imamate of ‘Alī (a) (Baḥrānī, 2002, vol. 2: 140; Ḥusaynī Tihirānī, 2007, vol. 10: 291); explanation of some lines of Ziyārt Jāmi‘a Kabīra (Karbala‘ī, 2007, vol. 2: 15); instances of beneficial science (Namāzī Shāhrūdī, 1999, vol. 7: 347); reasons for the prohibition of prostration for anyone save God (‘Alawī Gurgānī, 2016, vol. 8: 457; Ṣāhib Jawāhir, 2001, vol. 5: 421); explication of ‘Aqaba incident (Kūrānī, 2009, vol. 3: 132-134; Yūsūfī Gharawī, 2003, vol. 3: 480); interpretation of the prostration verses for Adam (Būrūjirdī, 1996, vol. 5: 245; Malikī Miyānijī, 1994, vol. 1: 206; Falsafī, 2010, vol. 3: 206; Ṣādiqī Tihirānī, 2014, vol. 1: 300); and the introduction of Hypocrites (Zabidī, 2007, vol. 3: 154). Besides, with a critical view toward the aforesaid narration, some researchers see the falsification of the claimed marvels and that sources do not mention the transfer of Ḥudhayfa to ‘Aqaba (Shūshārī, 1981, vol. 1: 211) as indications for the wrongness of this narration. Some others see it illogical and

confusing that a very big hole was dug in Medina – a very small city with low population density and serried houses – and the settlers did not know about it or did not inform ‘Alī (a) of it (Murtaḍa ‘Āmilī, 2006, vol. 30: 146-147). Nonetheless, the foregoing criticisms are related to the low probability of the marvels of ‘Aqaba incident, and do not take into account the elements of Adam’s story. In addition, in his work, investigation of the time and place of narration issuance has not been considered.

Date determination of the narration

Regarding the incomplete transmission of the narration, its date determination is done based on exploring intra-textual theories and source analysis.

Date determination based on text analysis

The narration has linked the plan of the Revered Prophet’s assassination (after the war of Tabūk) to the historical events and different marvels and themes, and has provided a lengthy and unique macro-narration of ‘Aqaba incident. Apart from those parts which seem like stories and miracles, the depiction of the scene of angels’ prostration for Adam has been accompanied with various theories whose exploration can help to estimate the time of the narration’s issuance. The cause of prostration command as Adam containing the lights of good doers, the function of Adam as Qibla in commanding angels to prostrate, classification of Shī‘as into weak and mid-ranking and the emphasis on the superiority of mid-ranking Shī‘as and also the salvation of Adam due to humbleness before Muḥammad and his offspring are concepts that determining their emergence and prevalence time can come of help to determine the date of the text. Although the themes of the narration which can be explored are not limited to these, it seems the uniqueness of narration’s text can justify the exploration of some of the theories. This is because the text of the narration is composed of various theories and micro-narrations that each of them may have a particular date, but their employment and assessment in the current structure of the macro-narration can indicate a later time.

Determining the date of “the cause of prostration command as Adam containing the lights of good doers”

In the middle of ‘Aqaba narration, due to the question concerning the superiority of Imām ‘Alī (a) over the angels, the incident of angels’ prostration for Adam has been pointed out. The cause of the prostration command for Adam has been the existence of the lights of the good doers of Prophet’s nation and the Shī‘as of Imāms within him, which is due to this statement: when God made angels aware of the virtues of the chosen ones from the nation of Muḥammad and Shī‘as of ‘Alī and his successors and that the superiority of the children of Adam over angels became clear due to their tolerance of difficulties which angels could not tolerate, God commanded them that they prostrate for Adam because he was one of those qualified beings. Three narrations ascribed to the Prophet (Ibn Bābiwayh, 1999, vol.1: 263, *Al-Tafsīr al-Mansūb ilā al-Imām al-Ḥasan* al-‘Askarī, 1989: 385, Estarabadi, 1988: 498), and one narration to Imām ‘Alī (Daylamī, 1992, vol. 2: 408) have pointed out the existence of the light of the Prophet and Ahl al-Bayt within Adam as the cause of angels’ prostration, but overgeneralizing it to the good doers of the nation of the Prophet and the Shī‘as of Ahl al-Bayt can only be seen in this narration; inevitably, the date of the issuance of the interpretation ascribed to Imām ‘Askarī (a) should be considered as the date of this narration. Moreover, the first narration ascribed to the Prophet where the cause of prostration for Adam is seen to be the existence of the light of the Prophet and Ahl al-Bayt can only be seen in this interpretation and the second can only be seen in Ta’wil al-Ayat by Estarabadi (d. 940 A.H) that in the older source (Ibn Bābiwayh, n.d: 8) without this part narrated. the third one is not attributable to the Prophet due to the reasons which will be mentioned in the next part. In addition, the narration ascribed to Imām ‘Alī (a) is a single narration in *Al-Ihtijāj* by Ṭabrisī; the probability of the issuance or prevalence of this narration can roughly be seen as the time of the creation of these last two works.

