Al-Qasemi Journal of Islamic Studies, **volume 9, issue 1 (2025), 1-32**

The intellectual and social sources of the Shi'ite movement in Iraq

Maya Cohen[1]

INTRODUCTION

When the prophet Mohammad died in Medina in 632, no one had been named as his successor. This failure led to fierce clashes, and various leadership models were proposed. Three criteria were laid out for selecting a Caliph: (a) *sabiqa* (precedence), (b) *karaba* (a close family relationship to the prophet), and (c) *ria'asa* (patrilineage).[2] Abū Bakr (reigned 642–634) was chosen in line with these principles; he became the first of the first four Caliphs (*rashidun*).[3]

The emergence of Shi'ism is closely linked to the events surrounding Mohammad's death and the appointment of his heir. Many Muslims supported ʿAlī ibn Abi Talib on the grounds that, as well as belonging to the same bloodline (ʿAlī was Mohammad's cousion and son-in-law) he had been a companion to the prophet since his youth, his father having adopted Mohammad when he was

[1] Sallem Academic.

[2] Nehemiah Levzion, Daphna Efrat, and Daniella Talmon-Heller, *Islam: An Introduction to the History of the Religion*, 2nd ed. (Tel Aviv: Open University Press, 1998–2008), 1:90–91 (Hebrew). The second was ʿUmar Ibn al-Khattab (reigned 634–644), the third ʿUthmān Ibn Affan (reigned 644–656), and the fourth ʿAlī Ibn Abi Talib (reigned 656–661).

[3] Joseph Drory, "The History of Early Islam," in *Islam: History, Religion, Culture*, ed. Meir Bar-Asher and Meir Hatina (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2017), 57–59 (Hebrew).

orphaned.[4] After the deaths of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, ʿUthmān was appointed Caliph, and the rivalry between ʿAlī's faction and their opponents intensified. ʿUthmān awarded his Meccan relatives key positions, the most controversial of which was that of Mu'awiya, one of Mohammad's fiercest opponents during his rise to prominence.[5] Throughout the *rashidun* period, supporters of the ʿAlī faction complained of discrimination and suppression. While this became a common feature of the movement, Shi'ism was founded only after the death of ʿAlī, who had vast numbers of supporters in Iraq.[6]

Shi'ite historiography identifies four men as backing ʿAlī, even prior to Abū Bakr's appointment as Caliph—Ammār ibn Yāsir (d. 660), Miqdad ibn Aswād al-Kindi (d. 656), Abū Dharr al-Ghifāri (d. 651), and Salman al-Fārisī (d. 657). Known as the "Four Pillars of the Sahaba," these men—all of whom came from the margins of Arab society—effectively functioned as ʿAlī's first faction.[7] His camp was thus initially strengthened by men from diverse backgrounds who strove for unity based on factors other than class or ethnicity.[8]

The backing of these groups was primarily due to ʿAlī's championing of equality amongst all Muslims, a policy that contrasted sharply with the approach of his

---

[4] Aṭ-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 14: The Conquest of Iran—A.D. 641–643/A.H. 21–23*, trans. G. Rex Smith (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 146–51; Levzion, Efrat, and Talmon-Heller, *Islam*, 108.

[5] Levzion, Efrat, and Talmon-Heller, *Islam*, 95–96.

[6] Julius Wellhausen, *Religio-Political Factions in Early Islam*, trans. R.C. Ostle and S. M. Walzer (Amsterdam: North-Holland Pub. Co., 1975), 96.

[7] Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 20.

[8] Hamid Dabashi, *Shi'ism: A Religion of Prote*st (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 108.

predecessor, who privileged the Quraysh as possessing leadership qualities.[9] Concentrated primarily in Kufa (Iraq) and Egypt, this band of rebels assassinated ʿUthmān in 656, unsurprisingly insisting after his overthrow that only ʿAlī had a right to the Caliphate.[10]

This chapter, which examines the rise and development of Shi'ism in Iraq, is divided into two sections. The first argues that ʿAlī's decision to transfer his power center to Kufa constituted a geographical shift that enabled the first Shi'ite community to emerge. The second discusses in theological and doctrinal terms the local cultural influences Iraq exerted on the evolution of Shi'ism. Analyzing the way in which Shi'ism drew on Israelite mythology, Christian and Jewish ideas, and pre-monotheistic traditions, it evinces the impact the geo-religious space had on the shaping of Shi'ism into the form in which we know it today. Finally, it shows how the convergence of diverse communities, faiths, and traditions—still alive today in the space—led to the emergence of holy places as historico-theological landmarks.

[9] Hugh Nigel Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century* (London: Longman, 1986), 77-78.

[10] Levzion, Ephrat, and Talm-Heller, *Islam*, 96.

ʿALĪ'S TRANSFER TO KUFA

ʿAlī became Caliph following ʿUthmān's murder in 656. While his appointment did not prompt any real resistance, his assumption of the Caliphate was tarnished by the assassination even though he had not been personally involved in it.[11] Understanding the need to firmly establish his rule, ʿAlī settled in Kufa that same year, never having even visited the region before.[12] Numerous scholars have sought to discover the motives for this move. In the following sections, I will review some of the most prevalent conjectures in the contemporary literature, then offer some thoughts of my own.

Kufa's geographical advantages over Medina as a power base

One of the greatest challenges ʿAlī had to face was his Qurayshite origin. The local Muslim community gave him no room to find his feet, so his rule was beset with difficulties. Identifying with the al-Anṣār (the Helpers),[13] he had not favored Abū Bakr's election as the first Caliph. His appointment thus raised a red flag for the Qurayshites, who realized that he would have to safeguard their status as imperial rulers. The tribe most opposed to him was headed by Al-Zubayr, Ṭalḥa, and ʿĀʾisha, the Prophet's widow.[14]

Despite his family ties with Mohammad, ʿAlī privileged his fellow townsmen, appointing them to key posts in the Empire, in contrast to ʿUthmān's policy of advancing his own family due to their tribal affiliation with the Prophet.[15] This policy enraging his fellow townsmen, and they resisted him; the "Camel" battle

[11] Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 75.

[12] Ibid, 77.

[13] Local inhabitants of Medina who took the Islamic prophet Muhammad and his followers into their homes when they emigrated from Mecca during the Hijra.

[14] Kennedy, *The Prophet,* 76.

[15] Levzion, Ephrat, and Talmon-Heller, *Islam*, 96.

