

Cahim

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A. Br. : c. —, s. —

B. L. : c. IV, s. 2119

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M. L. : c. II, s. 730

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of *hāwiya*, but the reason would be, not that it is non-Arabic, but that 'abyss' by itself would not necessarily connote Hell to his uninstructed hearers. To a Christian the word abyss is associated with Hell because of the passages in Luke viii, 31, and the Apocalypse ix, 11, and xx, 1 and 3, and it would be from Christians that Muḥammad acquired this conception of Hell, because in the first Meccan period to which the passage belongs he was chiefly under Christian influences.

Many other solutions have been proposed by Muslim sources. Some explain *umm* as 'skull' or 'brain' and *hāwiya* as 'descending' and hold that the verse means, 'His head [by metonymy for the sinner himself] is hurled down into the fire'.¹ Others introduce a secondary sense of the root from which *hāwiya* is derived and interpret the passage as 'His [the sinner's] mother is bereft of him', meaning that the sinner is condemned to ruin. But the most common explanation of the Muslim commentators is that *umm* 'mother' is to be understood as 'abode' or 'terminus'.² This interpretation may in fact be the literal meaning if *umm*, commonly signifying 'mother', is here intended as a verbal noun, 'proceeding to a goal', derived from the root *amm*. Blachère so understands the term³ and his interpretation receives some confirmation from a variant reading noted by Jeffery which would substitute *imm* for *umm*,⁴ thus making more tenable the meaning of 'terminus' not only in a metaphorical but even in a literal sense.

Previously Occidental scholars had regarded *hāwiya* as a proper name used by Muḥammad to mystify his hearers⁵ or as a word directly borrowed from the Hebrew הוֹחַל (howah) 'disaster', of Isaias xlvi, 11, or Ezechiel vii, 26.⁶ Others suggested an Ethiopic derivation from a related radical meaning 'a red glow in the sky',⁷ or in order to confirm the Muslim interpretation, 'His mother is bereft of him', held that the seventh and eighth verses, 'And what has made you know what this is? It is a scorching fire', were interpolated.⁸ None of these interpretations, except perhaps the last, is impossible, but they are hardly necessary in the light of the evident meaning of the text. Jeffery has pointed out the difficulties of supposing a direct borrowing from Isaias or Ezechiel: the passages containing the term resembling *hāwiya* and signifying 'disaster' are not connected with hell fire and Muḥammad was less influenced by Judaism in the first Meccan period to which this passage belongs.⁹ Both he

¹ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, Cairo, A.H. 1300-7, xx, 250; Tabarī, op. cit., xxx, 182.

² *Ibid.*; Baydāwī, op. cit., v, 194.

³ Blachère, op. cit., II, 26, n. on 6/9.

⁴ As read by Talha b. Muṣarrif, Codex of Ibn Mas'ūd, Arthur Jeffery, *Materials for the history of the text of the Qur'ān*, Leiden, 1937, 111.

⁵ Torrey, 'Three difficult passages', 468-9.

⁶ Torrey, *Jewish foundation*, 51, and 'Three difficult passages', 470-1.

⁷ Arthur Jeffery, *The foreign vocabulary of the Koran*, Baroda, 1938, 286.

⁸ R. Brünnow, *Arabische Chrestomathie*, ed. August Fischer, fourth edition, Berlin, 1928, glossary, p. 144; A. Fischer, 'Eine Qorān-Interpolation', *Orientalische Studien Theodor Nöldeke* ... gewidmet, ed. Carl Bezold, Gieszen, 1906, I, 50-3.

⁹ Jeffery, *Foreign vocabulary*, 285-6.

and Torrey, moreover, have indicated the weakness of the interpolation hypothesis by showing that the passage in question is characteristic of Muḥammad's mode of expression and that the unusual lengthened form of the pronoun *hiyah* occurring in verse 7 would scarcely have been employed by an interpolator.¹ Besides, the whole sūra is not only one of the shortest but also one of the earliest proclaimed at Mecca and an interpolation would therefore have been easily detected.

Jahīm

Chronologically the second word for Hell in the Qur'ān, *jahīm* is also, after *jahannam*, the second most common of the seven names. It is the term characteristic of the first Meccan period both in frequency and distribution, as appears from Table I. Out of a total of twenty-two references to Hell *jahīm* is used ten times between the fifteenth and the thirty-fifth sūras of the chronological series of this period. The nine occurrences in the second Meccan period are relatively undistributed, six of them being concentrated in the fourth in order of its twenty-two sūras—sūra xxxvii—and the other three in the seventh and tenth of the chronological series. Even in the seventh sūra of this period² *jahīm* appears in a passage³ which Blachère considers as certainly belonging to the first Meccan period.⁴ The word occurs twice more in Meccan sūras⁵ but

TABLE I

Period	References to Hell	Occurrences of <i>jahīm</i>	Sūras in this period	Sūras containing <i>jahīm</i>	Percentage of sūras containing <i>jahīm</i>
1st Meccan	22	10	48	9	19
2nd Meccan	34	9	22	3	14
3rd Meccan	31	1	22	1	4
Medinian	37	6	21	5	21

in passages which Bell attributes to the Medinian period, where it is also found in six other places. Practically, then, the use of the term is restricted to the first Meccan and very early second Meccan periods and to the Medinian period.

The meaning of *jahīm* is clear from the context of many of the passages in which it is found. Kindled to intense heat⁶ like the blazing pyre into which the idolaters once sought to cast Abraham (xxxvii, 95), it is exhibited to both wicked and good (xxvi, 91, and lxxix, 36). Approached by a path (xxxvii, 23) it is a place into the middle of which the sinner is cast (xxxvii, 53, and xlii, 47) and at whose bottom grows the Zaqqūm Tree with its horrible fruit (xxxvii, 62). In it the wicked roast (xxxvii, 163; lvi, 94; lxxxiii, 16) and after their draught of boiling water they return to it (xxxvii, 66) to have it as a permanent abode (lxxix, 39).

The *Lisān al-ʿArab* sums up these descriptions in the following terms:

¹ Torrey, 'Three difficult passages', 467; cf. J. Barth, 'Studien zur Kritik und Exegese des Korans', *Der Islam*, vi, 1916, 120-1. ² Qur'ān xlii, 47 and 56. ³ Qur'ān xlii, 43-59.

⁴ Blachère, op. cit., II, 172; cf. Otto Spies, *Der Sprachstil des Koran*, Leipzig, 1940, 40.

⁵ Qur'ān xxvi, 91, and xl, 7.

⁶ Qur'ān lxxxii, 12, where the strengthened form of the verb is used.