Determining the date of “the theory of Adam as Qibla for the prostration of angels for him”

According to the interpretation ascribed to Imām ‘Askarī, to explicate the superiority of ‘Alī (a) over angels, the Prophet has cited the angels’ prostration for Adam as evidence and says: “... the prostration of angels was not for Adam, but rather Adam was a Qibla for them so that they would prostrate toward

him for God, and by this they would glorify and respect Adam. It is not proper for one to prostrate for non-God and to adore one to the extent that God must be adored....”

By explicating the role of Adam in angels’ prostration, these statements rid the probability of the partnership of Adam and God in the merit of being prostrated. It seems the addressee of the narration has a preconception to the effect that angels’ prostration for Adam does not allow the prostration for non-God, and deems these two as contradictory. Accordingly in his talks, the Prophet answers this obvious question that how the divine command for prostration and prohibition of prostration for non-God can be both acceptable; he negates the legitimacy of Adam to be prostrated and stipulates Adam to be a Qibla, and emphasizes that prostration for non-God is inappropriate. That the divine command of prostration has turned into an issue as a meaningful basis for the words of the Prophet as well as the function of Adam as Qibla as an answer both can be guides for estimating the probable time of the narration issuance. In order to determine the date of the theory of Adam as Qibla, the exploration of the incident of angels’ prostration for Adam from the pre-Islamic Jewish-Christian sources (as a legacy in the intertextuality with the Qur’ān and also effective in the culture of revelation time) is begun and is continued up to the point that the data sufficiency in the Islamic era is attained.

Angels’ prostration for Adam from the pre-Islamic Jewish-Christian sources

Angels’ prostration for Adam is not mentioned in the Bible. However, some signs of it can be seen in the Jewish-Christian traditions. In the book *Adam and Eve*, from Jewish sources which probably belongs to the first century (Achte-meier, 1996: 898), it is reported that Michael has called Adam the face of God, has announced God’s command to the other angels as to bow down to Adam, and he himself was the first angel who prostrated for Adam (Life of Adam and Eve, 14: 1-3).

Bereshit Rabbah, which is compiled in the first half of the fifth century, reports that as angels saw Adam, they took him for God and were inclined to sanctify him and show humility before him. Therefore, God put him into sleep so that angels could see his limitation (GenesisRabbah, 8: 10). In this explication, the divine command for prostration cannot be seen, but rather it was the mistake of angels to take Adam for God, leading to their desire for humility before Adam.

In the Christian-Syriac piece of writing, known as “Cave of Treasures,” which is written in the mid sixth century and early decades of the seventh century (Minov, 2020: 44), it is said: When Adam named creatures, God told him that he is the leader of all creatures and they are under his control and at his service. By hearing this, the angels bowed over their knees and worshipped him (Cave of Treasures, Fol.5b). Hence, the issue of angels’ prostration for Adam has somehow been known in the culture of the People of the Book, and it is not far-fetched if Muslims of revelation era were familiar with it.

Angels’ prostration for Adam in the Qur’ān

The noble Qur’ān in six Meccan chapters (38:72-76; 7:11-13; 20:116; 17:61; 15:29-33; 18:50) as well as a Medinite chapter (2:34) talks about the divine command of angels’ prostration for Adam. In some of these verses, that Satan sees itself superior is also mentioned as a reason not to prostrate for Adam. What can be derived from the verses exoterically and their analysis in the verses’ register as well as chapters’ context show that Adam was considered as a real and authentic worshiped existence (Rād, 2016: 138-140). In addition, in the Qur’ān, there is no sign for the similarity of the verses as well as their incompatibility with the other verses all the more the monotheistic verses or Unity of God’s undermining (Rād, 2016: 137). Therefore, these verses to be challenging and the theory that Adam was a Qibla in the incident of prostration for him cannot be derived from the exoteric layer of the verses of the noble Qur’ān.

Angels’ prostration for Adam in the narrations ascribed to the Prophet

To the extent of my search in Muslims’ various narration legacies, there is another narration as to the angels’ prostration for Adam ascribed to the Revered Prophet. This lengthy narration begins with the pivot of the superiority of the final prophet over all the creatures –including the angels and prophets – and continues with the question of ‘Alī (a) as for the superiority of the Prophet over Gabriel, leading to the procurement of evidences for the superiority of the Prophet and Ahl al-Bayt over the angels such as the prostration of angels for Adam: “... the first thing God created was our soul that He made it talk about

His own Unity and appraisal... after that, God created Adam and put us within his loin, and commanded angels that they prostrate for Adam to honor and revere us. Their prostration in effect was to worship God and their respect of Adam was due to our existence in his loin. How cannot we be superior over angels whereas all of them prostrated for Adam?...” (Ibn Bābiwayh, 1999, vol.1: 262-263).

The aforesaid statement demonstrates that the prostration command was due to the illuminating existence of Ahl al-Bayt within Adam; also that the angels’ prostration was for the servitude of God, and reverence of Adam was because he was like a container of the lights of Ahl al-Bayt. Although there is no indication in the narration for Adam to be Qibla – due to lessening the authentic role of Adam to a subordinating role with the implicit reverence – explaining the quiddity of the prostration and adding the aspect of God’s worship can be deemed as evidences that there is probably a challenge for the addressee as well as the attention to the role of Adam in the prostration command in the words of the Prophet.