- the first *fitna* - occurred in 656 and forced ʿAlī into a struggle against the Meccan elite. Remote from the primary centers of Arab settlement in Iraq and Syria, and arid, hot, and humid, Medina was not an easy place from which to conduct a military campaign.[16] Dependent upon food imported from Egypt, it was also vulnerable to external forces. Kufa, in contrast, lay at the heart of the Muslim Empire of the day. Nestled on the banks of the Euphrates, it was much closer to the military centers on the Persian front. It thus possessed significant geographic advantages for administrating the Empire and controlling warfare.[17]

The Kufan support of ʿAlī

Founded in 638 by ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab in order to house the soldiers who had taken part in the Battle of al-Qadisiyyah, Kufa later served as a base for all the Arab armies fighting on the Persian front.[18] It attracted both diverse nomadic Arab tribes and a large group of strangers, *Mawlā* (protégés), who had migrated from Persia when it was conquered.[19] Over time, two main factions consolidated in the city—the strongest and most influential tribes and smaller Arab and Mawlā tribal groupings.[20] During ʿUmar's reign, the Kufans were unhappy with the leaders he appointed, and their hostility grew when ʿUthmān, supported by the Umayyads, took the throne.[21]

Some local leaders in Kufa backed ʿAlī even prior to ʿUthmān's reign. Malik al-Ashtar, for example, headed a group that was the first local entity to advocate for

[16] Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 77; Husain M. Jafri, *The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 101.

[17] Jafri, *The Origins*, 102.

[18] Ibid, 101.

[19] Ibid, 103, 114.

[20] Ibid, 112.

[21] Ibid, 118–19.

ʿAlī's appointment as Caliph after ʿUthmān's assassination.[22] In order to defend his position against the Ummayads Al-Zubayr and Ṭalḥa, ʿAlī appealed to the Kufans, who opposed Al-Zubayr's Qurayshite regime. Seeking to reward his supporters, he dismissed ʿUthmān's relatives, replacing them with his own men.[23] While his own tribe extended him little aid, he gained a firm position amongst the Kufans. He thus transferred his seat of power to the city, the residents continuing to champion him and strengthen his power base.[24]

Rivalry with the Ummayads

In contrast to the warm embrace ʿAlī experienced elsewhere, he was cold-shouldered in Syria. Muawiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, the scion of an Ummayad family and one of ʿUthmān's relatives, demanded that ʿAlī avenge his predecessor's blood and refused to recognize his Caliphate until he did so. However, ʿAlī depended on the support of men who had been involved in ʿUthmān's murder, first and foremost al-Ashtar; hence, he was left with no recourse.[25] Two military camps emerged—ʿAlī stood against Muawiyah and the Meccan elite who had accompanied him to Bazra and lay under his protection.[26] Because Kufa and Bazra were the two largest territories with a broad military base, ʿAlī was forced to establish his military base in Kufa.

Kufa's heterogeneous population

From its very beginnings, Kufa had always been populated by diverse groups and characterized by the lack of a predominant ruling tribe. This heterogeneity

[22] Ibid, 107.

[23] Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 77.

[24] Jafri, *The Origins*, 120.

[25] Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 78-77.

[26] Heinz Halm, *Shi'a Islam: From Religion to Revolution*, trans. Alison Brown (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1997), 6.

attracted ʿUmar who, seeking to disseminate Islam as widely as possible during his Caliphate (with the exception of the Arabian Peninsula), understood the potential embodied in a cosmopolitan community prepared to unite under the flag of Islam.[27] Kufa was thus not only an advantageous location for a military base, but also offered an opportunity to spread Islam further afield.[28]

The challenge to uniting the Kufans under one regime proved difficult to meet, however. The populace's needs were governed by disparate geographical, historical, ethnic, racial, and economic features.[29] ʿUmar's desire to find a local leader whom they could trust thus ultimately failed. ʿUthmān, who was appointed after his death, showed no interest in political complexities but placed his own men in positions of power.[30] ʿAlī's egalitarian approach, which he espoused throughout his entire career, appears to have convinced him that he could use it to gain the loyalty of the Kufans. Hence, he settled in the city to strengthen his political status, unite people around him—and, under ʿUmar's influence, promulgate Islamic universalism amongst the masses.

ʿAlī's settlement and political endeavors in Kufa

When ʿAlī' transferred his seat of power to Kufa, bringing around a thousand of his followers with him, he was joined by another 12,000 or so locals. The challenge of the city's ethnic diversity played a significant role in the development of Shi'ism: How should the city be led—in accordance with Islam or on a tribal basis? Understanding its complex nature and the power relations within it, ʿAlī' took an approach different from that of his predecessor, putting

[27] Ibid, 109. For the Arabian Peninsula, see Levzion, Ephrat, and Talmon-Keller, *Islam*, 95.

[28] Jafri, *The Origins*, 109.

[29] Ibid, 112.

[30] Ibid, 110, 119.

religion center stage and appealing to all those who wished to be treated as equals amongst equals. In an attempt to unite the various classes, he introduced changes into the tribal division in the city, transferring men from one neighborhood into another to ensure that they would mix and blend.[31] He also believed that rulers, rather than protecting their personal interests or becoming tyrannical tax collectors, should be charismatic leaders dedicated to forming a true Islamic community. A hallmark of his reign—and the key to the power his successors held throughout the early Muslim period—this attitude, and his attentiveness to the Muslim Kufans' problems, helped him establish himself and create a broad power base in Kufa.[32]

ʿAlī's victory over Al-Zubayr and his men at the Battle of the "Camel" in 656 prompted the Meccans who had migrated to Bazra to surrender, which enabled him to extend his influence over that city.[33] In 657, he clashed with Muawiyah in Sayfan, close to Raka, but both sides were wary of engaging in battle. Instead, for three months, they conducted isolated forays. Muawiyah was seeking vengeance for ʿUthmān's assassination rather than reaching for the Caliphate at this stage, and ʿAlī wanted his opponent to recognize him as Caliph by swearing an oath of allegiance and forswearing any punishment of those responsible for his predecessor's murder.[34]

This "phony war" ended in August 656. However, the real war ended quickly as well, with the Syrians' seeking an end to hostilities. Despite their military advantage, the Iraqis elected to forego further bloodshed and reach a peaceful settlement. Compelled to accept arbitration, ʿAlī was forced into a compromise

[31] Ibid, 120, 122–23.

[32] Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 78.

[33] Jafri, *The Origins*, 120.

