

Celibacy

The decision to devote oneself to **celibacy** for religious reasons is expressed by *tabattala*, the fifth form of the verb *batala*, which means cutting oneself off from all worldly concerns, especially sexual intercourse. This term occurs once in the Qur'an in (73:8): *tabattal ilayhi tabattalan*, "devote yourself completely to Him (God)" by observing total abstinence. Many other Qur'anic passages testify to the value of this behaviour in the case of certain holy persons. John the Baptist (Yahya) is described as having been endowed by God with "a tenderness coming from Us and an absolute purity (*zakāt*)" (Q 19:12). This term, referred to in the context of the chastity of the Virgin Mary, refers implicitly to the *Questions of Bartholomew*, an apocryphal book (second to fourth century CE), which says, "Peter said to John, 'You are a virgin and undefiled, and you must ask her [Mary, about Jesus's birth]'" (2:5). Ephraem the Syrian (d. 373), in his *Hymns on the Church* (9:18), means the same when he refers admiringly to John as "a Nazirite" (originally, an Israelite consecrated to the service of God). The virginity of Mary also holds an essential place in the Qur'an (4:156-7; 66:12), and she is called *batūl* (unmarried, virgin, devoted) in a Sunnī tradition (Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 1:461). The same term is applied to Fāṭima, the daughter of the Prophet, but with a different meaning. Al-Biqā'ī (Ibrāhīm b. 'Umar al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar fī tanāsub al-āyāt wa-l-ṣuwar*, ed. 'Abd al-Razzāq Ghālib al-Mahdī, 8 vols., Beirut 1995) says, on the meaning of the verse (Q 73:8), "She was called *batūl* because of her abstention from her fellows, equals, and peers, in her respect for the unicity of God (*tawḥīd*)—that is, she abstained from associating

anything with God." A Shī'ī tradition confirms this meaning: "A woman came to visit Abū 'Abdallāh (Ja'far al-Ṣādiq). She said, 'May God bless you, I am a devoted virgin woman.' He asked her, 'What is the meaning of the word "devoted," according to you?' She replied, 'Not to be married.' He asked, 'For what purpose?' She replied, 'In order to receive God's favour.' He said, 'Get away from here! If it is that which attracts the favour of God, then Fāṭima is worthier than you to wear this title, because no woman received more favours than she did' (al-Kulaynī, *Furū' al-Kāfi*, ed. 'Alī Akbar al-Ghafārī, 8 vols., Beirut 1985, 5:509).

All the Prophetic traditions, however, prohibited Muslims from practising this type of celibacy, reported only by Ibn Ḥanbal, but one in particular was unanimously agreed to by the traditionists: "The Prophet forbade 'Uthmān b. Maz'un to do that. If he had allowed him celibacy, we would have been castrating ourselves" (Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 1:175, al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ, K. al-Nikāḥ*, no. 8; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ, K. al-Nikāḥ*, nos. 6-8). This prohibition is often associated with that of the Christian monastic and eremitic way of life (*rahbāniyya*) and may also have been a reaction against Manichean doctrines that venerated celibacy, even within marriage. A Prophetic tradition reported by Ibn Ḥanbal (*al-Musnad*, 6:125, 157) says, "On the authority of 'Ā'isha: The messenger of God forbade us celibacy." Another tradition is reported by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan*, 11:2045): "On the authority of Ma'qil b. Yasār: A man came to see the Prophet and said, 'I found a beautiful and high-ranking woman, but she does not give birth to children. Do I have to get married to her?' He said, 'No!' (After

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his third visit, the Prophet added) 'Marry affectionate and prolific women so that I can subjugate the other peoples, thanks to them.'" Finally, there is this Shī'ī interpretation of Q 73:8: "*tabattul* means complete connection to God and detachment from any other but Him, signified when you point to the sky with your index finger" (Aḥmad b. Fahd al-Ḥillī, *Uddat al-dā'ī*, Qum 1972, 183).

The commentators of the Qur'an thus interpreted verse 73:8 by neglecting the connotation of sexual abstinence in the verb *tabattala*, and they took "purification" in only a general sense: "purify your invocation (*du'ā*) completely and thus your act of worship (*ibāda*)" (Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, ed. 'Abdallāh Muḥammad Shihāta, 5 vols., Beirut 2002; the same comment appears in the *Tafsīrs* of al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr). According to al-Biqā'ī, *tabattal* means, "Make every effort to cut yourself off from all worldly concerns and to remain pure in everything you do; do it gradually, until this condition becomes your real nature" (Ibrāhīm b. 'Umar al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar fī tanāsub al-āyāt wa-l-ṣuwar*, ed. 'Abd al-Razzāq Ghālib al-Mahdī, 8 vols., Beirut 1995).

The jurists emphasised the necessity of marriage, presenting it as an absolute obligation (*farḍ*), which nothing but total incapacity permits one to neglect (see al-Shāfi'ī, *Kitāb al-umm*, 5, *Kitāb al-sha'b*, *Bāb al-nikāḥ*, *Bāb mā jā'a fī amr al-nikāḥ*).

Muslim mystics had a unanimously favourable opinion of marriage, describing it as a necessary trial, a kind of asceticism ordered by God to test the patience of the pious man, and they regarded celibacy as a harmful obstacle to those setting out on the Ṣūfī way.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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GENEVIÈVE GOBILLOT

Cetinje

Cetinje (Turk. Çetince; in Ottoman orthography, Çetīne) is a town in present-day Montenegro (Crna Gora; Turk. Karadağ), with a population of 13,991 (2011), which is located at the foot of Mt. Lovćen, roughly 30 kilometres (19 miles) southwest of the country's capital, Podgorica. It served as the political, cultural, and spiritual centre of the principality of Montenegro (from 1910, a kingdom) until the end of World War I. Cetinje is famous for its Monastery of the Holy Mother of God (*Bogorodica*), as well as a rich tradition of publishing in Cyrillic, which began in the last decade of the ninth/fifteenth century at the town's Crnojevići printing house, the first press of its kind in southeastern Europe.

After the death of Sultan Mehmed II (Meḥmed II, r. 848-50/1444-6 and 855-86/1451-81), in 886/1481, Ivan Crnojević (d. 1490), the ruler of Zeta (encompassing much of today's Montenegro), who had previously accepted Ottoman suzerainty, took initiative and established a stronghold at the foot of Mt. Lovćen. A *palatium* that was erected there (1482), near the Cetina River, as well as a monastery (1484), which became the seat of the Zeta metropolitan bishops, formed the nucleus of medieval Cetinje. The