However, this narration is only related in some works of Ibn Bābiwayh. He has narrated it in *‘Ūyūn Akhbār Al-Riḍā, Kamāl al-Dīn* (Ibn Bābiwayh, 2016, vol. 1: 254-256), and *‘Ilal al-Sharāyi’* (Ibn Bābiwayh, 1966, vol. 1: 5-7), and says at the beginning of the transmission chain that he has learned it in 354 AH in Kūfa.

Exploring the other persons in the chains of transmission also indicates this narration was used among the people of kūfa and the narration circle of Furāt Kūfī, though Hasan b. Muḥammad is unknown in the sources of authorities (Māmaqānī, 2010, vo. 20: 408) and only based on the transmission chains of Ibn Bābiwayh, we know he was one of the narrators of Furāt kūfī (Qubādī, 2010: 78). Muḥammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Alī b. Hamidānī also is not introduced in the books of authorities (Namāzī Shāhrūdī, 1994, vol. 6: 432), but based on the transmission chains he was one of the chiefs of Furāt kūfī (kūfī, 1990: 38 & 528). The other two also are of the unknown and insignificant narrators (Namāzī Shāhrūdī, 1994, vol. 4: 347, vol. 7: 290).

Abdu al-Salām Hirawī (Abāṣalt) was one of the trustworthy narrators who converted from Sunni to Shī‘a (Ṭāwūsī Masrūr, 2017: 41-54). He was active in the narrative milieu of Kūfa, Baṣra, and Baghdād (Khaṭīb Baghdādī, 1997, vol. 11: 47-49), and met Imām Riḍā in Nayshābūr (Ibn Bābiwayh, 1999, vol. 2: 183). In addition, in the text of the narration, the expression “the first thing God created was our soul” is the origin of the theory of creating souls before bodies as well as the animalistic meaning of “soul,” which both are concepts related to the time after the Prophetic era (Shafī‘ī, 2019: 33).

Hence, ascription of a single narration with a Shī‘a origin via a Nayshābūrī- Kūfī path that contains concepts related to the time after the Prophetic era to the Revered Prophet is noteworthy. This is whereas, if proved as an authentic narration, the only probable evidence for a part of the narration is the incident of ‘Aqaba, and cannot indicate the prevalence of the theory of Adam as Qibla in the Prophetic era.

Angels’ prostration for Adam in the words of the Companions

Investigating the words ascribed to the Companions shows there are sporadic and limited remarks by some Companions as to the quiddity of angels’ prostration and the role of Adam in this divine command. First, these remarks are recounted and, then, they are analyzed.

Recounting the opinions of the Companions

It is said Ubay b. Ka‘b (d. c. 19-33 AH) sees the quiddity of angels’ prostration a concession to Adam’ qualification compared to that of the angels (Shahristānī, 2008, vol. 1: 273; Tha‘labī, 2002, vol. 1: 180), and Ibn Mas‘ūd (d. 32 or 33 AH) sees it angels’ following of Adam in communal prostration for God (Shahristānī, 2008, vol. 1: 273; Tha‘labī, 2002, vol. 1: 180). In words ascribed to Imām ‘Alī (a) (d. 40 AH), it is said: “... as God created Adam, He set him superior over angels and showed them He had already given him a special knowledge by which he could quest the names of things. God made Adam the altar, Ka‘ba, and Qibla and made lights, spirits, and the righteous prostrate for him...” (Sibṭ Ibn Jawzī, 2006, vol. 1: 506; Mas‘ūdī, 1989, vol. 1: 43) and “... God made angels prostrate for Adam. It was not a prostration to worship Adam, but rather it was a concession to the superiority of Adam and a mercy from God...” (Ṭabrisī, 1983, vol. 1: 211). According to this statement, Adam had a role of Qibla and prostration for him was not a kind of worship, but it was to concede to his superiority. Three comments are also ascribed to Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 68 AH) (Abū Ḥayyān, 2000, vol. 1:

247; Ibn Abī Ḥātam, 1999, vol. 1: 84; Shahristānī, 2008, vol. 1: 273). Based upon those comments, Ibn ‘Abbās saw Adam as the target of angels’ prostration; however, this prostration was to salute Adam as well as to obey the divine command because prostration for non-God is prohibited.

Analysis of Companions’ opinions

According to the aforesaid reports, it seems how angels prostrated for Adam and the compatibility of this prostration with worshipping Unity had been an issue that made some Companions show reaction and made them try to change the meaning of the prostration or change the role of Adam. One instance even indicates Adam as Qibla. Nonetheless, the data of this issue is sporadic and few, and some of them are recounted in ancillary sources: *Tafsīr Ibn Abī Ḥātam* (d. 327 AH), *Murawij al-dhahab* by Mas‘ūdī (d. 345), *Al-Kashf wa al-bayān* by Tha‘labī (d. 427), *Mafātīḥ al-asrār* by Shahristānī (d. 548), *Al-Ihtijāj* by Ṭabrisī (d. 520 or 548 AH), and *Tadhkira al-khawāṣ* by Sibṭ Ibn Jawzī (d. 654 AH) recounted these opinions. From these, *Murawij al-dhahab* is general history, *Al-Ihtijāj* is a latter dialectical-narrative source, and *Tadhkira al-khawāṣ* is a latter work about the virtues of Shī‘a Imāms by a preacher. It should be noted that the comments of Companions are a few and not reflected in the early narration compilations and interpretations – except one comment by Ibn ‘Abbās in *Tafsīr Ibn Abī Ḥātam* – making the probability of the prevalence of this challenge weak.