[34] Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 77-78.

with Muawiyah and had to forfeit his right to lead the Ummayads. People began to doubt his leadership, many clandestinely switching allegiance to Muawiyah and promising him their support. Others, disappointed by ʿAlī's weakness, also abandoned his cause. They migrated to Nahrawan, in the heart of the Saud region and came to be known as the Kharijites (the Leavers), because of their defection from ʿAlī's army.[35]

The Kharijites' separation and the tribal leaders' cold-shouldering of ʿAlī adversely affected his status, so the validity of his Caliphate was now in question. The Kharijites determined his fate by murdering him close to the Kufa mosque in 661.[36] His death divided the Kufans divided both politically and religiously. On the one hand, ʿAlī's supporters were not only committed to him, but they also believed that the leadership should remain within the Prophet's house. On the other, the followers of Muawiya believed that he and his faction could guarantee that their stake in Arab political affairs and their ruling position would be preserved.[37]

The formation of ʿAlī's faction in Iraq

Shi'a means "faction" in Arabic. ʿAlī' emerged due to his rivalry with Muawiya and the Syrian camp. When Muawiyah assumed power over all the Empire after ʿAlī's murder, *shi'a* came to denote those who had supported ʿAlī. This group then adopted the term as their official name.[38] While they hoped that one of ʿAlī's sons would succeed their father, his firstborn, Hussein, was forced to relinquish the Caliphate in favor of Muawiya, the first Ummayad ruler (661-680).[39] Over

[35] Ibid, 78.

[36] Ibid, 79-80.

[37] Jafri, *The Origins*, 126.

[38] Wellhausen, *Religio-Political Factions in Early Islam*, 95.

[39] Eitan Kohlberg, "Shi'a: Ali's Faction," *Zmanim* 8 (1982): 12.

time, Iraqi Shi'ites became increasingly hostile to the new ruler sent from Damascus, the seat of the new Caliphate, and many Kufans came to regard ʿAlī as "commander of the faithful," a valorization that made him into a legend.[40]

When Muawiya's son Yazid inherited the Caliphate from his father, he was faced with the task of dealing with the Shi'ites' insistence that they also had a claim to the throne. The head of the Shi'ite faction in Kufa appealed to the best candidate amongst its ranks—ʿAlī's son Hussein, a resident of Medina—to join forces with them. Recognizing the political danger inherent in any meeting between Hussein and ʿAlī's faction, Yazid sent troops to halt Hussein's progress from Medina to Iraq. The two sides clashed on 10 Muharram 61 (680 CE) at Karbala, west of the Euphrates, where, despite the assistance of the Kufans, Hussein and his followers were killed.[41]

Their deaths enraged the Muslim Kufans, many of whom felt not only that Mohammad's beloved grandson had been cruelled slaughtered by godless tyrants, but also that the Prophet himself had been betrayed. Hussein thus became a symbol for all Muslims oppressed by the Ummayad dynasty. The murders also heightened their identification with ʿAlī's house, many of whom had pinned their political hopes and aspirations on his faction.[42] Bringing ʿAlī's dynasty to an end, the Battle of Karbala constituted a watershed moment in how the faction perceived itself, prompting it to become an opposition main-stream.[43]

This trend is perfectly exemplified by Mukhtar ibn Abi Ubayd al-Thaqafi's revolt (685-687)—which was a turning point in the social fabric of the Shi'ite movement. Following Hussein's death in battle, many of the veterans

[40] Halm, *Shi'a Islam*, 6–7.

[41] Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 81.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Heinz Halm, *The Shiites: A Short History* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2007), 16.

encouraged Mukhtar to propose himself as the leader of the new faction in the absence of any candidates from the houses of ʿAlī' or the Prophet. A tribal elder, Mukhtar, served in a number of key posts in Kufa. This experience enabled him to gain intimate knowledge of the citizens and the best way to rule them. He thus chose to grant the Caliphate to Mohammad Ibn al-Hanafiya—one of ʿAlī's scions (by a wife other than Fatima).[44]

Mukhtar added an innovative element to Hanafiya's enthronement, calling him Mahdi—"The Guided One," sent to save the world. This move, accepted by many, inspired numbers of people to embrace the struggle to strengthen the oppressed. Many Mawlā joined the revolt due to the injustice and discrimination they suffered at the hands of the Prophet's tribe, for example, the bar to engaging in any armed conflict to gain their rights. They regarded the rebellion as a general struggle for general equality.[45]

Although the revolt lasted for only two years, the mass influx of Mawlā significantly affected the movement's development and shaped its character. While it had initially been an Arab faction, it became a predominantly Muslim social movement. In mobilizing the Mawlā, Mukhtar transformed them from an Arab religious group into a non-ethnic movement based on Islam, which conformed to the image ʿAlī had had in mind. The new direction taken by the revolt imbued Shi'ism with an ethnic heterogeneity the movement still manifests today, spreading across the Middle East and embracing Arabs and non-Arabs alike.

Numerous studies support this idea, that Hussein's murder constituted a watershed for the faction, turning it from a political into a religious movement

[44] Andrew J. Newman, *Twelver Shiism: Unity and Diversity in the Life of Islam, 632 to 1722* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 20–21; Halm, *Shi'a Islam*, 23.

[45] Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 78.

with a clear doctrine.[46] However, even immediately after Mohammad's death, ʿAlī's supporters had believed in a religiously rather than a politically based Caliphate.[47] The Kufans' resistance to granting leadership of the faction to ʿAlī's sons and Hussein's commitment to following in his father's and older brother's footsteps both confirm that the faction was just as religious as political in its formative period.[48] The desire to unite as a faction, demanding that the Caliphate remain within a consecrated house, arguably prefigured the idea of divine leadership passed down from father to son, which in time became one of the doctrinal pillars of Shi'ism.

ʿAlī's decision to establish Kufa as his base of power is explained through demographic, political, and geographical factors. This move became a turning point in the faction's history, influencing its development during his life and after his and Hussein's deaths. Mukhtar's revolt exemplifies these dynamics, alongside the emergence of Iraqi Shi'ism shaped by local cultural and religious traditions. The evolution of Shi'ite theology, particularly Twelver Shi'ism, in this context is also explored.

[46] Haider Saeed, "Iraqi Shi'is and the Pressure of Religious Identity: An Attempt to Determine the Meaning of Shi'i Identity, *AlMuntaqa* 2.1 (2019): 62–63; Halm, *The Shiites*, 16–17.

[47] Newman, *Twelver Shiism*, 17–18; Mahmud Shahabi, "The Roots of Shi'ism in Early Islamic History," in *Shi'ism: Doctrines, Thought, and Spirituality*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988), 15.

[48] Wilferd Madelung, *The Succession to Muhammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 311–12.