The authenticity of those narrations which indicate Adam as Qibla should also be reconsidered. Mas‘ūdī’s recount of the narration ascribed to Imām ‘Alī (a) is stated with an incomplete chain of transmission from Imām Ṣādiq and is not considered in latter sources, and is related only in *Ghurur al-Akḥbār* (Daylamī, 2007: 193) – the work of a Daylamī preacher (d. 841 AH) – and *Bihār al-Anwār* by Majlisī (d. 1110 AH) (1983, vol. 54: 212). A similar wording of the narration, in another way by a chain of transmitters, has been stated from Imām Ḥusayn in *Tadhkira al-Khawāṣ* in the form of a sermon by the Commander of the Faithful in the Jāma‘ Mosque of Kūfa (Ibn Jawzī, 2006, vol. 1: 504), and in the extant Shī‘a sources it can only be found in *Bihār al-Anwār* (Majlisī, 1983, vol. 74: 298). The aforesaid narration begins as follows: “... God was alone in His Dominion and unique in His Sovereignty. Thus a ray was glowed from His light and a cut shined from His illumination, and that ray came together in these hidden faces and matched the face of the Prophet...” (Mas‘ūdī, 1989, vol. 1: 42). These statements evoke the beginning of creation from light. This is whereas date determination of narrations of creation beginning show, in the Prophetic and early Companions’ era, the material or non-material origin of the universe was not an issue and the theory of universe creation from non-material elements like light has been put forward from the mid second century (AH) (Shafī‘ī, 2019: 39-40 & 46). Therefore, it seems this narration cannot be deemed a case in point of the theory of Adam as Qibla in the era of Companions.

Angels’ prostration for Adam after the era of Companions

After the era of Companions, we are also faced with sporadic recounts as to the angels’ prostration for Adam. First, the opinions of the Successors and the followers of the Successors and then the recount as well as the analysis are provided here.

Recount of the opinions of the Successors and the next generations

According to the extant recounts from the second century (AH), in the incident of angels’ prostration for Adam, ‘Āmir Sh‘abī (d. c. 105) sees God as the worshipped existence and Adam as Qibla like Ka‘ba (Abū Ḥayyān, 2000, vol. 1: 274; Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, 2002, vol. 1: 124). Ḥasan Baṣarī (d. 110 AH) sees the angels’ prostration was for Adam and his divine veneration. He says the reason was to make angels aware of God omniscience and His will (Ibn Abī Ḥātam, 1999, vol. 1: 84, vol. 5: 1443). It seems his statement implies angels deemed themselves superior, a point which is cited in some recounts (Ibn Abī Ḥātam, 1999, vol. 1: 83). Qatāda (d. 118 AH) also sees the angels’ prostration for Adam was to obey God and also Adam’s divine veneration (Ṭabarī, 1992, vol. 1: 181). ‘Amru b. Dīnār (d. 126 AH) pays attention to the way of prostration and describes it as a state other than putting forehead on the ground (Shahristānī, 2008, vol. 1: 273). To explicate the type of prostration by Jacob for Josef, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zaid (d. 182 AH) also points out its parallel form with the angels’ prostration for Adam and calls this a non-worshipping prostration in order to venerate Adam (Ṭabarī, 1992, vol. 13: 45). In

the opinions left from the era of the Successors and their followers, there cannot be seen any other recount as to the command of prostration and the role of Adam.

Moreover, Shī'a sources inform us that there were questions about the angels' prostration for Adam in the era of Imām Ṣādiq (a) (d. 148 AH). A recount relates the question of Abī Baṣīr from the Imam: "Did angels prostrate for Adam and put their foreheads on the ground? Yes. It was to venerate Adam by the order of God." (Quṭb al-Dīn Rāwandī, 1989: 42) Another narration points out the question of a disbeliever when he was arguing with Imām Ṣādiq (a): "... Is prostration for non-God appropriate? He said: no. So how did God command angels to prostrate for Adam? He said: whoever prostrates based on God's command has in effect prostrated for God..." (Ṭabrisī, 1983, vol. 2: 339). Furthermore, another narration ascribed to Imām Ṣādiq (a) describes the angels' prostration for Adam as the superiority of Adam and worship of God (Kūfī, 1990: 57).

In the third century, the first recount of the incident of angels' prostration for Adam can be seen in the correspondences of Yaḥya b. Aktham with the household of Imām Hādī (d. 254 AH). Yaḥya b. Aktham asked about the prostration of Jacob the prophet for Josef and received his answer in likening angels' prostration for Adam and explicating it for revering him and obeying God (Ibn Sh'ubī' Ḥarrānī, 1984: 478; Qumī, 1984, vol. 1: 356). Who was prostrated by angels can also be seen in the question by Abū Ibrāhīm Muzanī (d. 264 AH), which was answered via depicting the status of Adam as Qibla (Ibn 'Asākir, 1995, vol. 7: 398). This issue is also noticeable in the questions propounded by Hādī Ila al-Ḥaq (d. 298 AH), and his answer was returning the true nature of that prostration to the creator of Adam and revering Him for creating Adam from soil (Hādī Ila al-Ḥaq, 2001: 439). Moreover in this century, a sect with the name of Ḥulmāniyya appeared who deemed God's incarnation into Adam as the reason of angels' prostration for Adam (Baghdādī, 1988: 245).