THE THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SHI'ISM UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF IRAQI TRADITIONS

Shi'ite doctrine began taking form during the office of the sixth Imam, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 765), who established a private religious institution in Medina where he developed halakhic law for his followers (Shi'ite *halakhah* became known as Jaʿfari). Living during the transition from the Ummayad to the Abbasid Empire, Ṣādiq maintained close relations with the Caliphs, which enabled him to visit holy places in Iraq (ʿAlī's and Hussein's tombs). His faction was also given permission to live in the central cities of the Abbasid Empire, and, as a result, it established itself as a movement throughout the central region.[49]

Ṣādiq was also known for sitting with Sunni religious sages and developing halakhic ideas, despite the differences between the two movements—e.g., those concerning the Holy Family versus the strong political ruler.[50] His thought and teaching drew on earlier sources and local religions and cultures.[51] As numerous studies have demonstrated, the various Mesopotamian communities interacted with one another, such that Shi'ite ideas were directly influenced by pre-Islamic traditions, Iraqi Judaism and the Babylonian Talmud, Christianity, and early Islam, shaping their evolution into the Shi'ite cultus we know today.[52] During the ninth century under the Abbasid Empire, in the wake of Ṣādiq's death, two

[49] Halm, *The Shiites*, 22–24.

[50] Liyakat N. Takim, *The Heirs of the Prophet: Charisma and Religious Authority in Shi'ite Islam* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 30–31.

[51] Michael Cook, "Early Islamic Dietary Law," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 7 (1986): 266, 269–70.

[52] Halm, *The Shiites*, 42.

central institutions of religious study were founded in Iraq and Iran, and during the tenth century, Shi'ism grew rapidly in the Buyid Empire in Baghdad.[53]

Affinities with the Jews

Hussein's tragic fate raised religious and ethical questions amongst the Kufans, who bore a burden of guilt for not coming to his aid when he was attacked by Al-Zubayr. The faction rallied around Sheikh Suleiman Ibn Surad, one of ʿAlī's supporters, who held meetings in his house following Hussein's death every Friday, during which he recited verses from the Quran dealing with Moses' wrath against the Israelites for making the Golden Calf:

> Do it, like the old Israelites, after they cast and worshiped the golden calf! When Moses said to them, "You have sinned severely, atone through death!" they patiently stretched out their necks and offered themselves to the knife, realizing that this was the only way they could free themselves from their guilt. So you too; prepare for death, sharpen your swords and lances and procure war equipment and horses.[54]

The drawing of this parallel with the Israelites prompted the Tawwabin uprising and the "penitents" movement, which advocated expiation for sin. The meetings in Suleiman's house and the links with the Israelites formed the early buds of Shi'ite thought in the wake of Hussein's death.[55]

The comparison is also more generally associated with the dualistic Islamic attitude towards the Jews—their justified messianic perpetuity and the sins

[53] Graham E. Fuller and Rend Rahim Francke, *The Arab Shi'a: The Forgotten Muslims* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1999), 12.

[54] Wellhausen, *Religio-Political Factions*, 121; cf. Sura 2:54; Jafri, *The Origins*, 155.

[55] Halm, *The Shiites*, 16–17.

attributed to them in the Quran.[56] Shi'ism adopted the same approach, as seen in this example of ʿAlī's faction drawing an analogy between their sins and the Israelites'.[57] The idea that Jewish messianism was eternally justified, which, according to Sunni doctrine, legitimized the Arab conquest of the Promised Land and became the basis for the Imamate and the divine plan in Shi'ism.

As Bar-Asher observes, Shi'ism's development as a movement and a legitimate school of Islam rested on the notion of Israel as the "chosen people." Within the Shi'ite framework, Mohammad and his descendants are the Israelites' heirs; Judaism thus exhibited as an "ancient sign or proto-Shi'ism," which prefigured the Jews' destiny as a persecuted minority. The Jewish hope for redemption inspired them with the hope that they, too, would see better days than those they had endured under the Ummayads and Abbasids.[58]

Shi'ites also cited the Israelites' sinfulness, as described in the Quran, in order to demonstrate their superiority over their Sunni rivals. Understanding the Arabic nation in terms of their dominance as the true nation (versus that of the Sunnis), they likened ʿAlī's adversaries to the Israelites by appealing to the Quranic tradition of Jewish iniquity, asserting that the Ummayads had murdered Hussein and his followers at Karbala in the same way as the Israelites had abused their prophets.[59] In this way, Shi'ism established not only the notion of individual

[56] Uri Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur'an: The Children of Israel and the Islamic Self-Image* (Princeton: Darwin, 1999), 76–77.

[57] Meir Bar Asher, "On the place of Judaism and the Jews in the religious literature of the early Shia", *Pe'amim: Studies in Oriental Jewry*, No. 61 (1994), 28 (Hebrew); Halm, *The Shiites*, 16–17; Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur'an*, 78.

[58] Bar-Asher, *On the place of Judaism and the Jews in the religious literature of the early Shia*, 27-29.

[59] Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur'an*, 78.

expiation for sins to bring the redemption closer, but also the need to justify the movement to others. The desire of ʿAlī's faction's to separate itself and create new myths and traditions was thus a function of its eagerness to evince Islam's superiority over other doctrines.[60]

Shi'ite versus Christian sins

The Quranic verses about the Israelites that Suleiman read to the Kufans gradually came to serve as a message of remorse for individual deeds. The deep contrition Shi'ites felt led them to the belief that they must expiate their sins by identifying with the dead (Hussein) and make the ultimate sacrifice by giving their lives.[61] The earliest account of the faction after Hussein's death, written by the Kufan Shi'ite Abu Mikhnaf (d. 774), indicates that four years after Hussein's fall in battle, in November 684, Suleiman sent a missive on behalf of ʿAlī's faction in Iraq, calling for participation in an act of atonement for sins and a campaign in which they must be prepared to sacrifice their lives.[62] The addressees immediately set out on the banks of Euphrates for Syria, devoting their nights to weeping and self-examination and confessing their guilt. In January 685, the survivors of the battle halted on the border of Syria in northern Mesopotamia, lamenting that their lives had yet to be taken. Sometime later, one of them determined that their repentance had been accepted, despite their survival. Hence, being called upon to continue living, their task was to advance the cause of the holy Shi'a.[63]

[60] Bar-Asher, *On the place of Judaism and the Jews in the religious literature of the early Shia*, 30.

[61] Wellhausen, *Religio-Political Factions*, 18.

[62] Halm, *The Shiites*, 17.

[63] Ibid, 19.

The Kufan doctrine also corresponds to the Christian belief that Christ atoned for original sin on the cross. After the defeat at Karbala, the "penitents" sought to expiate their transgressions, adopting principles such as "sin and punishment." The Shi'ite concept of sin and the desire to atone for it through suffering paralleled the Christian idea that Jesus gave himself to expiate humanity's sins. Shi'ite iniquity is internal, however; the adherents of the movement are required to atone for past Shi'ites' wrongdoings and to accept this as their lot. This development gave rise to the Ashura ceremony, which was designed to cleanse a person of sins of the past, thereby proving that they would have sacrificed themselves with Hussein had they lived during the days of the believers.[64] These cultic notions also form part of the Christian sacraments—in the form of the mass, confession, and so forth.[65]

The 684-685 journey of the "penitents" and the doctrine of the expiation of sin became the basis of the central observance of the Ashura, to be performed annually on 10 Muharram, the holiest day in the Shi'ite calendar,[66] when believers gather to perform mourning rituals, marching, weeping, and shrieking, and carrying long swords to make them feel as though they are fighting at Karbala and sacrificing their lives with Hussein. Commemorating the battle, the ceremony gradually came to serve as an umbrella ritual for Shi'ites of all hues, and the formative events led to the core tenet of the Shi'ite faith, that believers

[64] Ibid, 18-19.

[65] Aviad Kleinberg, *Christianity from its Beginnings to the Reformation* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 1995), 74, 76 (Hebrew).

[66] Peter Chelkowski, "Diverse Religious Practices," in *Shi'ism: Doctrines, Thought, and Spirituality*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988), 262–63.

must unite against world injustice in order to commemorate Hussein's death.[67] Emerging in seventh-century Iraq with the goal of atoning for the past and creating a better future, this ritual shaped the path Iran has continued to follow to this day.[68]

The Battle of Karbala also spawned a further parallel between Shi'ism and Christianity—namely, an analogy between Hussein and Jesus. According to some scholars, in addition to confronting the Ummayad Caliphate, Hussein sought to sacrifice himself on behalf of humanity. Like Jesus, who went to Jerusalem and was crucified, Hussein went to Karbala to receive the punishment destined for him from the beginning of time. Shi'ite theologians exhibited no qualms in comparing Hussein with Jesus, some texts depicting the events Hussein experienced prior to the battle in line with Jesus' death on the cross.[69]

In order to strengthen this claim, a further tradition arose, according to which Hussein's mother, Fatima, was a virgin and her son's birth a miracle. This reinforced the parallelism between Hussein and Jesus, whose mother, Mary, conceived him by the Holy Spirit.[70] Other sources allege that the story of Jesus and his disciples prefigured the Battle of Karbala and attribute the former's weeping and sorrow to their realization that one day Muhammad's grandson would also die. Shi'ism drew an analogy not only between the deaths of Jesus and Hussein, but also between the former and those of later Shi'ites—in contrast to Christian, according to which Jesus is the only Messiah who sacrifices himself

[67] Ibid, 264–65.

[68] Halm, *The Shiites*, 19–20.

[69] Ibid, 31.

[70] Susan Sered, "Rachel, Mary, and Fatima," *Cultural Anthropology* 6.2 (1991): 136. This belief has been challenged by both believers and scholars, Fatima having five sons.

for all.[71] Nevertheless, despite the numerous parallels between Shi'ite and Christian theology, some notions privilege the Shi'ite ideas of the change in sin and the deaths of the believers, and so forth. Despite the parallel lines between Christian theology and Shiite theology, there are distortions of the original Christian idea in order to fit the new Shiite ideas.

The development of Shi'ite theology under the influence of Babylonian Judaism

Heretofore, we have reviewed the evolution of Shi'ite doctrine and the parallels with the Israelites adduced by the Shi'ites to establish their superiority over the other religious traditions in the region. While quite frequently relating to the Jews, this move does not acknowledge any direct links with Judaism nor any effect of their Jewish deeds on the development of other religions, yet some scholars contend that many Jewish influences on Iraqi Muslim halakhic schools can be discerned, most prominently amongst Twelver Shi'ism.[72]

Today, the Ashura ceremony, which commemorates Hussein's holy death, is described as the dark, destructive day on which Allah created evil. When the faithful were martyred at Karbala, the world became lawless, which requires individuals to atone for their sins and renew their pure intentions annually. Some maintain that Ashura's distinctive ritual nature was shaped by the Jewish Day of Atonement, which occurs on the same day and was adopted by the Prophet.[73]

[71] Halm, *The Shiites*, 31–32; Cook, "Early Islamic Dietary Law," 260, 266, 269–70.

[72] Cook, "Early Islamic Dietary Law," 260, 266, 269–70; Bar-Asher, On the place of Judaism and the Jews in the religious literature of the early Shia, 25.

[73] Khalid Sindawi, "Ashura Day and Yom Kippur," *Anes* 38 (2001), 209–10; Yonatan Friedman, "The Fundamental Commandment in Islam," in *Islam: History, Religion, Culture*, ed. Meir Bar-Asher and Meir Hatina (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2017), 275–76 (Hebrew).

The Ashura rites are characterized by a focus on communal deeds performed over the past year and remorse for sins.[74] Every year, Shi'ites mourn Hussein's death, closing the bazaars and gathering together to lament; their desire to participate in the rituals and identify with Hussein's fate assures them of salvation on the Day of Judgment.[75] Repentance from evil, the sealing of the judgment, and the anchoring of the Ashura in the calendar as a day of rest all parallel the customs and laws of the Jewish Day of Atonement.[76] The two days also share similar prayers, both focusing on confession and the acknowledgement of sin, mourning, and fasting.[77] The fact that the Babylonian Jewish diaspora developed into an important temporary center was not only the work of later generations; the rabbinic literature speaks of exilarchs as early as the days of Judah haNasi (d. 219 CE).[78] Serving as the leaders of Babylonian Jewry due to the belief that they were descended from the House of David, they represented the Jewish community before the local authorities. Not only were they recognized as authoritative leaders by other groups in the region, but Muslims also affirmed their position in the Jewish community.[79] Although the

[74] Mahmud Ayoub, "Diverse Religious Practices," in *Shi'ism: Doctrines, Thought, and Spirituality*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988), 258–59.

[75] Ibid, 263.

[76] Sindawi, "Ashura Day and Yom Kippur," 210. See b. Roš Haš. 16a.

[77] Isaiah Gafni, *Babylonian Jewry and its institutions in the period of the Talmud* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center for Israeli History, 1986), 20 (Hebrew).