According to the recounts from the fourth century, the role of Adam in the command for angels to prostrate was one of the ethical issues among Mu'tazila. Abū 'Alī Jubā'ī (235-303 AH) from the Mu'tazila of Baṣra and Abulqāsim Balkhī (d. 319) from the Mu'tazila of Baghdād deemed Adam as Qibla in this incident (Ṭūsī, n.d., vol. 1: 150; vol. 4: 356; vol. 7: 214). On the contrary, Ibn Ikhshīd (d. 325) (Ṭūsī, n.d., vol. 1: 150; vol. 4: 356; vol. 7: 214), Jaṣṣāṣ (d. 370 AD) (Jaṣṣāṣ, 1985, vol. 1: 37-38) and Rumānī (d. 384) (Ṭūsī, n.d., vol. 1: 150) from the Mu'tazila of Baghdād opposed the opinion of Adam as Qibla, and saw angels' prostration as the reverence of Adam.

Also in Imamates, Abdul-'Azīz b. Yaḥyā Jalūdī (d. 330 AH), Shaykh of Imamates in Baṣra, interpreted the prostration of angels as a sign of humbleness (Shahristānī, 2008, vol. 1: 273), and Ibn Bābiwayh (d. 381 AH) saw angels' prostration for Adam as glorification of the spirits of divine proofs in his loin whose obedience was the servitude of God (Ibn Bābiwayh, 2016, vol. 1: 13).

Analysis and assessment of the opinions of Successors and the later generations

There were a limited number of ideas in the second century as to the prostration of angels for Adam and his role as Qibla. Some indications have been reported by Ḥasan Baṣrī, Qatādi Baṣrī, and 'Amru b. Dīnār Makkī from which one can perceive the challenge of angels' prostration for Adam. There are also some narrations ascribed to Imām Ṣādiq (a) which stipulate the question regarding the prostration of angels for Adam. These single narrations both are in two Shī'a ancillary sources (that is, Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā by Rāwandī and Al-Iḥtijāj by Ṭabrisī), and that the narration in Al-Iḥtijāj is related with an incomplete chain of transmission, creating doubt for referring to them. The opinion of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd – the jurist of Medina – also focuses on the reason for the prostration of Jacob for Josef. By itself, it does not refer to any doubt regarding the prostration of angels for Adam, but rather its employment for clarification of another verse can show the clarity and certainty of the verse of prostration for Adam among the addresses. On the other hand, in his interpretation under the verses of angels' prostration for Adam, Muqātil b. Sulayman Balkhī, who lived in Baṣra in the second century, does not point out the disagreements, does not mention the opinions of the earlier interpreters, does not see any need to interpret it, and only cites the relation of Satan to the angels (Balkhī, 2003, vol. 1: 98; vol. 2: 30, 539, & 589; vol. 3: 43). Accordingly, it seems inconsistency as well as the small number of accounts, singleness of some of them in the ancillary sources, and lack of citing the works left from that era all weaken the possibility that the issue of angels' prostration for Adam was well-known in the second century. In addition, about Adam as Qibla, one account is reported from 'Āmir Sh'abī, the Kūfī narrator and jurist (last years of the first century and the early years of the second century); this

account is not mentioned in the compilations and interpretations of early narrations, and its only source is the interpretation of Ibn ‘Aṭīyya (d. 541 AH). Although, based on the aforesaid data, one cannot deny this issue to be a challenge, and may propound the opinion of Adam as Qibla. However, evidences regarding the eminence of this opinion cannot be seen.

Data from the third century is also sporadic and little. The narration ascribed to Imām Hādī points to the story of prostration for Adam. In addition, to providing the reason for the prostration of Jacob the prophet for Josef. The only source to relate that interpretation is ascribed to Qumī, and its ascription to ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm is not fixed and its validity is open to discussion (Salmān, 2018: 75-128). Moreover, angels’ prostration for Adam snatches the attention in order to clarify the prostration of Jacob for Josef, and does not indicate any doubt about angels’ prostration for Adam. In addition, the opinion of the Egyptian jurist, Abū Ibrāhīm Muzanī (which Adam was like Qibla) is only related in *Tārikh-i Madīna-i Damishq* by Ibn ‘Asākir (d. 571 AH). It is interesting that Ibn Qutayba (d. 276 AH), who lived for some time in the land of Iraq as well, does not point out this verse to be challenging, as he cites its problems. He only relates the kind of address toward the angels and the creation of Adam (Ibn Qutayba, 2003: 71, 74, & 98). Nonetheless, that there existed the sect of Ḥulmāniyya makes one think that before the appearance of this sect the prostration of angels for Adam was a known issue, based upon which this sect deemed God’s incarnation into Adam as an answer. Its followers set this as the center of their belief and used the verse of prostration to confirm their foundations. This possibility can be further approved by the indications about this question in the second half of the third century in the book by Hādī Ila al-Ḥaq. Therefore, it seems in the second half of the third century it was widespread to see angels’ prostration for Adam as a challenge, though Adam as Qibla still was not well-known and did not enjoy much fame.