[78] Ibid, 94.

[79] Menahem Ben-Sasson, "Senior Appointments: Jobs, Titles and Ceremonies in Israelite Communities in the Mediterranean Basin in the Middle Ages," in *The Justice Jacob Türkel Festschrift: Studies in Israeli Law, Halakhah, Philosophy, and Theory*, ed.

Babylonian Talmud makes no reference to the existence of exilarchs earlier than the Second Temple era, over time the office spread across the region space for political reasons.[80]

The Shi'ite concept of the Holy Family (*ahal al-beit*) promulgated by Ṣādiq arose because the Shi'ites had to justify their existence under Ummayad and Abassid rule. The Shi'ites thus attacked the Imam's status as a religious leader imbued with "divine charisma."[81] Their establishment of authority on the basis of lineage from the Holy Family resembles the Jewish and non-Jewish attitudes towards the exilarch in Babylonia—an argument supported by sources that attest to Ṣādiq's frequent appeal to the theological notions of other religions to justify his approach.

In the wake of the death of Hussein, the third Imam, Shi'ite theology began to shape the idea of the identity and return of the Mahdi. Various figures were proposed.[82] While Ṣādiq presents a detailed portrait of the Mahdi, his identity was only definitively determined after the disappearance of the twelfth Imam, Mohammad al-Mahdi (864), who traditionally was believed to be due to return in the eschaton.[83]

Aharon Barak, Karin Carmit Yafet, Eliakim Rubinstein (Tzafririm: Nevo, 2020), 228 (Hebrew).

[80] Moshe Bar, "The Babylonian Exilarchate during the Talmudic Period," *Zion* 28.1/2 (1963), 28 (Hebrew).

[81] W. Montgomery Watt, "Shi'i Theology," in *Shi'ism: Doctrines, Thought, and Spirituality*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988), 288.

[82] Halm, *The Shiites*, 29; Graham E. Fuller and Rend Rahim Francke, *The Arab Shi'a: The Forgotten Muslims* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 21, 25.

[83] Halm, *The Shiites*, 37; Liyakat N. Takim, *The Heirs of the Prophet: Charisma and Religious Authority in Shi'ite Islam* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 26. The vanishing

The belief in the Mahdi's return was a minor concept in classical Islam, completely absent from Sunni doctrine.[84] In Shi'ism, in contrast, the twelfth Imam's return following his disappearance became a key teaching, Shi'ites believing that Mohammad al-Mahdi would come back in the latter days and redeem his followers from the infidels after a long, bloody war.[85] Although the year of his return is unknown, it is said he will make his reappearance on 20 Muharram, the day on which Hussein sacrificed himself at Karbala.[86] The final form assumed by Shi'ite theology with respect to the Mahdi (874) accords with certain features of the Jewish messiah, who will be a descendant of David.[87]

The Akitu Festival as the basis of the Ashura ritual

Developing in Sumer, the Akitu Festival is thought to be one of the most ancient feasts in the world.[88] The Sumerian Gilgamesh Epic describes it as being celebrated during Sargon's reign in numerous city-states across Mesopotamia in the first month of the Mesopotamian calendar (the Jewish Tishre).[89] During

notion appears to have arisen from pre-Islamic traditions: see Roy Vilozny, "The Imamate," in *Islam: History, Religion, Culture*, ed. Meir Bar-Asher and Meir Hatina (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2017), 342 (Hebrew).

[84] Halm, *The Shiites*, 34–35.

[85] Shaykh al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-irshād: The Book of Guidance into the Lives of the Twelve Imams (984–1022*), trans. I. K. A. Howard (London: Balagha Books/Muhammadi Trust, 1981), 551–53.

[86] Ibid, 548; Halm, *The Shiites*, 36–37.

[87] Montgomery Watt, "Shi'i Theology," 289.

[88] Julye Bidmead, *The Akitu Festival: Religious Continuity and Royal Legitimation in Mesopotamia* (Piscataway: Gorgias, 2002), 1.

[89] Svend Aage Pallis, *The Babylonian Akitu Festival* (Copenhagen: Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri, 1926), 19–20; 24, 31.

Hammurabi's reign it was transferred to Nisan and celebrated over the first twelve days of the month, reaching its peak on the tenth.[90] Its name appears to derive from that of the Moon-god Aku, in whose honor buildings were erected where the celebrations could take place.[91]

A prominently religious festival, Akitu celebrates the departure of Marduk, the head of the Babylonian pantheon, from his temple on the banks of the Euphrates, in a festal procession on 10 Nissan. Accompanied by other gods, Marduk leaves via the city's principal exit for the Akitu house, where, according to tradition, human lots are determined for the coming year by the divine council.[92] The ritual revolves around a dramatic display depicting Marduk's death and resurrection and the fixing of human lots for that year.[93] While the rites include mourning and lamentation, the festival is primarily joyous and merry, with the elite and the general populace celebrating together.[94] The temple is also cleansed by the sacrifice of a lamb known as the "goat for Azazel," which drives out all the evil spirits.[95] These traditions parallel the Jewish observance of ten days of repentance, the sealing of judgment for the coming year, and the "goat for Azazel" sacrificed by the High Priest in the Temple on the Day of Atonement.[96]

[90] Tamara M. Green, *The City of the Moon God: Religious Traditions of Harran* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 157; Pallis, *The Babylonian Akitu Festival*, 5.

[91] Pallis, *The Babylonian Akitu Festival*, 14, 22.

[92] Ibid, 35, 50.

[93] Ibid, 304.

[94] Ibid, 151.

[95] Bidmead, *The Akitu Festival*, 73.

[96] "Aaron shall take the two he-goats and let them stand before God at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting; and he shall place lots upon the two goats, one marked for God and the other marked for Azazel … Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over it all the iniquities and transgressions of the Israelites,

Numerous sources describe how in Babylon, after nine days of preparation, the tenth day began with a procession to the Akitu house, the culmination of the annual event. The participants carried statues of the gods, danced, played instruments, and dressed in festive attire to heighten the sense of Marduk's resurrection. The idea that an evil event must be commemorated by marking Marduk's death in a dramatic procession to the Akitu house also became part of Shi'ism, whose followers hold a central procession in memory of Hussein's fall in battle and visit his tomb in order to unite against evil and bring the redemption closer.[97]

The majority of extant sources relating to the Akitu refer to Babylon, capital of the Babylonian Empire, which ruled much of the ancient Near East. Located on the banks of the Euphrates in modern-day Iraq, the city served as the site for the development of various religions.[98] In sum, a large group of scholars claim that many Ashura customs are modeled on the Jewish Day of Atonement, and findings reveal that early pre-Islamic Akitu influences on Judaism and Shi'ism were facilitated by geographic proximity.[99]

The emergence of Shi'ite pilgrim destinations in Iraq

As we have observed, ʿAlī's move to Kufa and the activities of his faction there prompted the development of Shi'ite theology and doctrine. As a result, holy Shi'ite sites were also established in Iraq. In the wake of ʿAlī's cruel death in the

whatever their sins, putting them on the head of the goat; and it shall be sent off to the wilderness through a designated agent. Thus the goat shall carry on it all their iniquities to an inaccessible region; and the goat shall be set free in the wilderness" (Lev 16:7–8, 21–22).

[97] Bidmead, *The Akitu Festival*, 94–95.

[98] Halm, *The Shiites*, 42.

[99] Pallis, *The Babylonian Akitu Festival*, 249–51.

Kufa mosque, a tradition began to develop around his heroism and wisdom, honoring the time when his followers gathered around his body, sanctified it, and carried to his resting place—a special lot in Najaf, close to modern-day Kufa.

With ʿAlī's tomb becoming a site of pilgrimage for Shi'ites the world over, Najaf won distinction as one of the most important and holy Shi'ite places; pilgrimage there assumed a status on a par with the *hajj* to Mecca and Medina.[100] Hussein was buried at Karbala, and some sources attest that as early as four years later Shi'ites began visiting his tomb there. This led to the emergence of a pilgrimage tradition.[101] The annual Ashura procession and ritual take place in Karbala, and Shi'ite tradition holds that pilgrims are granted a direct relationship with Hussein that assures them of mercy on the Day of Judgment.[102]

Other Imams are buried alongside ʿAlī and Hussein, most prominently those important to Imamate Shi'ism. Construction around their tombs has grown exponentially, each tomb being adorned with an ornate mausoleum topped with one or two golden domes (The Kāẓimayn).[103] Although initially elaborate tombs were a tradition only of the Shi'ites, Sunni Muslims later adopted the trend as a counterweight and in order to encourage a similar worship of its own. a challenge to reverence of the dead[104] While the *hajj* continues to constitute the central

[100] Fuller and Francke, *The Arab Shi'a*, 13.

[101] Vilozny, "The Imamate," 340; Chelkowski, "Diverse Religious Practices," 264.

[102] Khalid Sindawi, "Visit to the Tomb of Al-Husayn b. ʿAlī in Shiite Poetry: First to Fifth Centuries AH (8th–11th Centuries CE)," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 37.2 (2006): 232.

[103] Halm, *The Shiites,* 25–28.

[104] Oleg Grabar, "The Earliest Islamic Commemorative Structures, Notes and Documents," *Ars Orientalis* 6 (1966): 39.

Shi'ite rite today,[105] sites such as Janaf, Karbala, Kufa, Baghdad, and Samara have become the central sacred places of Shi'ism, and Iraq has always been the home of, and most significant locale for, Shi'ite holy sites, reflecting its status as the historical and intellectual stronghold of Shi'ism.

As this discussion has shown, local traditions in Iraq influenced the development of Shi'ite theology and doctrine. The Jewish, Christian, and pre-Islamic religious presence there directly shaped Shi'ite faith, with the ideas of sin, the Ashura, the Holy Family, and the Mahdi's return forming the cornerstone of Shi'ism. These were complemented by the evolution of a *hajj* ritual in Iraq, where geographical proximity made Shi'ism into a distinctive movement—countering the claim that it did not begin to emerge as a serious force in Iran until the sixteenth century.[106]

Conclusion

This chapter argues that Shi'ite Islam was established in Iraq and that its infrastructure was developed in this region. First examining ʿAlī's decision to move to Kufa rather than settle in Medina, it adduces four reasons for this shift: (a) Kufa's geographical advantages over Medina and their influence upon the consolidation of his rule, (b) the Kufan support he received, (c) the rivalry with Muawiya as leader of the Ummayads, and (d) the city's heterogeneity. All these revolve around a single motif—namely, ʿAlī's path of faith, which stemmed from his belief that all his followers were equal, irrespective of origin or Islamic precedence—class distinctions thus being unacceptable.

The decision to move may also have been due to the hostility the Meccans displayed towards ʿAlī—or to the diverse Kufan populace that welcomed, and most significantly supported, him. Finding themselves isolated after his death,

[105] Halm, *The Shiites*, 33.

[106] Ibid, 17.

Shi'ites began developing a doctrinal scheme that portrayed ʿAlī as the leader of the nation. In light of their understanding that they must cling to his path, his followers started seeking to gain the Caliphate. Hence, after his death, they called on his sons to take their father's place, strengthening the belief in a leader characterized by a heritable "divine charisma." Resting on the earlier demand that ʿAlī receive the Caliphate following the Prophet's death, this path of action made clear the common religious denominator that united Shi'sm from its inception—namely, the doctrine of the Holy Family, second only in importance to the principle of egalitarianism.

Hussein's fall at the Battle of Karbala at the hands of the Ummayads was another watershed in the growth of Shi'ism, leading many Muslims to unite in an act of treason against Mohammad himself. Reinforcing its identification with ʿAlī's house, the faction became a widespread focus of hope. Against this backdrop, Mukhtar began attracting believers from the margins of Arab society and Mawlā, which dramatically changed the movement's demographics from an Arab majority to a mixed community resting on a common Muslim base. The believers who had called on Hussein to settle in Kufa as their leader regarded themselves as complicit in his death, having left him undefended on the battlefield. Some were therefore determined to expiate their sin—a notion that drew on the Christian doctrine that Jesus atoned for original sin.

The Shi'ite notion of expiation and mourning was developed from Israelite traditions by the Kufan Suleiman Ibn Surad, based on two dominant Islamic approaches relating to characteristics of the Jews: (a) their justified messianic perpetuity and (b) the sins the Quran imputes to them. This parallelism fueled the emergence of the idea of "penitents" who sought to expiate their sins, which led to the commemoration of Hussein's fall on Ashura Day, when believers refrain from all work and march in a procession that reenacts Hussein's journey to his death. The religious rituals performed—the sealing of the Day of Judgment

for the coming year, rest, and the recitation of prayers—resemble those of the Jewish Day of Atonement, which was first adopted by the Prophet as a Muslim fast day.