Regarding the disagreement of Mu‘tazila as for the role of Adam (propounding him as Qibla on the one hand and criticizing this opinion on the other hand), it seems at the late third century and early fourth century this theory at least was recognized among some scholastic theological movements. The interesting point, however, is the way this theory is related. Despite searching some works of Mu‘tazila of that era – which required this challenge to be propounded due to the quiddity of those works – the author of the present article found no disagreement among Mu‘tazila in dealing with this issue. Some works like those of Jāhīz, *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān* and *Sharḥ badi’al-Amālī* by Jaṣṣaṣ, *Al-Maḡālāt wa ‘Ūyūnu al-masā’il* by Abulqāsim Balkhī, *‘Ūyūnu al-masā’il* and *Tafsīr* by Ḥakim Jushamī, *Al-Mughnī* and *Mutashābih al-Qur’ān* by ‘Abd al-Jabbār, and *Mūsū‘at tafāsīr* al-Mu‘tazila were searched. In some of the works, the verse of prostration as for the relation of Satan to the angels (Balkhī, 2018: 487, Nabhā, 2009, vol. 4: 263) and the superiority of angels over the prophets and the offspring of Adam (Jaṣṣaṣ, 2002: 245) are pointed out, but nothing is said about the challenge of angels’ prostration for Adam; even in some of the aforesaid works, the relators and the disagreement of Mu‘tazila are not cited (Hamidānī, 1962, vol. 5: 150; id, n.d.: 86; Jaṣṣaṣ, 1985, vol. 1: 37; Jushamī, 2019, vol. 1: 328). In addition, in all the works of Sayyid Murtaḍā, despite considering Adam as Qibla, its relators are not mentioned (‘Alam al-Hudā, 2010, vol. 1: 408; id, 1985, vol. 2: 156; id, 1998, vol. 2: 334). The only source in which the disagreement among Mu‘tazila (with citing their names) is mentioned is *Tafsīr-i Tibyān* by Shaykh Ṭūsī. The other authors pointing out this theory have mentioned it with indefinite pronouns like “qīl” and “qāla Ba ‘ḍuhum” (Qurṭubī, 1985, vol. 1: 293; Shahrīstānī, 2008, vol. 1: 273; Ṭabarānī, 2008, vol. 1: 150; Tha‘labī, 2002, vol. 1: 180). Based on this, it seems Adam as Qibla is an ancillary belief among Mu‘tazila which can be supposed relatively well-known in the fourth century.

Date of the idea of Adam as Qibla in angel’s prostration for him

Angels’ prostration for Adam is mentioned in some pre-Islamic holy texts. This makes it possible to consider that the people of revelation era knew about the prostration for Adam. The noble Qur’ān also has a clear reason as to the prostration for Adam in which no ambiguity and challenge can be seen. In narrations attributed to the Prophet, there is one instance which gives this perception that the command of prostration is suspicious, though the authenticity of this narration is doubtful. In the words ascribed to the Companions also there are a few accounts which talk about the command of prostration to be challenging. Nonetheless, few reflections of it in the sources (mostly in ancillary ones) weaken the possibility that this challenge was common. In the third century, the appearance of Ḥulmāniyya sect

and their use of the challenge as for the prostration command plus the questioning by some theologians show the relative fame of this challenge in the second half of the third century.

Moreover, there is no trace as for Adam as Qibla in the texts of the People of the Book, the noble Qur’ān, and the narrations ascribed to the Prophet. In the era of Companions, there is a single narration ascribed to ‘Alī (a) purports Adam as Qibla in the divine command, which is faulty if referred to. After the Companions also, this view was once again stated in the late first century and the early second century by the judge and jurist of Kūfa. It again appears in the words of an Egyptian jurist in the second half of the third century. Later in the late third century and also the fourth century, it gets to become relatively known among Mu‘tazila as a matter of disagreement.

Thus, it seems the challenge of divine command of prostration for Adam in the second half of the third century as well as Adam as Qibla as the answer for this challenge in the late third century and the fourth century are both well-known. Regarding the jurisprudential and theological aspects as for the issue of prostration for non-God, the theory of Adam as Qibla first emerged in the opinions of jurists, and later became widespread among theologians.

Determining the date of the superiority of mid-ranking Shī‘as over weak Shī‘as

Based on ‘Aqaba incident the Prophet – to explain the superiority of ‘Alī (a) over the angels – alludes to the angels’ prostration for Adam as the evidence; he explicates the dimensions of this divine command. After negating the prostration for Adam as worship as well as emphasizing the prohibition of prostration for non-God, he states the superior position of Shī‘as via the station of the worshipped: “If I were supposed to command anyone to prostrate for non-God, I would certainly tell the weak Shī‘as and other obliged Shī‘as to prostrate for the mid-ranking Shī‘as (regarding their knowledge of ‘Alī –the successor of the Messenger of God).” These sentences indicate the classification of Shī‘as into weak and mid-ranking and the superiority of the mid-ranking Shī‘as over the weak ones. This is noteworthy from some aspects:

First, employing the expression of “shīa‘tunā” (our Shī‘as) by the Revered Prophet, because in the words ascribed to the Prophet the use of “Shī‘a of ‘Alī” is well-known (Al-Tafsīr al-Mansūb ilā al-Īmām al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī, 1989: 127; Barqī, 1952, vol. 1: 181; Ibn Hamām Iskāfī, 1984: 47; Qādī Nu‘mān, 1966, vol. 1: 75; Kūfī, 1990, 52; Kulaynī, 2008, vol. 2: 448). However, the application of Shī‘a to refer to his followers is unprecedented and is considered as one of the peculiarities of this narration. Furthermore, the adjectival phrase of “shīa‘tunā” (our Shī‘as) was used after the prophetic era and in the stage wherein this expression was changing from its Shī‘a literal meaning to the figurative meaning, paving the way for it to be noticeable (Muntaẓirī Muqaddam, 2014: 103-104). Accordingly, its use in the prophetic words seems weird. *Second*, classification of Shī‘as into weak and non-weak in the time of the Messenger of God lacks support. In the prophetic time, what is more, Shī‘a was not known as a doctrinal group based upon the pivot of ‘Alī (a) (Āqā Nūrī, 2008: 94-95), as a result of which classification based on the extent one enjoys Alawite knowledge cannot be sensible. The first use of the phrase of “weak Shī‘as/ our Shī‘as” can be seen in a statement attributed to ‘Alī (a) in the narration ascribed to Imām ‘Askarī (Al-Tafsīr al-Mansūb ilā al-Īmām al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī, 1989: 339). Its frequent use is noticeable in the narrations ascribed to Imam Ṣādiq (a) (Al-Tafsīr al-Mansūb ilā al-Īmām al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī, 1989: 301 & 343; Baḥrānī, 1995, vol. 2: 496; Kulaynī, 2008, vol. 15: 426), though most cases for using this phrase are also reported in this very narration which is ascribed to Imām ‘Askarī (Al-Tafsīr al-Mansūb ilā al-Īmām al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī, 1989: 301, 339, 343, 345, 348). *Third*, using the conditional structure (If I were supposed to command anyone to prostrate for non-God) by the Revered Prophet – except the present narration – can be seen about the prostration of wife for her own husband, whose prophetic origin is faulty (Īzādī, 2017, 84-97) and is initiated by the narration circles of Sunnis in Kūfa (Īzādī, 2016: 64). Therefore, this part of the narration also is peculiar regarding its structure and content in the interpretation ascribed to Imām ‘Askarī, and dates back to the time of its writing.

Determining the date of “humbleness to Muḥammad and his household: the reason for the salvation of Adam”

After using the story of Adam to explicate the virtues of ‘Alī and his relatives in the incident of ‘Aqaba, the disobedience of Satan is compared with the defiance of Adam, and then the perdition of

Satan and salvation of Adam are linked to the arrogance and humbleness of them, respectively, in front of Muḥammad and his Ahl a-Bayt. The role of Adam's humbleness in his save is of the peculiarities of this narration. Adam's humbleness in front of Ahl a-Bayt – except for another case in this interpretation (Al-Tafsīr al-Mansūb ilā al-Īmām al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī, 1989: 219) – cannot be seen in the other narrations and traditions, whether prophetic or not-prophetic. Although it is possible that behaviors like resorting to Ahl a-Bayt – which is pointed out in many narrations – can be considered as instances of humbleness, description of Adam's interaction with the lights of Ahl a-Bayt as humbleness is something unique, as far as the research by the author of the present article. It should be said the comparison of Adam's disobedience with that of Satan as well as the role of humbleness and arrogance of those two are reflected in the talks of some Sufis of the fourth century (Sullamī, 2004: 154); this might be deemed as the ethical-mystical origin of this concept, which of course needs a separate study. By any means, the singleness of this concept in the interpretation ascribed to Imām 'Askarī shows it is issued in the time of writing this book.

Determining the date based on source analysis

As it can be seen in the section of determining the date based on text analysis, out of the four investigated ideas, three ideas are peculiarities of the interpretation ascribed to Imām 'Askarī, and the date of their issuance depends on identification of the date of writing the book. Therefore, in order to determine the date of the narration of 'Aqaba, the first source of relating the narration, i.e. the interpretation ascribed to Imām Ḥasan 'Askarī, is analyzed. Ascription of this work to Imām 'Askarī (232-260 AH) is highly doubtful (Madadī, 2014, vol. 1: 321-325; Shushtarī, 1981, vol. 1: 152-229). There is no sign as for this interpretation in the early Contents as well as the other works of that time, and the only way for its identification and ascription is Ibn Bābiwayh. Nonetheless, Ibn Bābiwayh's narrations of this work were not widespread in the early books of tradition. This was so until about the six century when its unrecognizability among Imamate circles was over via repeated relations of some virtue-based and argument-based works of this interpretation which were often from Ṭabaristān (q.v.: Ibn Shahr Āshūb, 1960, vol. 1: 92, vol. 2: 293 & 300; Ṭabrisī, 1983, vol. 1: 14) (Anṣārī, 2017: 134).