These parallels among Ashura, the Day of Atonement, and the Mesopotamian Akitu Festival, suggest that Babylonian Jews and Muslims embraced numerous conceptions from the ancient Mesopotamian culture. In a similar vein, the Shi'ite principle of the Holy Family appears to rest on the Davidic lineage attributed to the Babylonian Jewish exilarchs, the doctrine of the Mahdi's return recalling the Jewish messianic idea and thus contrasting sharply with Sunni Islam.

In time, ʿAlī's decision to move his power base to Kufa became a critical factor in Shi'ism's development into the movement as we know it today. The Shi'ite legacy was shaped along the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris in diverse, important cultures that influenced its theology and doctrines, and the nature of many of its leaders. This chapter has sought to evince the significance of Iraq in the emergence of Shi'ism, through ʿAlī's settlement in Kufa, through local traditions that influenced the formulation of its doctrine and theology, and through the country's holy sites and shrines. In short, it argues that the roots and importance of the Shi'ite movement, whose impact remains powerful today through modern-day Iran, lie in Iraq, a source of world cultures and civilizations.

Bibliography

Aṭ-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 14: The Conquest of Iran: A.D. 641–643/A.H. 21–23*. Translated by G Rex Smith. Albany: SUNY Press, 1994.

Bar, Moshe. "The Babylonian Exilarchate during the Talmudic Period." *Zion* 28.1/2 (1963): 3–33 (Hebrew).

Bar Asher, Meir. "On the place of Judaism and the Jews in the religious literature of the early Shia". *Pe'amim: Studies in Oriental Jewry*. no. 61 (1994): 16-36 (Hebrew).

Ben-Sasson, Menahem. "Senior Appointments: Jobs, Titles and Ceremonies in Israelite Communities in the Mediterranean Basin in the Middle Ages." In *The Justice Jacob Türkel Festschrift: Studies in Israeli Law, Halakhah, Philosophy, and Theory*, ed. Aharon Barak, Karin Carmit Yafet, Eliakim Rubinstein (pp. 217–40). Tzafririm: Nevo, 2020 (Hebrew).

Bidmead, Julye. *The Akitu Festival: Religious Continuity and Royal Legitimation in Mesopotamia*. Piscataway: Gorgias, 2002.

Chelkowski, Peter. "Diverse Religious Practices." In *Shi'ism: Doctrines, Thought, and Spirituality*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr (pp. 262–67). Albany: SUNY Press, 1988.

Cook, Michael. "Early Islamic Dietary law." *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 7 (1986): 217–77.

Dabashi, Hamid. *Shi'ism: A Religion of Protest*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Drory, Joseph. "The History of Early Islam." In *Islam: History, Religion, Culture*, ed. Meir Bar-Asher and Meir Hatina (pp. 57–86). Jerusalem: Magnes, 2017 (Hebrew).

Friedman, Yonatan. "The Fundamental Commandment in Islam." In *Islam: History, Religion, Culture*, ed. Meir Bar-Asher and Meir Hatina (pp. 275–76). Jerusalem: Magnes, 2017 (Hebrew).

Fuller, Graham E., and Rend Rahim Francke. *The Arab Shi'a: The Forgotten Muslims.* New York: St. Martin Press, 1999.

Gafni, Isaiah. *Babylonian Jewry and its institutions in the period of the Talmud.* Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center for Israeli History, 1986.

Grabar, Oleg. "The Earliest Islamic Commemorative Structures, Notes and Documents." *Ars Orientalis* 6 (1966): 7–46.

Green, Tamara M. *The City of the Moon God: Religious Traditions of Harran*. Leiden: Brill, 1992.

Halm, Heinz. *The Shiites: A Short History*. Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2007.

Halm, Heinz. *Shi'a Islam: From Religion to Revolution.* Translated by Alison Brown. Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1997.

Jafri, Husain M. *The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Kennedy, Hugh Nigel. *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century*. London: Longman, 1986.

Kleinberg, Aviad. *Christianity from its Beginnings to the Reformation*. Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 1995 (Hebrew).

Kohlberg, Eitan. "Shi'a: Ali's Faction." *Zmanim* 8 (1982): 16–23 (Hebrew).

Levzion, Nehemiah, Daphna Efrat, and Daniella Talmon-Heller. *Islam: An Introduction to the History of the Religion*. 2nd ed. Tel Aviv: Open University Press, 1998–2008 (Hebrew).

Madelung, Wilferd. *The Succession to Muhammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Momen, Moojan. *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

Montgomery Watt, W. "Shi'i Theology." In *Shi'ism: Doctrines, Thought, and Spirituality*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr (pp. 288–90). Albany: SUNY Press, 1988.

Newman. Andrew J. *Twelver Shiism: Unity and Diversity in the life of Islam, 632 to 1722*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013.

Pallis, Svend Aage. *The Babylonian Akitu Festival*. Copenhagen: Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri, 1926.

Rubin, Uri. *Between Bible and Qur'an: The Children of Israel and the Islamic Self-Image*. Princeton: Darwin, 1999.

Saeed, Haider. "Iraqi Shi'is and the Pressure of Religious Identity: An Attempt to Determine the Meaning of Shi'i Identity." *AlMuntaqa* 2.1 (2019): 62–80.

Sered, Susan. "Rachel, Mary, and Fatima." *Cultural Anthropology* 6.2 (1991): 131–46.

Shahabi, Mahmud. "The Roots of Shi'ism in Early Islamic History." In *Shi'ism: Doctrines, Thought, and Spirituality*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr (pp. 14–19). Albany: SUNY Press, 1988.

Shaykh al-Mufīd. *Kitāb al-irshād: The Book of Guidance into the Lives of the Twelve Imams (984–1022)*. Translated by I. K. A. Howard. London: Balagha Books/Muhammadi Trust, 1981.

Sindawi, Khalid. "Ashura day and Yom Kippur." *Anes* 38 (2001): 200-214.

Sindawi, Khalid. "Visit to the Tomb of Al-Husayn b. ʿAlī in Shiite Poetry: First to Fifth Centuries AH (8th–11th Centuries CE)." *Journal of Arabic Literature* 37.2 (2006): 230–58.

Takim, Liyakat N. *The Heirs of the Prophet: Charisma and Religious Authority in Shi'ite Islam*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2006.

Vilozny, Roy. "The Imamate." In *Islam: History, Religion, Culture*, ed. Meir Bar-Asher and Meir Hatina (pp. 334–52). Jerusalem: Magnes, 2017 (Hebrew).

Wellhausen, Julius. *Religio-Political Factions in Early Islam.* Translated by R. C. Ostle and S. M. Walzer. Amsterdam: North-Holland Pub. Co., 1975.