Based on the date determination of some concepts of the book, the access of Ibn Bābiwayh to it, and the presence of the narrators from Jurjān in the book's chain of transmission, this work can be seen belonging at least to the second half of the third century and the fourth century (AH) in the milieu of Ṭabaristān (Bar-Asher, 2013: 129-143). Comparing the present style and content of the book with the relations of Ibn Bābiwayh of this interpretation, some researchers have also propounded the probability that this book has two layers. This is because some relations of Ibn Bābiwayh via the narrators of the narration, i.e. Muḥammad b. Qāsim from Imām 'Askarī, cannot be found in *Tafsīr 'Askarī*. On the other hand, in the present interpretation there are traditions which have not been narrated in the works of Ibn Bābiwayh, in spite of that fact that the work required their narration. These points were not related until the sixth century, not by Ibn Bābiwayh and not by anyone else. In addition, regarding the style, Ibn Bābiwayh's relations of this book are concise and related to the verses (Anṣārī, 2017: 119-120 & 125-131), but the main part of the present interpretation (220 out of 379 narrations) is comprised of mid-size and long narrations which are like stories and have little relation or even no relation to the verses (Ma'ārif, 2019: 43-44). Besides, in all the relations by Ibn Bābiwayh from Muḥammad b. Qāsim from Imām, the role of Imām Ḥasan 'Askarī is the role of a narrator wherein he relates from the other Imāms with a connected chain of transmission from his forefathers, but in the present interpretation a notable part of the relations are the words of Imām himself (Anṣārī, 2017: 139).

Moreover, ascription of this layer of interpretation to Imām Ḥasan 'Askarī is also dubious. Based on many indications, the present-day studies have seen it possible that the interpretation ascribed to Imām 'Askarī is that very interpretation by Abī Muḥammad Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-'Askarī known as Nāṣir Uṭrūsh Zaydī (d. 304 AH). The similarity of name, agnomen, and nickname of Imām 'Askarī with those of Nāṣir Uṭrūsh; the presence of some evidences as to mixing these two in the chains of transmission; that Uṭrūsh has an interpretation; intermediated transmission from him by Muḥammad b. Qāsim (narrator of the interpretation) (Anṣārī, 2017: 119-120 & 132); and analysis of the chains of transmission and manuscripts of the present interpretation along with the story content analysis of the narrators' interpretation about its issuance cause which is in line with the station and life conditions of

Nāṣir Uṭrūsh in Āmul (Ostadi, 2021: 147-8) are of the aforesaid indications for the identification of the interpretation ascribed to Imām ‘Askarī with the one ascribed to Nāṣir al-Uṭrūsh. Based on this, the first layer of the interpretation is formed in Ṭabaristān in the fourth century.

The second layer includes long narrations which have little relation or no relation to the verses (centered on relating miracles, the virtues of Imāms, and arguments), which were probably added in the sixth century—the time when virtues were favored (Anṣārī, 2017: 118-140). Besides, this book has peculiarities which are traceable only in the sources of Ṭabaristān in the sixth century such as *Al-Iḥtijāj* by Ṭabrisī and *Manāqib* by Ibn Shahr Āshūb, and is line with the thriving and potent government of Māzandarān Shī‘as in the sixth century AH (Ismā‘īlī, 2008: 86-88). Therefore, it seems the second layer of the interpretation can be considered to belong to the sixth century and the milieu of Ṭabaristān.

Conclusion

The incident of ‘Aqaba, in the interpretation which is scribed to Imām ‘Askarī, is attributed to the Revered Prophet via an incomplete chain of transmission – in a long narration which is composed of various occasions and concepts. Thus, its date determination was sought based on the written ideas in the text with an emphasis on the micro-story of Adam’s story and the analysis of its source. In the analysis of narration text, four ideas were examined. Examining the idea of Adam as Qibla in angels’ prostration for him in the pre-Islamic Jewish-Christian sources, the Qur’ān, and the accounts of Islamic era shows the relative prevalence of this idea in the late third century and fourth century (AH) among the theologians. This idea in combination with the cause of the divine command for the prostration for Adam as a container of good doers’ lights are set in a context wherein concepts like the prostration of weak Shī‘as for the superior Shī‘as and the role of Adam’s humbleness in front of the Prophet and Ahl al-Bayt in his salvation are also provided; all of these ideas belong to an era after the Prophetic time, and are considered as peculiarities of this interpretation and relate the final date of this interpretation to the date of its compilation.

This interpretation cannot be ascribed to Imām Ḥasan ‘Askarī; rather, the present interpretation is a two-layer source, the first layer of which is the interpretation of Nāṣir Uṭrūsh Zaydī, belonging to the second half of the third century and the fourth century (AH) in the milieu of Ṭabaristān. The second layer is also comprised of single, long narrations centered on relating the miracles, virtues of Imāms, and arguments; this layer belongs to Ṭabaristān in the sixth century.

The length of the text, lack of interpretative link with the verse, inclusion of many miracles and acts of honor yet with no indications in the earlier sources are some of the factors in the incident of ‘Aqaba which show it belongs to the second layer of the interpretation. The text of the narration is mixed with distinctive Shī‘a concepts, showing this narration was formed in a Shī‘a milieu which favored the virtues and was away from dissimulation. This was in line with the supremacy of Shī‘as of Ṭabaristān in the sixth century AH. Thus, the date of the narration as for the incident of ‘Aqaba in the interpretation ascribed to Imām ‘Askarī can be deemed to be the sixth century AH and that its narrative milieu is Ṭabaristān.

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